

CHRISTIANS AND WAR  
A SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

1914 - 1948



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by

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## FOREWORD

Christians during the years between 1914 and 1948 were living continually in the shadow of war, either a war departing or a war gathering on the horizon.

War was near them daily, and Christians wrote and spoke much about it. Far too many of their thoughts were recorded to include them all in a survey such as this.

An attempt has been made in this work to give a view of the thoughts of both individuals and official Church organizations which appear not only to be representative but also to be in such a position as would give them influence over the minds of a considerable number of other Christians. The men and the organizations have been permitted to speak their own words with a minimum of commentary or bias.

Enough history has been sketched in to show the background against which the thought was expressed, but a constant effort has been made to exclude details of generally known historical events, the inclusion of which would only detract from the central purpose of the survey.

There has been an effort to maintain a balance between the two extremes of giving so little of a quotation that the thought would not be grasped, and of giving so much that the reading would become burdensome long after the thought had been made clear.

I am greatly indebted to my advisors, the Reverend Professor W. S. Tindal, O.B.E., D.D., and the Reverend Principal G. S. Duthie, for their invaluable help and careful counsel, and I wish to express a word of appreciation for the helpful interest taken in this work by Lyndesay G. Langwill, C.A., and by my minister, the Reverend John W. Currie.

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Fred R. Manthey, Jr.

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CHAPTER ONE  
1914 - 1918

THE STATE SUPREME

When the war came in August 1914 the Christians in Great Britain were surprised and shocked. On the basis of purely secular estimates, which affect Christians more than they realize, the war was unthinkable. Western men were too civilized, from a humanitarian point of view, to wage a general war upon each other. In June 1914 a European War seemed an impossibility; in August the flames had spread over the Continent.

Surprise is always revealing of character. It is the instantaneous reaction that shows the nature of a man's thoughts, his prayers, and his life values; the whole fabric of his previous inner life is revealed in an instantaneous action. So it was with the Christians in the United Kingdom, both individually and corporately, in 1914. The Christian reaction to the surprise in the late summer of that year showed how deeply imbued they were with the concept of a "righteous war," the superior demands of the State over the individual conscience, the necessity of preserving Western Christian civilisation by force of arms, if need be; and the firm belief that at times the Body of Christ needed the protection of the soldier.

As we study the pronouncements of Christian leaders in the United Kingdom we shall recognize these attitudes. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, a Christian of many and diversified gifts, a leader

of the Free Churchmen, and editor of the British Weekly was fully convinced of the righteousness of the war and of the superiority of the demands of the state over the individual conscience. The following lines are from his biography:-

"Great Britain declared war on August 4. In the British Weekly of August 6 Nicoll published a clarion leader, United We Stand, and from that hour his one absorbing care was how to secure victory. To him as a Christian patriot nothing else seriously mattered. Now, as never before, he realized his calling and election. Surely he had come into the kingdom of journalism for such a time as this." (1)

As the biographer continues to elaborate on Nicoll's attitude, we can see the burning indignation of the Old Testament in his consecration to the war. The righteousness of the cause was his theme:-

"From the first Nicoll believed and urged (1) that the War was a righteous and necessary war, that we could not shrink from it without shame unspeakable, that at any risk we were bound to enter it and to play our part; (2) that the War would be a terrible war, and possibly much prolonged; (3) that the War would tax our whole strength and resources of every kind, and that we must be prepared to answer every call made by our leaders to the very uttermost. He saw clearly, moreover, that our worst danger would be national disunion. Among Free Churchmen

multitudes were by tradition and temperament averse from fighting, and he laboured incessantly to bring home to them their sacred duty. Above any other writer he had the confidence of the Nonconformists, and no man did more vital service in rallying them unbroken to their country's call." (1)

We can deduce from this and further statements of the biographer and Nicoll himself that pacifism would be one of the dangerous elements included in the term "national disunion." In this war the claims of the state were supreme. If the individual conscience did not coincide with the demands of the army and the navy, then the conscience was diseased. There was only one point of view possible for the true Christian. Nicoll found a congenial spiritual companion in Deborah. His denunciation of the slackers was as strong if less poetical. His biographer says:-

"When Germany had outraged the common conscience of the world by openly repudiating all morality and all mercy, Nicoll found it difficult to tolerate Doublers or shirkers. If young men pleaded that their own consciences would not allow them to draw the sword in any cause whatever, he pitied them when he believed that they were sincere. But he detested the heresy of non-resistance. To him pacifism as a doctrine appeared not merely unchristian but immoral \* \* \* All through the War Nicoll warned British Free Churchmen against the subtle falsehood of pacifism." (2)

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(1) ibid. p.237

(2) ibid. p.237

In the following letter Nicoll speaks like a Judge of Israel; he wants "the heather on fire" by a powerful war-conscious leader.

from a letter to Sir George Riddell, August 30, 1914

"I should like very much to see you. The news to-day is not good. \* \* \* I find it \* \* very hard to understand why Kitchener does not call in a more emphatic way for additional reinforcements. It would make you perfectly sick to see the young men loafing about the streets of Aberdeen. The conscience and intelligence of the country have not yet been touched, and I doubt whether Asquith's speeches will set the heather on fire. Lloyd George is our man for that." (1)

Winning the war, not theological discussion on the meaning of the Cross, the Suffering Servant, or the redemptive way of Love, was the object of Nicoll - and the group of Christians whose thought on the war he so ably articulated. On September 1 most of the daily papers printed An Appeal to Young Nonconformists, by Sir William Robertson Nicoll. The message was that every Nonconformist able to fight should enlist without delay. At that time the Army of the United Kingdom was made by volunteer enlistment. The decision to take up arms was a personal decision, dictated by conscience, social pressure, or perhaps by a combination of both. Nicoll and his followers in the Church depreciated conscience when it was individualistic, but appealed to it in presenting the claims of the state. A Christian view of the war did not demand

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(1) ibid. p.240



denial of conscience, but only its suppression in certain fields of activity. It was a command that Christianity, in order to save itself at a particular point in history should cease to be individual and Protestant, and become a handmaiden of the State. The State and Christ's Body became identical in interest. At City Temple on November 10, 1914, at a meeting of Free Churchmen at which Mr. Lloyd George spoke and Nicoll presided the latter said:-

"If we had not been Christians, we should not have been in this War. It is Christ Who has taught us to fight for liberty, righteousness, and peace. It is He Who has taught us to care for small nations and to protect the rights of the weak, over whom He has flung His shield. That is why we are here to-day. The devil would have counselled neutrality, but Christ has put His sword into our hands." (1)

This is the concept of the righteous wrath of God applied to current events. Nicoll's thought about the war is epitomised in his closing statement, "Christ has put His sword into our hands." Men were to take up the sword not because they were citizens of the United Kingdom, but because they were Christians. The Christian faith demanded the arms.

"If we had not been Christians, we should not have been in this War" expresses the thought of another non-pacifist Christian leader, Principal James Denney. We see this attitude expressed in various ways in a series of letters written during the war. (2)

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(1) ibid. pp.241-242

(2) James Moffatt, ed.

from a letter to Professor Carnegie Simpson, December 13, 1914

"I don't think I can help you at all about the war. About its legitimacy for a Christian, indeed, I cannot raise any question: If a Christian cannot side in it and strike with every atom of his energy, then a Christian is a being who, so far as this world is concerned - and this is the world in which we have to do right and wrong - has committed moral suicide, and I have no interest in him. The war presents to every creature whose country is involved in it the one great moral issue of our time; and for a man to say he can do nothing in it is to vote himself out of the moral world. In spite of all Friends and Quietists, that is how I feel. It is easy to quibble and be quirky about non-resistance in the abstract, or in the relation of a Christian individual to a persecuting pagan State, but I cannot understand - and don't want to understand - the man who thinks we should just sit still and let the Germans repeat in Kent or the Lothians, what they have done in Belgium \* \* \* Of course you can't save men's souls by force; but when men have been denying the rights of the soul, and trusting to brute force, you may convince them in war that a higher force still gravitates in spite of them to the side of right and vindicates it against lawlessness. That, I hope, is what is going to happen in the present war, and it is so far in the way of reducing to one the two planes on which you suggest God acts. If there is such a thing as the Lord's battle going on in the world, I see no reason in the nature of the Christian religion why a soldier should not be in it in the

exercise of his calling. The irrationality of war as such does not move me; that is not the concrete question which the facts present for solution, and it does not give the answer to that question beforehand. We have to deal with the actual world, and the actual question is, are the Germans to be allowed to establish unresisted a lawless tyranny over Christendom? I can only say that I cannot imagine any answer to that question but the one the Allies are giving, and I have no misgiving about its Christianity - whatever unChristian consequences may go with it, as they do with the acts of all imperfect men." (1)

The emphasis on the practical considerations is evident. He does not think "we should just sit still and let the Germans repeat in Kent or the Lothians, what they have done in Belgium." A politician with little contact with Christianity could well have made that statement with little or no embarrassment. When Denney said, "The irrationality of war as such does not move me," he might also have added that the theology concerned him as little. The various ways in which Christians in the 20th century might possibly have resisted evil are not considered. That Germany had for some centuries lived in the Christian tradition seems to have evaporated as a fact to be considered by the Christians in the United Kingdom. Denney took only small notice of the pacifist position, and it was only noted for the purpose of condemnation. In his estimation the religious pacifist was a man doing nothing in a situation which demanded a

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(1) ibid. pp.175-177

a definite decision - of a certain kind.

Here is evidence of that fissure in the unity of the Christian fellowship which was to continue growing until today it has become one of the most destructive tensions in the Christian Church. The division becomes wider as the tempo of war is increased by science; increased until in 1945 the British Council of Churches has to leave its report on the Atom Bomb at the impasse of an Irresolvable Dilemma.

The logical outcome of the Christian position occupied by Principal Denney is seen in the following letters. To defeat Germany was synonymous to vindicating the moral principles of Christianity.

from a letter to Miss Wilson, December 25, 1914

"The war is so engrossing that it is difficult to think of anything else. We are doing against the Germans what in Pitt's time we had to do against France, and I hope - and believe - we will be able to do it with the same success; there must be room for more than one nation in Europe, no matter how efficient it has made itself as a war-machine." (1)

The emphasis is on the purely political. Great Britain saved Christianity from France, they are saving it again from Germany. Who will be next? Will Great Britain always be the saviour? Is war inevitable? All unanswered. The thought is to win this particular war.

from a letter to his sister, January 9, 1916

"If this sinking of unarmed passenger ships, full of women

(1) ibid. p.178

and children, is not punished as murder, there will be no justice left on earth. There is nothing I would not give or do to see it avenged." (1)

The actions of the Germans needed avenging by Christians. In the following letter Principal Denney turns sharp criticism on the conscientious objectors, and also on the law recognizing them. It is an uncompromising statement.

from a letter to Mr. Kellock on the Salonika front, April 30, 1916

"I am very heartily at one with what you say about war, internationalism and the Churches. Not that I have the slightest doubt about our duty at the present moment to fight and to beat Germany. I have no sympathy with the conscientious objector, and hold that a law, which expresses the common conscience stultifies itself when it allows any one to rule himself out by simply pronouncing the word "conscience." If I thought it expedient not to compel these people to fight, I should certainly disfranchise them and penalise them financially. But I do feel anxious about the wildly anti-Christian way in which people are talking about international relations after the war, as if to boycott Germany, and foster hatred, suspicion, and animosity by every political and economic device, were the way to the Kingdom of God. We can surely have a mind above that." (2)

There is no question about the supremacy of the demands of

(1) ibid. pp.190-191

(2) ibid. p.196

the State. After the common conscience has spoken by formulating a law, the individual conscience is to be silent. The immediate, all consuming demands of winning a war take precedence over the long traditions of Protestant Christianity itself. This Christian thought is clear; winning the war comes first.

This last letter presents, with the sharp details of a good miniature print, the conflict and harmony within the Christian community during the entire period between 1918 and 1948. On the one hand the sharp criticism and lack of understanding between the pacifist and the non-pacifist:- "I have no sympathy with the conscientious objector, and hold that a law, which expresses the common conscience stultifies itself when it allows any one to rule himself out by simply pronouncing the word 'conscience'." On the other hand the Christian unity in decrying hatred, revenge, and vindictiveness:- "But I do feel anxious about the wildly anti-Christian way in which people are talking about international relations after the war, as if to boycott Germany, and foster hatred, suspicion, and animosity by every political and economic device, were the way to the Kingdom of God. We can surely have a mind above that."

For the unity of the Church it is unfortunate that the pacifist attitude to war cannot be eliminated by having "no sympathy" with it. It has been this unsympathetic attitude which has increased the problem. The Christian pacifist, the lesser of the two numerically, has deep theological roots which are not easily removed.

It was the "absolutist" objectors (taking their position on New Testament teaching) who caused the most trouble to the State and the majority in the Church during the 1914 war. Their objection was directed at conscription in and of itself, regardless of the righteousness of the particular war or of war in general. Many objectors accepted non-combatant service without compromising their conscience, but not so the individualist objector. In the United Kingdom, when the first compulsory military service act was passed in January 1916, provision was made for exemptions "on the ground of a conscientious objection to undertaking of combatant service." Of approximately 16,000 conscientious objectors it is estimated that some 1350 refused to perform any service ancillary to the military and in consequence served repeated imprisonments at hard labour for the same offense. The conscientious objector has always stood as a most difficult challenger of the political state's claim to absolute authority over its citizens. According to some definitions, conscientious objection is itself simply a special case under nonconformity, and heresy is another aspect of the same thing. From that viewpoint a list of conscientious objectors would include most of the intellectual and moral innovators in human history. (1)

The thought of the majority of the Christian leaders began, not with theology, but with the war itself as a specific event in history. They asked first of all, "Is it righteous?" If the answer to this primary question was "Yes", then participation followed as

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(1) for a scholarly treatment of "Pacifism", "Conscientious objection", "Peace" and related topics, see appropriate headings in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences.

an inevitable result. Christians might be saddened, but they could not be irresolute. This was the attitude of Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury. His biographer says:-

"He was present \*\* at the Debate in the House of Commons, and heard Sir Edward Grey's speech. When he came back to Lambeth, sad though he was that such a tragedy should be, he was convinced that no other course was possible than that taken by the Government \* \* \* The Archbishop's own first words in the House of Lords on August 5 included an appeal to the public to abstain from acts of individual selfishness or gain, which made it harder for others to meet the difficulties 'which we should all try to face as well as may be, standing shoulder to shoulder.' " (1)

Although he was convinced that the war was justified, he felt that victory involved more than the triumph of the United Kingdom over the German nation. His biographer has this to say about the preparation of special prayers:-

"They were grave, serious prayers, breathing trust and asking for guidance for the removal of 'arrogance and feebleness' as well as for the gift of 'courage and loyalty, tranquility and self-control.' Some wished a sharper note to be struck, and the Archbishop was reproached by more than one correspondent for the want of a direct prayer for victory. To a peer who complained of this omission he replied (August 27, 1914):-

"I thank you for your letter. Such criticisms are always useful,



but I ought to tell you that if there was one request which poured in more strenuously upon me than others from all quarters when we were compiling these prayers, it was that we should abstain from identifying ourselves with the Divine Will to such an extent as to claim that God is simply on our side, and that this is a matter of course." (1)

This ideal of the wideness of God's eternal purpose was, according to the Archbishop's statement, held by at least some other Christians in the United Kingdom at the beginning of the war. It was never lost, as will be seen at the time when the peace terms are discussed, but the fury of the war, the losses in battle, and the stories of enemy cruelty as the war progressed attacked the ideal's citadel. Turning again to the story of the Archbishop's life:-

"At Whitsuntide the note of determination was far more strongly struck. It is the severity of the national ordeal that is most emphasized in the Pastoral Letter issued by the whole diocesan episcopate:-

"After 10 months of war we see more clearly than at first the greatness and the severity of the ordeal which is putting the spirit of our nation to the test \* \* \* The spirit arrayed against us threatens the very foundations of civilized order in Christendom \* \* \* It can only be decisively rolled back if we, for our part, concentrate the whole strength of body, mind, and soul which our nation, our Empire, holds." (2)

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(1) ibid. p.736

(2) ibid. p.757

For the large number of Christians believing in the validity of the "righteous war", the identification of the victory of the nation with the victory of righteousness is natural. The nation may not be free from sin, but it is the instrument that is being used to defend the cause of right in the world. Every victory on land or on the sea becomes tangible evidence that the forces of justice - and the just nation, are triumphing. We may not agree with all the imprecatory psalms, but the Hebrews were well versed in the secrets of the heart. Christians whose thought concerning war is dominated by the concept of the "righteous war" are dedicated to the victory of righteousness which means victory for their nation. The conscientious objector appears as a denial of the connection between the righteous cause and the righteous nation.

A subject which caused the Archbishop of Canterbury "keen anxiety" was the case of the conscientious objector. "A large correspondence" followed the passing of the Military Service Act, and letters from conscientious objectors, interviews with them or their friends, and representations to the Government on their behalf, took up much of the Archbishop's time during 1916 and 1917 as well as later. He did not disguise his own disagreement with their convictions, which he yet completely respected as far as the "objection to actual military service was concerned." But he found it difficult to acquiesce in the refusal by the "absolutists" of an exemption conditional on the applicant's undertaking work of national importance. Referring to these "absolutists" he said:-

" 'One of the chief difficulties', so he stated to an intimate friend of several objectors, 'relates to the refusal of so many men to do any work whatever for the nation, however far removed from military service. It is this abnegation of the ordinary obligations of citizenship which renders reasonable treatment of these men so extra-ordinarily difficult.' " (1)

Being convinced of the necessity of participation in the struggle he could not understand the refusal to help the nation, although he could understand the refusal to kill. He heard from a correspondent that the plea of a young man had been dismissed by a Tribunal on the ground that as he was a member of the Church of England, and that Church was praying for victory, it was hypocrisy for one of its members to claim a conscientious objection. The Archbishop caused the following letter to be sent by his Private Secretary (April 4, 1916):-

"You ask as a general question whether conscientious objection to Military Service is in the Archbishop's judgement incompatible with membership in the Church of England. As to this the Archbishop directs me to say that, while he cannot himself regard as reasonable or consistent with Christian common-sense the position of those who claim for themselves and their property the protection of a civilised order of society while repudiating its corresponding claim upon their service, he has learned by experience that membership of a religious community is not found to be incompatible with even the extreme vagaries of

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(1) ibid. p.818

individual opinion." (1)

The heart was understanding, but the pacifists would question whether the mind was understanding. Sincere Christian pacifists were not claiming protection for their lives or property; and rather than being indifferent to the welfare of the democratic state felt that they were serving it in the highest capacity by not submitting to what they considered autocratic demands.

It was not only the problem of the relation of the conscientious objector to the Church, but that of the relation of the Church to the conscientious objector, which found a frequent place in the letters sent to Lambeth. There was no criticism more likely "to touch Archbishop Davidson than that of lack of consideration on his part for those who had a claim to expect it." Dr. Alfred Salter, of Bermondsey, a Friend and a Socialist, wrote a letter (at the end of 1916) complaining of this to the Archbishop. He said in part:-

"I cannot believe that Your Grace can approve of this set and deliberate persecution of men on account of their religious faith, and yet I cannot learn that you have used your powerful position to put an end to it. It is a fact that, at the present minute in England, there are more men in prison for the sake of their religious convictions than at any time for centuries past. Surely this is an extraordinary comment on the attitude of organised Christianity in this country! Cannot Your Grace take steps to impress on the Government this wickedness, and

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(1) ibid. p.818

at the same time the uselessness, of attempting to force men to do that which they believe to be wrong?" (1)

Instead of answering by letter the Archbishop sent for the writer, and they "talked for an hour." In describing the interview the Archbishop wrote to a friend:-

"I tried a little to corner him as to the length to which his opinions would carry him, but he practically shrunk from nothing. I wrote down the following and read it to him and he said it expressed his views - though of course he would add other things." (following is the written statement)

"If the Government were acting properly now, according to my view it would allow any man who objects to enlistment for whatever reason to go freely on his way without restraint or interment. I say this even if such freedom involve (1) his effective efforts being used to dissuade other men who feel any qualms on the subject from taking their part in carrying out the Nation's purpose in this war; (2) his competing successfully if he can (like the men who are over military age) with the trade or occupation of those who are at a disadvantage because they have accepted service in the Army or munition works." (2)

Both Christians, Dr. Salter and Archbishop Davidson could find no common ground on which to discuss the war. The premise, that

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(1) ibid. p.819  
 (2) ibid. p.819

war could serve a righteous cause, on which the Archbishop worked, could not be considered by Dr. Salter. For him, war was inherently and absolutely evil, It could never be used for the realization of Christian objectives.

In spite of this fundamental difference they (representing the non-pacifists and pacifists) could find a certain unity in common Christian principles. A common belief in justice was one such principle. Without altering his fundamental position, the Archbishop could come to the relief of the "absolutists" when it appeared to him that vengeance or retaliation was taking the place of law. He was considerably moved by a particularly bad story Dr. Salter told him of a young Bermondsey man who, after his plea as a conscientious objector had failed, was arrested, taken to a depot, ordered to wear khaki - and on his refusal stripped, and had khaki put on him by force. The young man was to face court martial.

from a letter to the Rt. Hon. W.H. Long (December 1, 1916)

"I am not sure whether you are the person to whom I ought to write about Conscientious Objectors. I am not proposing to raise a discussion on the whole question, but from the many interviews I have had with members of the Government, and from what was said in the House of Lords on two or three different occasions, I had thought that we had now done with the question of sending these hopelessly unreasonable people to a Camp to be put under military authorities and forced into khaki and so on \* \* Please observe that my point is not the imprisonment of

these men but the placing of them under military rule. This seems to be as irrational as it is cruel." (1)

Mr. Long in reply wrote a general statement of the position under the Military Service Acts - not very sympathetic. The conclusion of his letter is an indication of public opinion at the time.

from Local Government Board, Whitehall (December 4, 1916)

"If the matter had to be discussed again, I do not think the House of Commons, or the Country, would regard as tolerable the degree of latitude which we have allowed to all who allege a conscientious objection to military service. I am pretty sure that public opinion would demand much more drastic treatment of these people than the Government have been willing to mete out to them, and that in their own interest it is not desirable to disturb the present practice." (2)

When Long said, "public opinion would demand much more drastic treatment of these people than the Government have been willing to mete out to them," he was making a pointed commentary on Christian thought concerning the war. If society at large was hostile to the Conscientious Objector there was one segment - the Society of Friends - which guided and sustained his efforts. Although religious pacifists were found in all denominations it was the Friends that gave unity and character to the Christian pacifist movement. For

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(1) ibid. p.820

(2) ibid. p.821

250 years the Friends had declared their aversion to war, and on that basis alone they would have come under the criticism of the Christians who believed that, "it is Christ Who has taught us to fight for liberty, righteousness, and peace." The distinction between pacifist and non-pacifist was considerably sharpened by the passing of the Military Service Act of 1916. Many men who refrained from making a voluntary enlistment went when the State demanded. It was only those whose reluctance was founded in Christian beliefs that defied the order of the State. The Conscription Act acted as a mighty sifter, putting men in their true categories. The Friends felt there was a complete lack of understanding for their position. (1)

"The fact is that the consciences of the few were up against the instinct of self-preservation which accompanies every war. Few people could even understand, much less sympathize with, anyone to whom the immediate call of the State was not supreme."(2)

On their side the Conscientious Objectors suffered from a certain blindness which failed to see the other side clearly. There were many non-pacifists who did not hear the call of the State as supreme, but rather heeded the supreme call of righteousness. Both groups might truly claim to hear a call higher than the State. The pacifists had the following to say about the higher call that they heard - it is John W. Graham speaking:-

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(1) see John W. Graham Conscription and Conscience, A History 1916-1919

(2) ibid. p.31



"Let me try to explain the view of those who heard a higher call in conflict with it.

Their whole souls were in revolt against war. War means blind and wholesale death and maiming of innocent men. It means the torture of wounded men lying in the open, bleeding to death through hours of deadly thirst and moaning pain. It means the foul stench of decaying flesh of the living and of the dead \* \* \* it means desolate homes, poverty, and a fatherless generation growing to manhood. It means lonely lives of women and the hopes of parents blasted. To inflict these things upon the foe is the undisguised purpose of both combatants \* \* \* to slay the strongest and degrade the race - this is the purpose and the method of war." (1)

The clash between the conscientious objectors and the Government was described by Graham as "an insoluble conflict." He did not know the answer to the problem confronting the nation, but was unshaken in his belief that war was not the remedy. Referring to the question put to the pacifists he said:-

"They were asked if they were willing to let the Germans come and do to England what they did in Belgium, and if not, why they let themselves be protected by the sacrifice of others \* \* I admit the awkwardness of the dilemma and the misfit between the humanitarian ideal and the war situation. You cannot, in fact, put a piece of new cloth on an old garment, or new wine

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(1) ibid. p.31

into old bottles. You cannot mend a machine with a piece from an entirely different machine. You cannot patch the Balance of Power with the Sermon on the Mount, nor fill the Imperialists and the exploiters of mankind with the thought that the greatest among us is he that serveth. You cannot expect a lover of his kind to act in harmony with the European system of Emperors and diplomats, war offices and spies. We must begin further back - a long way further back - if we are to make an environment to suit our ideal." (1)

It is impossible for any good to come from war. One war leads to the next in endless succession. The way of the pacifist is the way to eliminate war. Such was the thought on war expressed by the pacifists through their spokesman.

"It may be replied, 'That is all very well, and it does not matter much, because you are so few, but how if you became a large fraction of the nation? Then we should fail before the German arms.'

"My reply is that then there would have been no war. One cannot imagine one nation mainly pacifist and the others military, among the Great Powers, who have, in fact, a common civilization, and are essentially of one culture. The nations move broadly together. The only hope for the world is in this very kind of conscientious feeling, and in the wide extension of unflinching Peace principles." (2)

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(1) ibid. pp.33-34

(2) ibid. p.34

The quotation which follows shows the sharp contest between Christians who saw nothing but evil in all war, including the one in Europe, and those who saw war as an instrument used by God in defending a righteous cause.

"Do we substitute justice for injustice, righteousness for unrighteousness, by the methods of war? We let loose a torrential flood of unrighteousness in the process \* \* \* It has generally been a transference of power, not a moral purification, which has closed hostilities." (1)

The decisiveness of the pacifist position even in the face of the realities of war is shown in the following statement made by Dr. Alfred Salter published a few weeks after war broke out. Months before conscription came it acted as a standard to which a number of Christians set themselves to conform. It was one of the formative statements of this period.

"There is a great place waiting in history for the first nation that will dare to save its life by losing it, that will dare to base its national existence on righteous dealing, and not on force, that will found its conduct on the truths of primitive Christianity, and not on the power of its army and navy. And there is a great place waiting in history for the first political party that will dare to take the same stand and will dare to advocate the Christian policy of complete disarmament and non-resistance to alien force. No nation and no political party (and for that matter no Church either) is at present

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(1) ibid. p.45

prepared to do that, although they all, more or less, profess to be Christian. The inference is irresistible that the nations of Christendom, the orthodox political parties, and the organized Churches believe in the Religion of Materialism, and not in God \* \* \*

"Whatever is right is best. That is the first axiom of faith in God. Best now and best hereafter, best from the point of view of expediency and tactics as well as best from the point of view of ultimate results, if only we could see far enough and clearly enough. If 'Thou shall not kill' is right, it is also best, both for individuals and the nation. Because I believe in the final reign and triumph of right, whatever happens, I believe that all killing is murder and is wrong, even in defensive wars, so called, and I will not stain my conscience with blood by going to war myself or by urging anyone else to go.

What is the result of such a policy? If I refuse to fight or support measures of defence, then I may get shot by the enemy as an act of war or I may be shot by the authorities of my own State as guilty of treason. Very well. I say deliberately that I am prepared to be shot rather than kill a German peasant with whom I have no conceivable quarrel. I will do nothing to kill a foe, directly or indirectly, by my own hand or by proxy. So help me, God. NEVER! (1)

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(1) ibid.

There could be no sharper contrast than to place beside this statement of Salter, the war-time thought of a strong non-pacifist like P.T.Forsyth. Forsyth's contention is especially significant because he attacks the pacifists in their stronghold; in theology. He asks:-

"Can a patriotism which does not stop short of killing men on due occasion be compatible with the idea of humanity and the love of mankind? This is a question to which common sense promptly answers, No. But the reply is so obvious that it is suspicious. It was the answer given in the age of common sense and palpable logic, the non-ethical, non-historical age of the eighteenth century. The question arose with the rise of the enthusiasm of humanity amid an Illumination ruled by rationalism and sentiment. But the theoretical answer was very different from the practical. It was in France that this cosmopolitanism worked out to a practical conclusion, where it appeared with that fine tenderness to life marking the Revolution. A cosmopolitanism which dissolved nationality, and flouted historical tradition or obligation, revealed its true moral quality there, and the sentimentalism of the age followed its usual course, and ended in heartlessness." (1)

There is no doubt in his mind that war can be waged in a righteous cause or that such a war can bring benefits to mankind. He makes this assumption in a phrase and hastens on:-

"The first contribution on a social scale to the development

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(1) P.T.Forsyth The Christian Ethic of War p.5

of the race is not economic programmes or ideals, but national conscience and human duty - even if the room for it has to be won and held by war. Only, the war shall be under moral conditions; it shall not affront the conscience of mankind; it shall be war for righteousness, against the aggression of those nations that publicly discard moral or humane control." (1)

A factor which makes the pacifist and the non-pacifist positions so difficult to reconcile is the use of similar terms with absolutely opposite meanings. Salter (the Friend) wanted the nation to serve God - by non-resistance. Forsyth wants the nation to serve God too - by becoming an effective rod of chastisement. Speaking of this duty he says:-

"The express repudiation of national morality by one nation changed the whole complexion of the present war for Christian men, and raised its moral significance. It enlisted that nation in the service of the kingdom of spiritual evil under the prince of this world. And it converted the chastisement of that nation into a service of the Prince of Peace. It made it an obedience to the will of God, and a loyalty to that Kingdom of righteousness which was the first charge of an atoning Christ to meet. He was a Christ actively atoning and not passively enduring, a Christ at once the victim and, by His active obedience, the agent of the judgment of God on earth. He so took the judgment that He exercised a greater judgment - as we hope by our obedient suffering

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(1) ibid. p.5

in this war to be the agents, not wholly unworthy, of the judgment upon unrighteousness among nations.

"Christian love in international form means the desire and purpose to see each man and people enjoy the free and humane life they have a right to. Twice already England has (we believe in God's name) saved this liberty and justice for the world - once from the Armada, and once from Napoleon \* \* \* She is called to do it once more - to serve God's Kingdom in history, as she has the right to call each citizen to serve her." (1)

In this system of Christian thought concerning war there is no place for the exercise of the individual conscience after the war has been declared righteous. Is it the Church or the Government that declares the war righteous? In the case of an unrighteous war the majority would become conscientious objectors. According to Forsyth, Christians must resist through the Church. This makes the organized Church the ultimate authority in decisions concerning war.

"The question arises how far those are justified in Christian ethic whose peace principles would lead them to a passive resistance in the event of compulsory service. Passive resistance is a dangerous weapon, far too dangerous for the young and crude; and the more so that it is almost impossible to prevent its use by improper persons.

"Passive resistance to the State for Christian reasons is less a matter of individual and private conscience than of duty

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(1) ibid. p.6

on the Church." (1)

This doctrine of the supremacy of the Church over the State in deciding the righteousness of a war, means that the demand upon the Christian citizens to take up arms ultimately comes from the Church. They must wait until the Church has spoken. Forsyth gives some principles on which the Church should make its judgment.

"The foundation of the Church is the Gospel, as regenerative for the soul, it is not the Sermon on the Mount, as directive for conduct. The teaching was guidance for those who already were new made by the Gospel, and it is only practicable in any shape by those who possess that supernatural power. It expresses the principle between brothers and not mere neighbours, between Christians it has not nations in view as the Cross has; and it can hold between nations only in so far as they are composed of real Christians\* \* \*

" \* \* \* when it is a question not of Christian Gospel and worship but of Christian ethic, i.e., of the application of the moral principle of the Christian Cross to an actual and practical situation, then, since the centrality and certainty are less in this region, since so much depends on our facts and our judgment, there is not the same right or duty to resist a discussed and deliberate ordinance of the State concerning its life. For the State is an ethical institute of God for us as much as the family is, and it is in its way equally, though less

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(1) ibid. p.64



obviously, powerful for our moral growth. In this regard it is inferior only to the Church." (1)

In questions such as war, the Church and the State are the two partners in the decision, the individual drops from the situation. God uses nations in accomplishing his plans in history. War is God's judgment on the nations.

"God, indeed, did more than judge the world in Christ's Cross; but He did judge it. Did He not use Assyria on Israel? \* \* \* did He not use Rome against Jerusalem in A.D. 70? Was there no connection between the rejection of Christ and the destruction of Zion? Did Christ, as the providence of His own Kingdom, not summon then the legions it did not suit Him to ask for to avert the Cross? And religion may sympathise with the power, however imperfect, that uses force to arrest wickedness and defend liberty." (2)

We might ask where could the pacifists and the non-pacifists find common ground for discussion in the above statement. The picture of Christ summoning His legions in 70A.D. would close the subject immediately. In this contention it is not correct to assume that one group depends upon the Old Testament and the other upon the New. Although the teachings of Jesus contain such comfortable words as the parable of the Lost Sheep, and the story of the Prodigal Son, there are also stern words of judgment about those who reject the

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(1) ibid. pp.66-69  
 (2) ibid. pp.87-88

appeal of His Father in Heaven. There are frequent references in the New Testament to judgment and punishment. The Sermon on the Mount tells of judgment, and Gehenna, of the broad way that leads to destruction.

Jesus often spoke of the judgments that would come upon the wicked. He told His disciples that when He went away He would send the Holy Spirit who should convict the world of sin and of judgment. With regard to the rejection of Himself and His message, He said that the words He had spoken would judge men at the last day. The Apostle Peter also tells us that, although Christ did not Himself personally resent injuries, yet He committed Himself to God who would judge righteously those who had sinned against Him. The judgments of God would, however, remain although mercy was also working, to save men from them, and among these judgments was the judgment of war. Our Lord actually declared that because the Jews had rejected Him they would suffer the loss of peace, and they would inevitably suffer the extreme horrors of war. (Luke 19:41-44)

Christ also spoke of immediate judgments of death for sin which were falling upon people around Him. When Pilate mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices Jesus said that they were not sinners above all Galileans, and He added that His hearers would likewise perish unless they repented. And the eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell were not, He said, sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. But all who did not repent of their sins would likewise perish. (Luke 13:1-5) These were the facts by which

a large group of Christians in the United Kingdom were led to believe that God used war, and was in fact using <sup>this</sup> war as an instrument for the accomplishment of His purposes. This thought is developed by a Christian thinker of deep insight, John Oman. He described the war as a kind of apocalyptic.

" \* \* \* war is ever a kind of apocalyptic with its carelessness of our civilisation and all its belongings and its reckless disregard of life and all its securities. Ancient judgments vanish like ancient treasures, and ideas men had thought eternal are discovered to be only the fashion of a departing time. And when this war is over a new age will be upon us also, a better or a worse according as we bear ourselves in the material and the spiritual conflict, but certainly another age, and those of us who are not prepared to reconsider all our judgments and help to build a new heaven and a new earth will not be able to retain the old, but will only wander in the new time as shadowy ghosts of a vanished past. Nothing less may finally suffice than a revision of all our judgments of life and duty, and in seeking a right judgment of the war and of the calls which rise out of it we ought to realise that it is inseparable from that larger task, for we are face to face not merely with a new event but with a new age." (1)

Oman is looking into the future, or perhaps it would be better to

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(1) John Oman The War and Its Issues University Press Cambridge  
pp.4-5 1915

say peering into the past with a penetrating glance. Victory in war is no guarantee of Christian advance. It is an opportunity which may be lost as well as gained. This is in sharp contrast to the thought that if the German nation could be defeated in the war then liberty and Christian freedom would naturally, automatically flourish as a result. Oman sees possibilities; no guarantees. According to him there were three judgments of the war necessary and possible - the political, the historical, and the religious. Speaking of the religious judgment he said:-

"The third, the religious judgment, is even less in request, especially among some religious people who might have been most expected to seek it. A few professors of various subjects have been led to express themselves with less passion if not more impartiality, and a few of the younger and less ecclesiastically minded laymen and of the more heterodox and unsubmitive kind of cleric are deeply exercised in mind; but if one were to judge by such outward manifestations as the tone of the religious press, resolutions at ecclesiastical gatherings, sermons on the war, occasional deliverances of persons prominent in the religious world and by the frequency with which in private gatherings the religious official is the most belligerent person present, no kind of problem exists for the religious mind to solve. To defend the political justice of our cause, not without satisfaction that a good thousand years of Christianity have passed over our enemies in vain, would appear to be the sole religious task. And the sounder the orthodoxy the less the sense of any possibility

of conflict between war and Christianity or any sense that the causes of the war may be deeper than politics and be in the idolatry of riches and pleasure, and private disregard for obligations, and blindness to the claims of poverty and need. That our whole conventional Christianity may be going up in flames with other results of man's labour is so little feared, that part of this warlike zeal is derived from the hope that, among other results, we are to build again Zion after the old external, traditional, outwardly visible and prosperous institutional form, and the liveliest hope of all is to see German theology perish in the flames with German Imperialism. Any further religious judgment we seem to be expected to postpone to the time when we shall again have 'calm of mind, all passion spent.' " (1)

Is victory possible without victory in arms? Most non-pacifist Christians in 1914-1918 said "No." Oman said, "Yes." Christianity could be triumphant in political and national defeat. The fortunes of Christianity were distinct from any particular State.

"The sceptre of Christ's kingdom is the cross of obedience and service, the giving of the life, and not the defending of our own or the taking of another's.

"In that case no Christian can accept the method of war as justifiable in itself or its victories as by themselves of decisive value, or even admit in war more than a stern negative

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(1) ibid. p.9

necessity which only a better victory won by a better method could redeem from evil and turn to good. No situation, therefore, ever could arise in which the practical tasks of conflict should suppress and not evoke thought, and in which anyone, speaking in the name of Christ, would have no higher, no prior concern than victory in arms and no task except to stand on the heights like Moses with uplifted hands and bless the people who fight in the valley. The task of the church and, therefore, of all particular churches must rather be to contend for such a victory of the spirit as would make us triumph if necessary in defeat as Israel and Greece have done before us." (1)

In speaking of individual duty, Oman does not give a recruiting speech or suggest that it is the function of the citizens of the United Kingdom to save western civilization. He emphasises individual responsibility for maintaining social ideals in a realistic manner. Christians cherish their ideals, and cannot live in an imperfect world as though those ideals were already realized. Each Christian must take his responsibility as a citizen of the world as it is. He (Oman) does not use the terms pacifist and non-pacifist, but his meaning is clear.

"A Christian is a member of a society which represents the kingdom of God. That, at least, means a rule not established by force, and a peace victory in war cannot give nor defeat take away. And he belongs to it by faith, which means he has rejoiced to see for himself that to the methods of the kingdom of God all might ultimately belongs." (2)

(1) ibid. p.15

(2) ibid. p. 23

"But if to be a Christian means to belong to a kingdom the rule of which is love and the sceptre of which is the cross of sacrifice, does that mean he is not implicated at all in the earthly kingdom or at all responsible for its maintenance? Granting that only the defects of our state make war necessary for maintaining righteousness, can he wholly deny responsibility for these defects? And clearly the one thing no one may ignore is responsibility." (1)

Although Oman is one with the large section of Christians who believed that pacifism was shirking responsibility, he was not so general in his condemnation of non-resistance as many others were. He said that non-resistance would not be practical in 1914-1918 because of specific reasons, but he did not condemn the principle.

"The answer manifestly cannot be given merely by our attitude to war. The religious judgment has always been that it depends upon our whole relation to the social order - war being only an acute illness arising from our whole method of competition, an illness which at least is some times better than chronic disease. Hence, however valuable its doctrine of non-resistance by arms may have been to stir reflection, a society which has accumulated by another type of warfare the largest treasure upon earth any similar body of persons ever possessed, treasure of the kind which most wars arise to protect, cannot have faced the real problem. The zeal of its members for social righteousness alone makes their

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(1) ibid. p.33

position worthy of esteem. The central issue is that raised so clearly by John Woolman, one of the most Christlike of modern men - the evil of strengthening the hands of the oppressor, for to enslave others is always an acuter opposition to the whole Christian order than fighting others, unless we are merely fighting to enslave them." (1)

He definitely takes the position that war is the lesser of two evils. There is no ring of glory in it, but rather a sorrowful recognition that man lives in an imperfect world. Although Oman's statement lacks the fire of William Robertson Nicoll's the conclusion is the same; every man should answer the call of the nation.

"To make life an end in itself and to make a man an end in himself are things so different that every good by which a man's soul is saved must be valued above life; and freedom, the condition of truly possessing a soul, no man can ever have except by setting it above life.

"That is not to hold life a light possession or war a small evil, but it is to hold that there are worse evils than war - moral surrenders against which we must contend even to bleed, and it may be the blood of others as well as our own. No mere material good can be sufficient justification, for all that a man has he will give for his life, but justice and liberty are spiritual blessings which never have been maintained at less hazard than life. Other ways of staking our lives we may see to be better

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(1) ibid. p.34



than war, but will that necessarily determine that we stand aside when our nation is sacrificing itself for these blessings in the way of war? Even though we see that war is an evil to be abolished and though we hope for the stage in our national life when we shall have developed such spiritual powers of resisting evil as to make war mere folly and crime, when no Christian would ever think of engaging in it, would that settle our duty at the present time?" (1)

Oman seems to be saying to the pacifists, " You have the ultimate truth, but now is not the proper time to put it into practice." He was pointing the way to the future. It was the conviction that war was an evil to be abolished by Christian action; that such spiritual powers of resisting evil could be developed "as to make war mere folly and crime" that gave impetus to the League of Nations movement that followed the cessation of hostilities. The League idea could never have appealed to Christians as it did if they had been dominated by the feeling that war was inevitable.

In the following four points, Oman anticipates the spirit from which the League of Nations drew its strength.

"1. We should never accept war as eternally necessary. While we recognise that we shall always be subjected to its discipline till we have provided a moral substitute for it by accepting the far austerer discipline of the service of love, we should have no part in the praise of its benefits, as if the creator of

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(1) ibid. p.35

a war might be regarded as a public benefactor." (1)

"2. We must never consent to fight merely for a material triumph. If a Christian can engage in a war at all, he must be sure that spiritual issues are at stake, and while he would not have his cause defeated if any sacrifice would enable it to win, he must realise that victory might mean defeat and defeat victory in the higher warfare of the spirit, and that any true cause of freedom or righteousness cannot ultimately be defeated by them who can only kill the body." (2)

"3. We can have no part in any gospel of hate, as if at the present time the Germans were mere fiends in human shape. We may have to recognise that they have adopted a cause for which they must suffer, but we should do so in sorrow, as a judge who must condemn, yet who would be no judge did he condemn with a light heart or in the heat of passion." (3)

"4. We should recognise that a peace to be abiding must be established in righteousness and a sense of mutual benefit and good-will." (4)

He leaves no doubt that war itself brings no Christian blessings when he says:-

"Let this war leave us with the old idolatries and we shall in the end, when the shadow has lifted from our spirits, have

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(1) ibid. p.39  
 (2) ibid. p.40  
 (3) ibid. pp.40-41  
 (4) ibid. p.41

gained nothing; but if the terrible disasters to the things seen teach us true reverence for the unseen forces of truth and righteousness we shall find the price not too great, for we shall have entered on a higher warfare in which we stake everything on God's will being done on earth as in heaven \* \* \* "(1)

Turning now to the war-time thought of an official Christian group representing the United Free Church of Scotland we find a combination of two elements which have previously appeared in the thought of others. First there is a clear statement designating one nation as the aggressor; the evil which the United Kingdom is called upon to withstand. Secondly there is a call to repentance and a warning against hatred; "Let us pray also, as Christ our Master has taught us, for those who are now our enemies \* \*" The following are excerpts from the Report of the Committee appointed to prepare a Pastoral Address to the People of the Church on the War during a dark period of the conflict, May 1915.

"The General Assembly, under a deep impression of the solemn circumstances in which they meet, desire to bow beneath the hand of the Most High and to put their trust anew in God. They call upon all members of the Church to face the crisis with which we are confronted as men who believe in God and whose hope is in Him. The Assembly give thanks to God that, amid all that is sorrowful and distressing, the nation is sustained and united by a clear conviction of the righteousness of its cause. We did not

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(1) ibid. p.129

draw the sword willingly, but only when every effort for the maintenance of peace had been exhausted. We have no selfish interest to secure in the war, but are fighting only to uphold justice and good faith in international relations, to right grievous wrongs which have been inflicted on the innocent, and to overthrow a standing menace to the peace of the world. We rejoice that such a cause has rallied every race within the Empire, and that our best and bravest sons have given themselves to it with a courage and a self-sacrificing devotion beyond all praise \* \* \*

"The one thing we cannot afford is to be without God in the world. Let us pray for victory for our righteous cause. Let us entreat Him who alone is wise and strong to grant us, if it be His holy will, a speedy and happy deliverance from our troubles. Let us be instant in intercession.

"Let us pray also, as Christ our Master has taught us, for those who are now our enemies, guarding our hearts against the spirit of hatred and retaliation, giving thanks that deeper than any cause of strife there are ties of humanity and religion which cannot be destroyed, and beseeching God that in His good time they and we, chastened and purified by the fire of suffering, may be found ready to be fellow-workers in the cause of God and man \* \* \*

"More than ever in these sorrowful days the Church must witness to the gospel of reconciliation to God in Christ. More

than ever we must find in our Christian faith that spirit of brotherhood, of sacrifice, and of mutual service, without which the estrangements within our social life cannot be overcome. More than ever we must let the ideal of a Christian nation inspire all our public action alike in external and internal affairs." (1)

There is balance in this report; " \* \* the nation is sustained and united by a clear conviction of the righteousness of its cause" - " \* \* beseeching God that in His good time they and we, chastened and purified by the fire of suffering, may be found ready to be fellow-workers." Or again, "Let us pray for victory for our righteous cause" - "Let us pray also, as Christ our Master has taught us, for those who are now our enemies." The balance however was within one group of Christians only. It did not indicate that the line between the pacifist and the non-pacifist groups had been obliterated. If this lack of rapprochement was noticeable in the Special Committee it was even more evident in the General Assembly itself. In the record of the Proceedings and Debates there is a valuable transcript picturing the extent of the pacifist and non-pacifist conflict within the Church in time of war. It is a record of the feelings of the moment; given in the heat of debate without the polishing of formal written or spoken discourse. This debate took place at the General Assembly of May 1915 because of one section in the Report anent Present Situation as affected by the War. The section in question appeared to give some approval to the position taken by the conscientious objectors.

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(1) United Free Church of Scotland Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly Edinburgh, May 1915

The debate vividly portrays Christian thoughts on war. The transcript follows:-

(Mr. W. R. Thomson, Bellshill had moved an amendment asking the Assembly to withhold its approval from the paragraph on page 8 of the Report)

The record follows:-

"The Report covered wide ground. It contained a doctrine of the Church, a treatise on social philosophy and a section on the relation of the State to the individual. It was in this last section that the paragraph occurred to which he took exception. To deal with the question of conscience to-day was to deal with it in relation to war. It was impossible to get away from that fact. The war had raised a moral issue from which they could not escape. For the Assembly to approve of such a paragraph in such an hour would lead to misunderstanding. There were people who would say, 'Oh, the great Assembly of the United Free Church has cast the mantle of its approval over those who have refused their assistance to the nation in the day of war.' They dared not run the risk of such a misunderstanding. The mistake of the paragraph was that it confused the case of the relation of the individual to the individual with that of the relation of a group or society to its members. Undoubtedly if he had a neighbour whose views were opposed to his own, it was his duty to tell him that he thought him wrong \* \*, to do all in his power to persuade him. But he had no right to seek to put that man to any disadvantage, or to lay any burdens or disabilities upon him. It was different in the case of society.

A body had to safeguard its existence, and to defend the very purposes for which it had come into being \* \* \*

"On many questions the Church must exercise a wise toleration. But when ultimate issues were raised she must safeguard her very existence. Was it not the same with the State? The State was not merely a secular institution. It was a spiritual entity \* \* \* When a State was in imminent danger, when all that it stood for, the precious human, the spiritual interests were threatened, could it permit members to refuse their assistance without putting them to some disadvantage? \* \* \* Had the war raised one of those ultimate issues \* \* \* which it was impossible to avoid? \* \* \* He would go no further than the Report of the Committee for such a judgment. It called on them to endure, 'so that freedom and truth and goodwill among the nations may not perish from the earth.' Could any judgment be stronger or more solemn than that? If so, could they come within a thousand miles of throwing their mantle of approval over those who refused to help in maintaining that freedom? (Loud applause) \* \* \* He moved that the Assembly decline to approve of the paragraph on page 8 of the Report beginning 'Similarly with regard to the claims of the individual conscience,' on the ground that in present circumstances such a paragraph is liable to be misunderstood."

"MR. DAVID WOODSIDE, Glasgow, seconded, and said that it seemed to him the whole paragraph was wrong. It had been brought before the House, and they were asked to approve of it. If it received the imprimatur of the Assembly, then the impression would go

abroad that the House sympathised with the view expressed \* \* \* this paragraph contained most objectionable teaching. Indeed, it seemed to him that the whole thing resolved itself into pure anarchy. The last clause was most assuredly Bolshevism. (Applause) The ordered society of life would be left at the mercy of the individual, and surely this was the sheerest Bolshevism. It was suggested that if a man could only prove his sincerity he might do anything \* \* \* The State had dealt very tenderly with the conscientious objector, and he thought that there was no need that the Assembly should attempt to make the State more foolishly tender still. (Applause)"

"MR. CHARLES ROBSON, Alloa, moved the following addition to the deliverance:-

"The General Assembly, recognising that there is a prevalent feeling in many parts of the country that the clauses in the Military Service Acts which provide for the exemption of conscientious objectors are not being interpreted by all the tribunals in the same sense, resolve to memorialise the Government to issue fresh instructions to the tribunals which will make it absolutely clear that in every case in which the genuineness of the conscientious objection is proved the objector is entitled to exemption under the Military Service Acts. And the Assembly furthermore asks the Government to review afresh, in the light of such instruction, the case of all conscientious objectors who at present are suffering imprisonment for conscience' sake."



"Speaking to his motion, Mr. Robson hoped that the Report would receive from the Church the place it deserved, and paid his earnest and solemn tribute to the courage and the sacrifice and the noble idealisms of youth \* \* \* there were many in prison, suffering for conscience' sake, many who, but for the failure of tribunals to uphold the law, would never have been so treated \* \* \* He was not now pleading for the right of conscientious objections to military service. He only asked that the protection which the law of the realm accorded to the genuine conscientious objector be given to him. Absolute exemption had been granted to some 400, while from two to three times that number equally deserving exemption were in prisons. After alluding to the cases of such men as Stephen Hobhouse, Maurice Rowntree, and Malcolm Sparkes, he went on to say that at the present moment sons of their own Church are thus suffering - probationers, students, and members of the Church. There was Donald Grant, M.A., who represented in Scotland the British Student Movement, and he also was in prison for conscience' sake. And only this week a young man of their Church had finished his third term of imprisonment - first, 112 days in Wormwood Scrubs, then 112 days in the Calton Gaol, and after that a year in the same place, and now he anticipated a further court-martial \* \* Could the Church stand silent or apart here? They might not approve of the conscientious objector; some of them might even yet fail to understand him; but could they refuse to ask the Government to grant to him the protection which the law had conerved to him?"

"MR. WILLIAM NICOLSON, Dundee, Seconded. He said that all viewed with feelings of gratification the fact that when the Government felt compelled to conscript the manhood of the country for military service, it showed itself ready to give due weight to the objections of conscience. No other country in the world had recognised the rights of conscience with the same generosity as Great Britain \* \* \* He did not wish the Church to throw her mantle over the conscientious objector who did not ask any mantle to be thrown over him, but simply asked that while this law was on the statute book, they should see that it be administered justly."

"MR. R. M. ADAMSON, Ardrossan, supported Mr. Thomson's amendment on the ground that the paragraph which he proposed to delete would give encouragement in some directions to the conscientious objector. There had been no lack in their Church of tolerance for the conscientious objector; but they found that there were men who, in the name of conscience, were expressing views so contrary to the most solemn and conscientious judgments of the Church, that they had been perplexing their members and breaking up congregations \* \* \* The false, unreasonable and, in some cases, lunatic views of these for whom the last speakers had pled roused the gorge - (applause) - and filled not only men but women too with moral loathing and spiritual disgust. (Applause) The sooner some people realised this the better. It was nothing to them - and, strange to say, it was amongst young men that this mental dry-rot appeared - that throughout all the countries of the Allies there was hardly a mind of the first order found to share their views. Considerations of

that kind made no impression upon their colossal conceit. He therefore hoped that nothing would be done that might seem to weaken the Church's clear and unequivocal judgment regarding this righteous war. (Applause)"

"MR. JAMES BARR, Govan \* \* \* Mr. Thomson had spoken of the cause for which they were fighting, but surely they were fighting for the rights of conscience, for the freedom of man as of nations, and against the overpowering of individuals by the State. (Applause) The objector had been spoken of as if he were guilty of treason to the State, and must suffer accordingly; but, at least, the State had not so treated him, but had provided exemption for him \* \* \* In passing of the Act it was intimated again and again, on behalf of the Government, that there was no intention of throwing men into gaol for honest convictions against military service; and yet, on 28th February last, Sir George Cave intimated, in the House of Commons, that there had been 5000 conscientious objectors in prison from time to time. There was a cumulative case that there had been harsh and illegal treatment. They had Conservative statesmen, like Lord Henry Bentinck, declaring that their treatment of them was 'consistent neither with humanity nor the law.' "

"DR. JOHN A. HUTTON, Glasgow, \* \* \* As for Mr. Thompson's amendment, he proposed to vote for it, though aware how much could be said on the other side \* \* \* He had always wished that the country could have done without the help of conscientious objectors. The war would pass; by the help of God they would be victorious; the

great things for which they had fought would be secured; and then all those men of military age who had been guilty of the sin of neglecting opportunities would have the terrible responsibility of having to live with themselves. (Applause) In the days to come it might be the delicate spiritual task of some of them to help these young fellows not to think too meanly and tragically of themselves."(1)

In the vote the deliverance was carried against Mr.W.R.Thomson's amendment. Mr.Robson's addendum was rejected by a large majority, which shows that a "large majority" of the General Assembly did not wish to go on record as seeking to further the interests of the conscientious objectors, even to the extent of asking that the existing law be administered impartially. Considering the tenor of some of the speeches, there is some basis for the feeling that the government was more tender toward the religious objectors than were some of their Christian brothers. It is interesting to speculate how the Draft Act might have been written if it had been framed by an ecclesiastical rather than by a political parliament. No Jeremiahs to weaken the arms of the nation were wanted.

A representative of the Church of England, Bishop Gore, believed that Jeremiah was useful in Jerusalem, but that there was no need for any modern counterpart because the issues in the war were so clear. He took it for granted that the nation was all of one mind in believing that it was their duty to engage in the war. He did not sense any <sup>d</sup>cléavage in the Christian fellowship because of the pacifist

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(1) ibid.

and non-pacifist dichotomy. Speaking of the Christian's war-time duties he said:-

"The call of the war has stricken this nation into a sense of unity and fellowship, the like of which neither we nor our forefathers of many generations have experienced. I may take it for granted, I dare say, that we are all of one mind in believing that it was our duty to engage in this war, and, having engaged in it, to see it through with all the concentration of forces which we can command.

"\* \* \* apart from our common duty as citizens in this emergency, there are duties which fall specially upon the church and the clergy, and which come home to us without any effort - I mean the duty of organizing the force of persistent corporate prayer \* \* \* the duty of giving the authorities - civil, military, and naval - all the support which we can in our parishes; the duty of supplying chaplains for the navy and army \* \* \* " (1)

Although there is no doubt in Bishop Gore's mind about the duty of Christians to be in the war, there is doubt about the sufficiency of patriotic emotion. Stated in a little different way than by John Oman, it is the same idea that victory in arms is not enough for the Christian to desire. The victory must be spiritual as well as material. No good will come from the war itself. His full statement follows:-

"Of these and the like duties we are constantly being reminded. We

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(1) Charles Gore The War and the Church and Other Addresses pp.2-3

are not likely to forget them. But meanwhile there is another duty much harder to fulfil, a duty which cannot be postponed, the duty of seeking to interpret the purpose of God at this tremendous crisis of the world's history, and of organizing in the nation a common mind among those who above all things are anxious to know our Lord's will, and so to prepare that <sup>the</sup> issue of the war may serve the purposes of the kingdom of God. It can hardly be necessary for me to remind you of the great difficulty of fulfilling this duty. The thoughts and feelings which patriotism inspires legitimately fill our minds and imaginations. But this is not enough. I am sure that if we simply yield ourselves to these thoughts and feelings we shall fall disastrously short of what our Lord would have us think. The Bible is full of patriotic emotion; but even more conspicuously the Bible is full of a great warning against the sufficiency of patriotism, against the sufficiency of the thoughts natural to flesh and blood. Some of the most conspicuous figures in the Bible, like Jeremiah, are called to the truly terrible vocation of appearing as unpatriotic, as men who 'weaken the hands of the men of war,' who 'seek not the welfare of their people, but the hurt.' (Jer.38)

"And our Lord Himself required His immediate disciples - Simon the Zealot amongst them - to accept so fully the doom upon their nation as being God's inevitable judgment, that they could await, without an effort to avert it, the ruin of their city and temple, and watch the approach of the day of disaster with an awful joy: 'Then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth

nigh.' Personally I can conceive of not trial greater than, in an intensely patriotic nation, to be called to play what would be regarded by the nation as an unpatriotic part. Mercifully no such call is on us to-day. We can wholeheartedly yield ourselves to the stream of patriotic enthusiasm which is sweeping so mightily through the nation." (1)

In these remarks is implied both a commendation and a denunciation of conscientious objection. If the nation is wicked, so sinful that God has doomed it to destruction by war, then conscientious objection is in accord with the Will of God. It is the duty of Christians. However, if the nation is righteous in its war, then any objection is condemned. Objection is not condemned in principle, it is condemned on the basis of each particular circumstance.

In contrast is the condemnation of objection because it is in opposition to the will of the majority. The law, made in accordance with the conscience of the majority, becomes stultified if it allows conscientious objection. Such was the opinion of Principal Denney. These two forms of criticism, although fundamentally different, are often confused.

Continuing with Bishop Gore we find that when the cause is righteous it is proper for the Christian to pray for victory for his own nation and defeat of the enemy, although they must always maintain a certain detachment.

"\* \* \* we may depend upon it that we shall not realize God's purpose and correspond with it, unless we, professing Christians,

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(1) ibid. pp.4-5



are making a great effort for detachment of mind. We are praying with passionate desire for the success of our arms - for the defeat, if it be God's will, of Germany and Austria. But suppose the end attained \* \* \* victory and the spirit of victory do not commonly put a nation into correspondence with God." (1)

"We will seek to live, with special alertness of mind, at the feet of Him who said to the first of His apostles in an hour when He was the subject of the grossest physical violence, 'Put up the sword into the sheath.' It is our privilege in every way to support our soldiers and sailors in a just war, and to encourage recruiting, and to bless the recruits, and to pray for God's blessing on our arms, bringing to bear upon the war the whole power of organized prayer, public and private. But it is our duty also to remember the perils of military enthusiasm, and to keep our minds full of the ideals and laws of the Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth, so that there may be a steady and quiet and constant counterpoise to the emotions of war." (2)

Bishop Gore's remarks illustrate some of the ramifications of the idea of a "just war." If the war in which he is engaged is righteous then the Christian is not embarrassed to repeat the words of Jesus, 'Put up the sword into the sheath,' and in the next breath say, 'It is our privilege in every way to support our soldiers and sailors in a just war, and to encourage recruiting, and to bless the recruits, and to pray for God's blessing on our arms.' This is one of the reasons why the pacifist group of Christians will countenance

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(1) ibid. p.6  
 (2) ibid. p.63



absolutely no war. They believe that once the adjective "just" is placed beside the word "war" that the scope of actions can be enlarged indefinitely.

Another note that can be detected is the depreciation of the prophetic function in time of war. The great eighth century prophets of the Old Testament were generally preaching against the majority opinion. They cried doom and destruction when the political leaders were trying their utmost to stave off disaster from barbarians as cruel as the Germans were painted to be in 1914-1918. History has proven the prophets right and the political leaders wrong. However, in the war years there was such a certainty of truth that troublesome prophets were not wanted in the midst of the congregation.

Up to this point the Christian thoughts on war have been in the prose form, but the war period also had its poets. Two with the most popular appeal (we may assume they were appreciated by many Christians) were Rupert Brooke, the soldier-poet, and Studdert Kennedy ("Woodbine Willie"), one of the most famous chaplains. The following selections reflect some of the attitudes that have already been evident in Christian thought.

#### THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;

A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,  
A body of England's breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home,

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Rupert Brooke

The next selection extols the opportunities of service in the righteous cause. It comes very near thankfulness for the coming of the war and the attendant opportunities.

I. Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,  
 And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping,  
 With hand made sure, clear eye, and sharpened power,  
 To turn, as swimmers into cleanness leaping,  
 Glad from a world grown old and cold and weary,  
 Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,  
 And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,  
 And all the little emptiness of love!

Oh! we, who have known shame, we have found release  
 there,  
 Where there's no ill, no grief, but sleep has mending,  
 Naught broken save this body, lost but breath;  
 Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there  
 But only agony, and that has ending;  
 And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.

Rupert Brooke

Of the next group of three selections the first gives the Christian poet's estimate of war; the second, the impact of the war on Christian teaching; the third, the counter action of Christian teaching on war experiences; and the fourth, the aspirations which the chaplain saw in the hearts of the fighting men.

## WASTE

Waste of Muscle, waste of Brain,  
 Waste of Patience, waste of Pain,  
 Waste of Manhood, waste of Health,  
 Waste of Beauty, waste of Wealth,  
 Waste of Blood, and waste of Tears,  
 Waste of Youth's most precious years,  
 Waste of ways the Saints have trod,  
 Waste of Glory, waste of God -  
 War!

Studdert Kennedy

from The Sorrow of God

Yes, I used to believe i' Jesus Christ,  
 And I used to go to Church,  
 But sin' I left 'ome and came to France,  
 I've been clean knocked off my perch.  
 For it seemed orlright at 'ome, it did,  
 To believe in a God above  
 And in Jesus Christ 'Is only Son,  
 What died on the Cross through Love.  
 When I went for a walk o' a Sunday morn  
 On a nice fine day in the spring,  
 I could see the proof o' the living God  
 In every living thing.  
 For 'ow could the grass and the trees grow up,  
 All along o' their bloomin' selves?  
 Ye might as well believe i' the fairy tales,  
 And think they was made by elves.  
 So I thought as that long-'aired atheist  
 Were nubbat a silly sod,  
 For 'ow did 'e 'count for my Brussels sprouts  
 If 'e didn't believe i' God?  
 But it ain't the same out 'ere, ye know.  
 It's as different as chalk fro' cheese,  
 For 'arf on it's blood and t'other 'arf's mud,  
 And I'm damned if I really sees  
 'Ow the God, who 'as made such a cruel world,  
 Can 'ave Love in 'Is 'eart for men,  
 And be deaf to the cries of the men as dies  
 And never comes 'ome again.

Studdert Kennedy

## WHAT'S THE GOOD?

Well, I've done a bit o'scrappin',  
 And I've done in quite a lot;  
 Nicked 'em neatly wiv my bayonet,  
 So I needn't waste a shot.  
 'Twas my duty, and I done it,  
 But I 'opes the doctor's quick,  
 For I wish I 'adn't done it;  
 Gawd! it turns me shamed and sick.

There's a young 'un like our Richard,  
 And I bashed 'is 'ead in two,  
 And there's that ole grey-haired geezer  
 Which I struck 'is belly through.  
 Gawd, you women, wives, and mothers  
 It's sich waste of all your pain!  
 If you'd knowed what I'd been doin',  
 Could yer kiss me still, my Jane?  
 When I sets me dahn to tell yer  
 What it means to scrap and fight,  
 Could I tell ye true and honest,  
 Make ye see this bleedin' sight?  
 No, I couldn't and I wouldn't,  
 It would turn your 'air all grey;  
 Women suffers 'ell to bear us,  
 And we suffers 'ell to slay.  
 I suppose some Fritz went courtin'  
 In the golamin' same as me,  
 And the old world turned to 'eaven  
 When they kissed beneath a tree.  
 And each evening seemed more golden,  
 Till the day as they was wed,  
 And 'is bride stood shy and blushin',  
 Like a June rose, soft and red.

\* \* \*

For between a thousand races  
 Lands may stretch and seas may foam,  
 But it makes no bloomin' difference,  
 Boche or Eriton, 'ome is 'ome.

Studdert Kennedy

## OLD ENGLAND

Yes, I'm fightin' for old England  
 And for eighteen pence a day,  
 And I'm fightin' like an 'ero,  
 So the daily papers say.  
 Well, I ain't no downy chicken,  
 I'm a bloke past forty-three,  
 And I'm goin' to tell ye honest  
 What old England means to me.  
 When I joined the British Army  
 I'd been workin' thirty years,  
 But I left my bloomin' rent book  
 Shown' three months in arrears.  
 No, I weren't no chronic boozer,  
 Nor I weren't a lad to bet;  
 I worked 'ard when I could get it,  
 And I weren't afeared to sweat.  
 But I weren't a tradesman proper,  
 And the work were oft to seek,  
 So the most as I could 'andle  
 Were abaht a quid a week.

\* \* \* \*

There were times when it were better,  
 And some times when it were worse,  
 But to take it altogether,  
 My old England were a curse.  
 It were sleepin', sweatin', starvin',  
 Wearing boot soles for a job,  
 It were sucking up to foremen  
 What 'ud sell ye for a bob.  
 It were cringin', crawlin', whinin',  
 For the right to earn your bread,  
 It were schemin', pinchin', plannin',  
 It were wishin' ye was dead.  
 I'm not fightin' for old England,  
 Not for this child - am I? 'Eil!  
 For the sake of that old England  
 I'd not face a single shell,

\* \* \* \* \*

It's new England as I fights for,  
 It's an England swep' aht clean,  
 It's an England where we'll get at  
 Things our eyes 'ave never seen;  
 Decent wages, justice, mercy,  
 And a chance for ev'ry man  
 For to make 'is 'ome an 'eaven  
 If 'e does the best 'e can.

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Giving this last selection a more inclusive scope by substituting "Old World" for "Old England" and "New World" for "New England" would change it into a fair statement of the hopes of the Christians who supported the war. It would be unreal to say that none of them wished to maintain the status quo; on the other hand it would be contrary to fact to say that Christians who supported the war did so primarily "to keep things as they were." The enthusiasm for some plan of a League of Nations, discussion of which preceded by some time the cessation of hostilities, is itself proof of the Christian hope for that New World where men would "get at things" their "eyes 'ave never seen." It was the enthusiasm for this New World which determined the character of the Christian thought on war in the period into which we enter with the ending of hostilities in November 1918.

#### Summary of the 1914 - 1918 period

1. Emphasis on the political and social importance of the war; protection of the gifts of Western Christian civilization, and the sacredness of treaties and political obligations.
2. Spiritual values collateral and secondary; during actual hostilities the main function of the spiritual was to keep the principles and implications of the "righteous war" clearly before the Christians and to strengthen the nation for the sacrifices which were demanded.
3. Within the group of non-pacifist Christians a difference of opinion concerning the nature of war; contrast between war as

an instrument of God, and war as essentially and always evil (the lesser of two evils).

4. Prophecy, in the style of the great literary prophets of the Old Testament, considered unnecessary and irrelevant when the issues of the war are clear.
5. Deep cleavage between the pacifist and non-pacifist Christian groups; assumption by the non-pacifist spokesmen that all right-thinking men would see the struggle as they saw it.

## CHAPTER TWO

1919 - 1921

## THE HOPE FOR A WAR-FREE WORLD

The hope for a new international order based on democratic principles and evoking the co-operative spirit of all nations was the goal toward which the majority of Christians in the United Kingdom (both pacifist and non-pacifist) turned their eyes at the end of the war. Like an oasis in the desert of anarchy, this ideal directed the divergent paths of Christians toward a common goal. An efficiently working League of Nations was the end in view; everything else such as peace making and treaty framing was subsidiary - necessary delays toward reaching the goal.

Even though the attention of Christians was focussed attentively on the future there was a certain awareness of the rocks and rough ground that lay in the pathway. They were somewhat uneasy because of an undisguised demand for measures of retaliation. Christians, especially of the non-pacifist group, were agreed that there should be reparation and repentance, but they knew there could be no vindictive retaliation in the peace making if the League was to be successful.

They did not present political leaders with blue prints for the making of new national boundaries, allocation of raw materials, or redistribution of colonies, but rather spoke in general terms of



righteousness and justice. If such principles were lacking in the victors, the peace would not be permanent.

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke this word of warning in October 1918 when victory for the Allies seemed near. He used as his text, Proverbs 16:32, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city":-

"In the world's life there has never been such an example, on such a scale, as is before our eyes to-day of the rivalry between two ideas - the idea of sheer force and strength on one side and the idea of righteousness and conscience on the other. We have given ourselves deliberately, as a people, to the second of these. We have not always kept our ideal pure and unsullied and simple, for we - like Israel of old - are wayward, and sometimes faithless to our own best ideals. But \* \* \* we have, at all events, tried to stand continuously for what we avowed from the first to be our standard \* \* \* Now it does seem to be coming about that the 'spirit' of righteousness, and not the principle of sheer unmitigated force, is going to gain the mastery \* \* \*

"Wrong, grave and terrible, wrong, in many of its outcomes irreparable, has been done to our common brotherhood, our Christian civilization. A real victory of righteousness means, I suppose, that that wrong must be, in such measure as is possible, set right, made good, by the wrongdoers. To stop short of that might easily be to do despite to the immeasurable and heroic sacrifice of the best and bravest of those on whom our hopes for the coming years had rested. There must, as it seems to me,

be no tampering with that stern measure of righteousness in action, cost what it may. The statesmen of the Allies must have behind them, if their work is to be real and lasting, a people keen themselves for righteousness, stern in self-discipline and self-restraint. Thoughts, theories, passions are in the air; some of them helpful, some of them, perhaps, very unhelpful. There is the widest difference between the thought or aim of mere 'reprisal in kind' for wrongs done and, on the other hand, the securing that wrongdoers shall, so far as may be, make good the wrong that has been wrought. But the whole is surrounded by perplexity, and calls for the out-put of a 'spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and strength,' which is hard indeed to secure amid the strife of tongues." (1)

In the same month in which the Archbishop was expressing his thoughts about retribution and retaliation, the Rev. Dr. E. Lyttelton wrote a letter on the same subject to the editor of the Times. In it he made the suggestion that courts be instituted to try the war criminals - both allies and enemies. His remarks are in harmony with those of the Archbishop demanding that there should be retribution for war crimes.

"Sir,- Retribution is a very grave subject, and we are faced by two opposite dangers at once. The first is that, among our people, the righteous indignation which has been stirred by the inhuman conduct of the Germans will be allowed to die down.

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(1) The Times October 21, 1918 6e

The second is that, if the Allies penetrate into Germany, they may take vengeance into their own hands. Both of these dangers can be countered by the establishment of a judicial Court for the trial of any officials - no matter how high their position - who have ordered or connived at brutalities. The inquiry conducted by this Court should be grave, deliberate, and thoroughly impartial, but the execution of sentence as summary as possible; and the Court should take cognizance also of accusations, if there be any, made against any of the Allies. If this is not done, the strain on the forbearance of the Allied Armies will be terrible. If it is done, we may hope for the impressive spectacle of vast hosts of armed men masters of themselves in spite of unexampled provocation; and not only that, but the verdict pronounced would raise the moral standard of the civilized world." (1)

In November 1918, just two weeks after the signing of the Armistice, an opportunity came to the Archbishop of Canterbury for putting into practice his ideas concerning the reconciliation of Christian peoples who had been at war against each other. The statement made on this occasion not only gives his thoughts on the relations of the Church in the warring nations, but also the relations of the nations themselves. He demands real penitence and reparation as a prerequisite to reconciliation. The occasion for his public pronouncement was a telegram from Professor Deissmann, Berlin University requesting immediate unity among the Christians of the world. The telegram was forwarded by Archbishop Soderblom of Upsala.

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(1) ibid. October 11, 1918 10c

In order the better to understand the Archbishop's answer, Professor Deissmann's message is given here in full:-

Archbishop, Canterbury, Lambeth, London  
 On request I forward this:-  
 Archbishop Soderblom, Upsala

"Christian circles in all belligerent nations desire, after the agonies of the struggle, an age of mutual forgiveness and conciliation, in order to fight in unison against the terrible consequences of the war, and to secure the moral improvement of the nations and of mankind. The German people having declared its readiness to make extensive sacrifices, and to make good again (wiedergutmachung) sees, however, in the conditions of the truce now imposed a presage of a peace which would not mean reconciliation, but an aggravation of the misery.

"After a four years' war of starvation, millions of the weakest and innocent would once more be endangered for incalculable time, and the deep bitterness thereof would prevent for generations the fulfilment of all ideals about Christian and human solidarity. But the state of mind among us has never been more favourable for a conciliation between the peoples than now. Armistice being concluded, a democratic movement, pouring forth with elemental power, began to give political foundations to our country. The endeavours of this movement for social improvement and the strengthening of the spirit of fraternal solidarity among all fellowcitizens and between all nations find an answer to ardent collaboration in the hearts of innumerable German Christians. To disturb the hopeful situation, by ruthlessly exercising the idea

of brute force, would mean an unpardonable sin against the new spirit passing through mankind, and in its noblest motive powers closely akin to the Gospel. Manifestations from earnest Christian leaders, especially in Anglo-Saxon communities, above all the manifesto from the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, in May 1917, have proved that this spirit is also found amongst our antagonists.

"Standing from the beginning of the war in the work for international Christian understanding, I now find it my duty at the end of the war to make an appeal to the Christian leaders, whom I know in the belligerent countries, to use all their influence, so that the approaching peace may not contain the seed of new universal catastrophes, but instead release all available conciliatory and rebuilding powers between the nations. I beg you to forward this telegram to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Federal Council in America.

Professor Adolf Deissmann, University, Berlin

Your sincere brother and servant - Söderblom (1)

The essence of the message is contained in the closing sentence; it is the request to all Christians in the Anglo-Saxon countries to "use all their influence, so that the approaching peace may not contain the seed of new universal catastrophes, but instead release all available conciliatory and rebuilding powers between the nations." It is in fact a plea that Christians in the victorious nations shield the citizens in the vanquished nations from the wrath of political leaders and statesmen who were to impose the conditions of

peace. Although it was not actually requested by Professor Deissmann, it is clear from the answer of the Archbishop that he interpreted this telegram as a request to waive any claims for retribution or specific acts of national repentance. The Archbishop refused this in his answer which follows:-

"My dear Archbishop and Brother, - I have received your telegram embodying the full message which Professor Adolf Deissmann asks you to convey to me in relation to the approaching Conference about a Peace Settlement. It would not be easy to answer such a message by telegram, as I find myself under the necessity of explaining my position rather fully. I can do this better in the form of a letter and as Professor Deissmann invites you to be the intermediary, I hope that you may be able to communicate to him what I desire to say.

"Professor Deissman's statement as to the present situation is not one which I can accept as correct. He speaks of the European situation as though all that is needed, on the part of Christian circles in the belligerent nations, were 'mutual forgiveness and conciliation in order to fight in unison against the terrible consequences of the war and to serve the moral improvement of the nations and of mankind.' This form of statement ignores, as it seems to me, both the historic origin of the war and the manner in which Germany has conducted it. I called attention to these essential matters in a long letter which I wrote to Professor Deissmann on September 22, 1915. To that letter he sent no reply

except verbal acknowledgment.

The archbishop then gave a summary of events as they appeared to him: every possible endeavour had been made by British statesmen to prevent the war; the Government was forced into the war; the object of the United Kingdom was the vindication of freedom and justice. He continued:-

"We have fought without hatred, and, so far as possible, without passion; and now that victory crowns the cause for which we fought, we desire to be equally free from hatred and passion in the course which we follow as victor. But we cannot forget the terrible crime wrought against humanity and civilization when this stupendous war, with its irreparable agony and cruelty, was let loose on Europe. Nor can we possibly ignore the savagery which the German high command has displayed in carrying on the war. The outrages in Belgium in the early months and indeed ever since; the character of the devastation wrought in France, including the inhuman deportation of innocent citizens; the submarine warfare against passenger ships like the Lusitania, and the rejoicings which ensued in Germany; the unspeakable cruelties exercised on defenceless prisoners down to the very end, including even the last few weeks; all these things compel the authorities of the Allied Powers to take security against the repetition of such a crime. The position would be different had there been on the part of Christian circles in Germany any public protest against these gross wrongs, or any repudiation of their perpetrators.

"The conditions of the armistice offer the best preliminary guarantees against a renewal of hostilities and a consequent postponement of peace. There is, I firmly believe, no spirit of mere bitterness or vindictiveness in the hearts of those who are imposing these conditions. The peace we hope to achieve must be a peace, not of hate or revenge, the fruits of which might be further and even more terrible strife."

He assured the German Christians that Christians in the United Kingdom wished to avoid that possibility, but on the other hand righteousness must be vindicated, even though the vindication involve sternness. There was no wish on the part of the Allied nations to crush or destroy the peoples of Germany. He closed his letter by saying:-

"I thankfully repeat to Professor Deissmann what I wrote to him in September 1915, my firm assurance that, in spite even of the horrors of this world, war, we recognize the sacred ties which bind together in ultimate unity the children of Our Father who is in Heaven, the deep and enduring ties of Christian fellowship. That fellowship may be broken or impaired, but it cannot perish, and it is my hope and prayer that when the right and necessary reparation has been made, we may be enabled once more to lay hold of that fellowship, and make it mutually operative anew \* \* \*

I am, your faithful brother in Christ,  
Randall Cantuar (1)



In this letter the thought is clear that Christians are to oppose their Government when either it or the High Command is acting in a cruel or inhuman way in the prosecution of war. If major victories are not won in the approved manner there is to be no rejoicing on the part of the Christian community. In a state of war it is the duty of Christians to hold themselves aloof from the rest of the community, and judge not only the cause itself but each individual victory. If the cause of war is itself unjust, then the Christians must, it would be assumed, stand aloof from their own community and give as much help as possible to the nation's enemy. If such action is not taken then the world Christian fellowship is broken for the time being. It can only be restored by definite acts of repentance and restitution. Since such reparation is made in political and economic terms, the elements necessary to heal the spiritual rupture can be converted into specific quantities of Pounds, Marks, or Dollars.

These plans for reparation and for bringing the war criminals to the bar of justice were taking form in the minds of statesmen. Plans of special interest to Christians were outlined in statements of Mr. Asquith and of Lloyd George. The following is an excerpt from a contemporary news item in the Times:-

Mr. Asquith speaking at Rochdale

" \* \* \* eyes were rightly turned to the great Peace Conference, whose function would be not only to liquidate problems left by the war, but to lay the ground plan of a new civilized world. They had frequently declared during the war \* \* \* that a clean peace

must include reparation for the past and guarantees for the future. The old fashioned procedure of which we had many illustrations in the Congresses of the past, of simply repainting the map, assigning and dividing territories, dethroning one set of rulers and replacing them by another, putting the sponge over the past and leaving the future to the chapter of accidents - all this was as obsolete as the feudal system or the balance of power \* \* \*

"The Allied Powers had announced their joint intention to summon the late head of the German Government and State before some form of international tribunal. Such procedure called for the best and most mature counsels of the wisest heads. There was a broad distinction between even blind and wicked errors of policy and deliberate and systematic infraction of rules which rest for their sanction not only upon international usage, but on the instincts and dictates of humanity itself \* \* \* Two things, in his opinion, should be insisted upon. The first was that in regard to all these matters justice be done; next, and not less important, that not only the form but the spirit of justice, which was the meting out to wrongdoers of their due, not less and not more, should be scrupulously preserved.

"With regard to reparation there was current a good deal both of loose thought and of loose language \* \* \* This was a very different affair in all its aspects, and particularly in its scope and range, from the comparatively simple transaction of the payment of the indemnity from France to Germany in 1871. It

was a matter in the working out of which would be involved some of the most complex problems of economics." (1)

That same month, December 1918, the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, made a speech in which he explained some points concerning enemy reparation. The Times reported as follows:-

"Germany must pay the costs of the war. Our own bill is about L 8,000,000,000. Germany's, though she was the aggressor, is about L 6,000,000,000 or L 7,000,000,000. It is indefensible that the loser, who was in the wrong, should pay less than the victor, who was in the right.

"Germany must pay-up to the limit of her capacity; but the Government must not raise false hopes. Germany's wealth before the war was estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000 millions. The war bill is 24,000 millions. Five per cent. on that sum would be 1,200 millions \* \* \*

"The claims of the Allies must be met before the 6,000 or 7,000 millions that is owing to the Germans themselves.

"All the European Allies will demand that the Kaiser and his accomplices shall be made responsible for their terrible crime, and I hope America will take the same view \* \* \*" (2)

It was with definite figures such as these that the break in the Christian fellowship caused by the war was to be healed. If the Christians in Germany had opposed their government and given help to the Allies during the struggle, then the break would never have occurred. The fellowship would have continued throughout the war.

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(1) ibid. December 9, 1918 12b

(2) ibid. December 12, 1918 9e

On January 12, 1919 the Peace Conference started its work. It faced a tremendous task made even more difficult because the objectives of the members were not unified. It is small wonder that the idealism which many Christians hoped would launch the new League of Nations was not found in the Conference. Nations had been called on to risk their existence during the war, but they were not prepared to make similar sacrifices for peace. The peoples of Europe were exhausted and frightened. Finding the shortest road to political security, repairing the material damage, and wringing the maximum amount of reparations from the aggressor were the objectives uppermost in the minds of the statesmen. The obstacles to the fulfillment of Christian hopes were not misunderstandings among the Christians, but rather a hardened materialism which the war had fostered. This hardness is shown in these following recorded conversations:-

"March 30, 1919 (Sunday) Motored with L.G. (Lloyd George) to St. Germain and Versailles, lunching in a wood en route. He, in a jolly mood, told me two good things said by Clemenceau in reply to Wilson at one of the secret conferences.

"Wilson: Force is a failure, Your Napoleon even admitted that on his death-bed.

"Clemenceau: It was rather late, was it not? And your country shows the fallacy of the statement. The U.S.A. was founded by force and consolidated by force. You must admit that!

"Then again Wilson, when speaking of the French claim to the

Saar coalfield, remarked:-

"You(the French) base your claim on what took place a hundred and four years ago. We cannot readjust Europe on the basis of conditions that existed in such a remote period.

"Clemenceau: Your country is a great country, but I can quite understand that a hundred and four years is a long period in its history. Europe is different! " (1)

At the time that ideals and expediency were struggling for supremacy in the Peace Conference, the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh. The Committee on The Present Situation As Affected By The War reported on the Peace Conference. Two features of this report are immediately evident:(1) In the estimate of the Committee the League of Nations was the ultimate goal of the Peace Conference, all the other activity was only ground-work for this main objective. War, in the thought of these Christians, was not inevitable. On the contrary it appears as an evil, to be eliminated from the world by the efforts of mankind, under the guidance and direction of the Will of God. Then (2) the Report emphasises the necessity of the Christian spirit in the organization of nations. War was to be eliminated not by good administration and committee work, but rather by the Holy Spirit working through the organization. The Committee reported to the General Assembly:-

"The world is waiting anxiously for the conclusion of the Peace Conference; the Church is praying that under the guidance of the

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(1) Lord Riddell Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and After  
Victor Gollancz London 1933 p.41

Holy Spirit the settlement may be clean and just. If delay has been occasioned by the difficulties requiring to be surmounted before a League of Nations could be established, it is not to be regretted. For the loss of so tremendous an opportunity for setting on foot such a League would have been a disaster of incalculable magnitude. The conscience and anguished heart of mankind were unquestionably understood aright and represented faithfully by those who insisted that in the very centre of the settlement there must be included a covenant of the nations to abolish war and perpetuate the relationships of peace and good will. But the ordinances of men, conceived though they be in the most ideal character and universally approved for their fairness and justice, need behind them the supreme sanction of Almighty God \* \* \*

"The Committee record with satisfaction that the covenant for the League of Nations has been successfully completed, and the general plan of its operations has been engrossed as an essential feature of the Treaty of Peace, which awaits the consent and signature of the delegates appointed by Germany. The event marks an epoch in the world's history, as regards the military and diplomatic relations of the nations, and the interests of war and peace. It brings to the Church of Christ, its office-bearers and members, a special call of duty and burden of responsibility. To maintain and guide the operations of such a League, and to secure the blessings it has been formed to obtain, there are required the

unfailing support and sustained labours of all men and women of goodwill in different nations." (1)

There is no suggestion here that the elimination of war and the maintenance of peace is the privilege of any nation or even the victorious allied nations. It is a universal responsibility, falling upon the men and women of goodwill in all nations. The emphasis upon the individual is significant. The making and keeping of peace is not the work of politicians or diplomats, but is the daily work of each Christian.

Christians were happy that provision had been made in the Peace Treaty for the League of Nations, but there was not entire satisfaction with the Treaty itself. L.P.Jacks, writing just after the Treaty had been signed, speaks in behalf of many disappointed Christians. He declares that they are disappointed, but adds that they have no right to be since no high idealism could survive the shock and world-wide terror produced by the war. Upon close analysis it would appear that Jacks is saying that Christians are actually disappointed in the war which did not bring the results promised, and actually prevented the brotherhood which men were so earnestly seeking.

"That the Treaty of Peace has caused a general disappointment hardly admits of dispute. Disappointment is to be read not only in that large section of the press, in all nations, which openly attacks the Treaty as giving us a bad peace, but equally in the other which defends it as giving us a good one. For a peace which

requires so much defence and puts so severe a tax on the ingenuity of its defenders is clearly not the kind of peace in which they, any more than their opponents, can find real satisfaction \* \* \*

"Mr. Lloyd George, defending the Treaty before the House of Commons, presented an elaborate argument to prove that it was just. A really just treaty would have needed no such defence, and the vehemence of Mr. George's argument suggests that he was aware of this \* \* \*

"We ought to have foreseen that the immensity of the business to be transacted would leave the Conference with no leisure for idealism and in no mood to embark upon moral adventures. We ought to have foreseen that the tendency would be to seek solutions on traditional lines as the easiest way out of the intolerable confusion; that in the process of adjusting a multitude of differences so vast and unmanageable, the ethical movement would be not upwards but downwards, until the ground of agreement was finally reached on the level of the accepted, the habitual, the common-place \* \* \* Agreement was found in the idea of punishment for wrong - the lowest, the least adequate, but the most widely accepted, of the many forms which the conception of justice can assume \* \* \*

"The heroism with which the war had made us familiar led us to hope that the Peace would display at least some traces of the same quality - and the value of a trace would have been enormous. We look for it in vain, and are left with the impression of an



anticlimax to an heroic episode in the history of the world \* \* \*

" \* \* \* we said to the Boers, 'You people have shown great qualities. We desire their conservation, and promise you that within the Empire you shall have the widest scope for their exercise.' That \* \* \* has worked well, for the result of it has been - General Smuts. Imagine, then, the difference that would have been made if a similar style, a similar attitude had been adopted by the peacemakers of Paris to the conquered Germans. 'You people,' they might have said, 'have excellent brains and have proved yourselves capable thinkers. Our terms as conquerors are that these thinking powers of yours which you have hitherto abused, shall be passed on intact to the service of the society of nations we are now trying to form. We need your intellectual resources for the vast works we have in hand \* \* \*

"When we remember the vast number of Generals they have, or recently had, in Germany, it is hardly possible to doubt that at least one of them may have in him the making of another General Smuts. Even if they can produce only one, that one, merely as a thinking force, would be worth more to the League of Nations than the Kaiser's head or another thousand million of indemnity. The gravest charge that can be brought against the Peace is that, for the present at least, it closes the prospect of any such happy event." (1)

This was the attitude of Professor Deissmann, but not of the

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(1) The Hibbert Journal L.P. Jacks "Why We Are Disappointed" pp.5ff  
Vol. XVIII October 1919 - July 1920

Archbishop of Canterbury. For the latter the war-time distinctions of aggressor and defender of the right were necessary until reparation had been made for the consummation of God's judgment. For Jacks, after the hostilities had ceased, these distinctions became of secondary importance to healing the separations between Christians. These differing attitudes toward the vanquished German nation spring from two Christian concepts of war. The first is that war is an instrument of God, that men are His agents in carrying out His Divine Will by means of the terrible fire of warfare. The other is that war is made contrary to God's Will by the sins of greed and selfishness, and that men should return without delay to God's ways of peace by completely obliterating the marks and distinctions of war. This latter concept was to dominate Christian thinking during the period of enthusiasm for the League of Nations.

The use made of either victory or defeat is an important index of the Christian attitude toward war. Is victory to be made the occasion for exaltation of man and his military might or of humble thanksgiving to God? Will it be a show of national boasting over a defeated enemy, or the beginning of the healing process between the family of nations? On the historic occasion when the Peace Treaty was signed by Germany the religious character of the celebration in the United Kingdom was determined by the King when he proclaimed to the nations:-

"Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to bring to a close the late widespread and sanguinary War in which We were engaged against Germany and her Allies; We, therefore, adoring the Divine

Goodness and duly considering that the great and general blessings of Peace do call for public and solemn acknowledgment, have thought fit, by and with the advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation hereby appointing and commanding that a General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for these His manifold and great mercies be observed throughout Our Dominions on Sunday, the Sixth day of July instant; And for the better and more devout solemnization of the same We have given directions to the Most Reverend the Archbishops and the Right Reverend the Bishops of England to compose a Form of Prayer suitable to this occasion, to be used in all Churches and Chapels, and to take care for the timely dispersing of the same throughout their respective Dioceses; and to the same end We do further advertise and exhort the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and all Spiritual Authorities and ministers of religion in their respective churches and other places of public worship throughout Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and in all quarters of Our Dominions beyond the Seas to take part as it may properly behove them to do in this great and common act of worship, and We do strictly charge and command that the said Public Day of Thanksgiving be religiously observed by all as they tender the favour of Almighty God and have the sense of His Benefits." (1)

The King and Queen attended the special Thanksgiving services held in St. Paul's , at which the Archbishop of Canterbury preached the sermon. In it was a note of hope, but also a word of warning. He

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(1) The Times July 2, 1919 12a

drew attention to the fact that the League of Nations was dependent on the people of the nation; that it could not accomplish its purposes by the efforts of statesmen alone. There was no criticism of the peace which had been made, but rather emphasis on the days to come, the days of the League of Nations.

"Our gaze passes from what has happened to what is happening, or is round about us, now. What do we see as the guerdon which our brave men have won for us? We call it peace. And peace means, not simply the ending of strife, but the spirit, the conditions in which whatsoever things are just and clean and wholesome can flourish and abound. Is that what we have won? If not, there is something amiss, something which needs fashioning still. But, please God, what we have secured by these years of unutterable stress is and shall be just that. Wholeheartedly we mean it so to be for our land and for other lands as well.

"I stand here, I speak here, to-day as one who, believing in our Master's promise, is bold to maintain - despite all our qualms, despite, nay because of, our experience - that, in His good time, the ending of war between Christian peoples is a thing attainable. Slow and halting are our steps upon His way, but the victories of Jesus Christ among the sons of men are manifold, are visible, are proven well. The world, with all its wrongs, is better than it was. Bit by bit its evils wane. May it perhaps be that in the very horribleness of the five hideous years we have seen as of old that the evil spirit can tear its victim before it be cast out?

'Peace, be still.' To that vision, dim still and hazy and uncertain, our eyes turn as we look forward wistfully into unborn years. It is still a thing unfashioned. But in our prayers at least it has its firm place. 'Thy kingdom come.' Does anyone as he offers that prayer - our Master's prayer - mean a kingdom among men wherein war is still to be the arbiter? And, if not? If not, it depends on those who pray - 'Thy kingdom come': for 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' " (1)

The attitude toward war is clear in this sermon. War is not inevitable, nor must the Kingdom come through the destruction of the nations of the world by a great war. Men are not helpless. It is the responsibility of all those who pray the Lord's Prayer to bend their efforts toward eliminating warfare from the earth. It might be called the "social gospel" toward war. The Archbishop continued:-

"And so, along with prayer and vision, there comes effort - clear, sustained, robust, believing. To that resolve, that effort, we have as a people set our hand, A League of Nations, must be no mere theory of statesmen. It is to be the peoples' pact. So far as in us lies we are answerable before God and man that it live and grow; and the people - you and I, that is - must be worthy to be its artificers. A people of clean life, of sensitive honour between man and man, a ready recognition of 'the other man's' side: a people keen at home in mutual service, and therefore strong in contribution to the common pact among the nations of the world.

"Now all that is not going to come about of a sudden. 'If the Vision tar y, wait for it' \* \* \* With chastened and yet eager heart we are thanking God to-day for what these five years have brought us, for the trust of championship on behalf of what is just and of good report, for the ready self-offering of our worthiest, and the dauntless valour of their gift, for the intrepidity and resource of our high command \* \* \*

"We have won the peace for which we strove. We thank God for it here and now. May He give us, as He only can, the grace to use it worthily. We kneel together today, King and people, in fresh dedication of ourselves as a nation to the service of the Lord Christ. It is not mere aspiration, mere feeling, that we want, but firm unflinching will \* \* \*" (1)

In other sermons preached on that Thanksgiving Sunday there is a cross section of Christian opinion concerning the war and the use of opportunities, which appeared to come from the war. Following is the Times report of the sermon preached at Christ Church, Westminster, by the Bishop of Birmingham:-

" \* \* \* on that Thanksgiving day the two uppermost ideas were those of victory and peace. Though victorious they had no revengeful feelings. Great Britain wanted no new territory, nor did she expect any financial gain. As to revenge, this country was more likely to be too easy than to be too severe. Once let the German show a real sense of shame and sorrow and he would be helped

and not hindered in his work of regeneration.

"In the days to come it would not be the least of the glories of the Peace Conference that it was decided that though the ex-Kaiser, the instigator of barbarous war, was brought to justice, nevertheless he escaped from the punishment which he himself and his agents wreaked upon men and women whose only offence was loyalty to their native land. It had been one of the characteristics of Great Britain that after a war was over she showed herself generous towards a stricken foe. Never had this been a more difficult duty than to-day, but all the more to be respected if it were found possible even on that occasion.

"It should be possible in the future for little nations as well as big ones to live an undisturbed and fruitful life of common service. It was necessary for the present to speak only of a League of Allied Nations, though they might look forward to a completer union of the civilized world." (1)

The Bishop of Exeter, at Exeter Cathedral spoke of the contempt they all had for the ex-Kaiser, and hoped they would not make a martyr of such a person. The Times reported:-

" \* \* \* he deeply regretted that a character for whom they had the greatest contempt should be dignified by being thought worthy to become the object of international vengeance, and that a man so contemptible and so unworthy of the high position

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(1) ibid. July 7, 1919 18a

he occupied should be tried and possibly made a martyr, so that in years to come there might rise up round his most contemptible name a great legend. No doubt monuments would be built to him. Far rather let him live out his days in universal contempt, sharing what was far worse than death - namely, in being the object of universal detestation and miserable shame. (1)

Bishop Ryle at the Abbey spoke of Germany, its crimes, and its relation to the League of Nations. The Times reported the sermon as follows:-

" \* \* \* peace had come and with it the outline of a League of Nations which would at least make war more difficult. Even the voice of peace uttered one stern warning. It was not war which desecrated a nation so much as the spirit in which it was waged. The Germans on countless occasions had shown marvellous courage and fine military qualities. It was not courage and it was not war that gave directions for the burning of Louvain, that ordered the atrocities on the invasion of Belgium and France, that was responsible for the sinking of the Lusitania and hospital ships, that authorized the use of poison gas, that endorsed the murder of Captain Fryatt, or the execution of Edith Cavell, that caused the deportation of young women in the dead of night from their homes, or the ill-treatment of prisoners of war. These things were not condoned by the signing of Peace, and there could be no place in the League of Nations for people who had so offended the

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(1) ibid. July 7, 1919 17a



conscience of Christendom, so outraged humanity, unless they repented and repentance found expression in something more than ambiguous generalities. But as General Botha had said when he left these shores,

" 'Let us be content to leave vengeance where it belongs, in a Higher Hand, and let it be our great privilege to show mercy to a vanquished enemy if he in turn shows himself truly prepared by deed rather than by word to confess his faults and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'

" 'Patriotism was not exhausted on the field of battle. The responsibilities, both at home and abroad, were stupendous, and the need for a united people was as great now as it was during the war. Let the spirit of righteousness, which exalted the nation in the terrible ordeal of war, continue to inspire and ennoble it in work and in sacrifice in the perplexing controversies of peace.'" (1)

It is worth pausing to consider for a moment the implications of one of the ideas in this Thanksgiving sermon. Is it war that breaks the Christian fellowship, or is it the acts of excessive cruelty and destruction? According to the Bishop of Exeter it is the un-Christian acts in war. It is repentance for these acts that is necessary for healing the division in the Christian community. There is nothing in war itself that severs Christian unity. There could be a Christian war, after which there would be little or no occasion for reparation

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(1) ibid. July 7, 1919 18a

or repentance. Germany is to be temporarily barred from the League of Nations, not because she was an enemy, but because she was an un-Christian enemy.

Dr.Lang, preaching at York Cathedral, declared that a new spirit of brotherhood was necessary if the League of Nations was to be effective. The Times summarized:-

" \* \* \* even the League of Nations would be a mere baseless fabric unless it was founded upon a new spirit of brotherhood, a spirit which compelled men and classes and nations to regard themselves as one family under one Father. Were they to begin that new time by a scramble for the advantage of individuals or classes? The spirit of brotherhood demanded imperatively that they should all set themselves to reproduce wasted wealth on which the welfare of the country most depended; that they should see that pleasure and the product of that wealth should be distributed with the utmost wideness and generosity. Every man should ask himself how he could put his energies and his work at the disposal of his country for the sake of all. In their relations with peoples abroad they must play their part in restoring the wasted and ravaged life of Europe. They must be proud to take their part in furnishing food and the materials of industry, which were imperatively needed in all the countries of Europe, not least in the country of their enemies. That lesson of peace would be a harder strain even than the strain of war." (1)

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(1) ibid. July 7, 1919 18a

These Thanksgiving Sunday sermons indicate that Christian thought concerning war was dominated by the idea of the League of Nations. There is hope that man can plan and work toward the elimination of war from all future history. Peace is possible by means of a new type of political organization. There is no shadow of doubt upon these hopes that the destiny of man upon earth is outside his control, or that he is forever to be caused grief and pain through endless war. An eschatology of the final destruction of the world as a necessity for fulfilling the Will of God does not receive any recognition in these statements. Christians saw war as a sociological and political problem, but with a distinctively spiritual emphasis. Christians welcomed all the plans and organization, but believed that the plans would prove fruitless if they were not permeated with the spirit of Jesus.

Men of imagination could see that the League was a new and daring experiment in Christian relations. During the half-century before 1914, the building of world-wide organizations had been almost entirely confined to international activities of an economic character, such as the Postal and Telegraphic Unions. The new League of Nations carried the movement towards world organization into the political sphere. In the field of international politics, Europe (with its annexes and dependencies in the Near and Middle East and in Africa) had been, during the 50 years before 1914, the exclusive field of organized relations. In 1914 the "Far Eastern Question" had scarcely risen above the horizon. Of the eight Great Powers which existed in

1914, four, - namely, Germany, France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy - were almost wholly European; two others - the British Empire and the Russian Empire - lay partly in Europe and partly outside it: only two - the United States and Japan - lay outside Europe altogether. The unification of the whole world into a single system, which had taken place in the economic sphere some time before 1914, had not, by that year, been completed in the sphere of political relations. The stage of inter-State politics had emerged, in four years, from Europe to the world. Growing out of the chaos and disorder of war, it was an act of faith to project the League into the life of nations. Christian leaders saw God giving this opportunity and responsibility through the war. The practical steps they took to fulfil this responsibility are a measure of their sincere conviction.

An organization which offered them a means of making effective their support of the League of Nations was the League of Nations Union. One of its objectives, stated in its Royal Charter of incorporation is as follows:-

"To advocate the full development of the League of Nations, so as to bring about such a world organisation as will guarantee the freedom of nations, act as trustee and guardian of backward races \* \* \* maintain international order and finally liberate mankind from war and the effects of war."

An organization such as this was exactly what the Christians were seeking. The Union, true to its stated purpose, was not slow to grasp a fortunate opportunity to support the League. On the first

anniversary of the Armistice, November 11, 1919, a great meeting, organized by the Union, was held at Queen's Hall. Mr. Balfour presided, and was accompanied on the platform by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi (Dr. Hertz), Lord Robert Cecil, and other distinguished persons. Mr. Balfour said:-

" \* \* \* it seems to me clear as daylight that if a repetition of these incalculable calamities is to be prevented for our children and our grandchildren, it can only be through the beneficent operations of the League of Nations \* \* \*

"There are those who think that the horrors of the last five years will cure mankind for an indefinite series of generations from any repetition of those abominations \* \* \* Memories are short. The weight of misfortune once thrown aside is apt soon to be forgotten, and you may depend upon it that if we let the critical moment pass \* \* \* and if we slide back into our normal condition of indifference, we shall have wasted one of the greatest opportunities that Heaven ever gave mankind \* \* \*

" \* \* \* there are two conditions at least which must be fulfilled if the League of Nations is to be a success. The League of Nations provides the machinery, but machinery without motive power, a body without a soul, is utterly useless, and behind the machinery of the League of Nations, if the League is to do all that it ought to do, must be the motive power derived from the wills of the people of the world, and

their action must be founded on the common conscience. That is the first condition. Another condition is that all the Powers, and more especially the Great Powers, on whose action so much in the near future must inevitably depend, should take an equal share of the burden which I do not for a moment deny that the League of Nations is going to throw upon them \* \* \* all the great nations responsible for this great undertaking should accept the same risk and be prepared to make the same effort \* \* \*

"I \* \* \* move the following resolution:-

"That the public meeting of the citizens of London heartily approves of, and pledges itself to support, the Covenant constituting the League of Nations, as embodied in the Peace Treaty.

"That this meeting, moreover, approves of the general objects and aims of the League of Nations Union, and declares its willingness to support a National Union organized on a voluntary basis to strengthen the League of Nations as established, which will provide the machinery for the abolition of war, and for bringing about democratic control over international relationships." (1)

The Archbishop of Canterbury supported the resolution, and appealed to all those interested in the movement to assist it financially. (2) The obvious, although usually overlooked, is often the most important element in a situation. We often take for granted as a commonplace that Christians believe war can be abolished. But this one principle determines much of the Christian

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(1) ibid. November 12, 1919 20c

(2) ibid. November 12, 1919 20c

attitude toward war. It would be safe to say that the declaration "war can be abolished" is one of the most important Christian thoughts concerning war. In seconding the resolution of Mr. Balfour, the Archbishop of Canterbury was making one of many public affirmations of this belief.

One month after this meeting, in December 1919, when the Archbishop preached his customary sermon on the last Sunday of the year in Canterbury Cathedral, he spoke on the theme of a "New World" which was much on his heart. The New World was a world free from war. War, from the Christian point of view, is so great a sin that only its elimination will make a new world. War has never been incidental in the Christian view of the world. It has always been a central problem in his relations with God and with his fellowmen. The Archbishop was anxious that the burdens of militarism and war be lifted from the shoulders of the peoples, not only of the United Kingdom, but of the whole world, and was disappointed with the slow progress that had been made. However, he expressed great hope for the League of Nations. He viewed the Covenant as a religious document, possessed of the characteristics of covenants made in the early days of the Reformed churches. The Times reported his sermon as follows:-

" \* \* \* that League of Nations - a Christian covenant if ever there was one - was not a matter merely, or even chiefly, for statesmen. It was a people's bond, a compact of self-restraint, an oath of fealty on larger principles than those of States and treaties - a fealty of Christian men and women to the Prince of Peace.

Let the thought of that personal share in it, which belonged to every one of us, sink deep. Every Christian statesman told us that it was on the people's shoulders that this thing must broadly rest. No citizen with a vote to record, no Christian with a prayer to pray, but must make that cause his own, her own, from that day forward. Not for nothing had God allowed what was called a little time ago a 'pious fantasy' to become a formal compact under statesmen's hand and seals. Of course it was novel, of course it was bewildering in detail, of course there were growling lions in the path - but that was why, as Christians, they brought it all to God." (1)

Part of the enthusiasm for the League developed from the Christian belief that war was the abnormal, not the normal state of man. Its elimination was a democratic movement, calling not on men alone, but on men and women both - everyone in all nations. A Report made to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland tells of efforts to sustain the democratic movement through the Church.

"In accordance with the deliverance of last Assembly, the Committee did their best to stimulate the zeal of presbyteries in reference to the League of Nations. As a result many presbyteries passed strong resolutions in its favour, and the ministers urged the subject upon the sympathetic understanding, attention, and support of their members \* \* \*

"There can be no question that the formation of such a League will only meet our sanguine expectations of it as an absolute

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(1) ibid. December 29, 1919 5a



guarantee of peace, if it become, as nearly as possible, world-wide. Your Committee venture the opinion that the high Christian ideal will only be realised when our late enemies become constituent parts of the League, and no effort should be spared to secure this as speedily as possible. There should be no shadow of a suspicion left that the Five Powers who have assumed the chief power in the executive of the League are only a new Alliance to preserve the balance of power." (1)

The League appeared to be the means at last for bringing Christian ideals to realization on a world-wide scale. Although the main object of the Covenant was to prevent the outbreak of another war, it was evident that in order to accomplish this the nations would have to become more Christian. They would have to debar themselves from many things which had been accepted parts of diplomacy in the past. In the Covenant the Governments agreed that they would indulge no more in secrecy and intrigue, but deal honestly and openly one with another; they would not push their national trade interests by unfair means; they would no longer make money by misgoverning and exploiting colored peoples; they would try to make peace throughout the world between employers and employed, on the basis of fair and disinterested agreement. The Preamble stated the objectives as follows:-

"The High Contracting Parties,

In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security by acceptance of obligations

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(1) United Free Church of Scotland Reports to the General Assembly  
May 1919 Report of the Committee on Social Problems

not to resort to war,

"by prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations,

"by the firm establishment of the understanding of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and

"by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another,

"Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations."

After the nations subscribed to the Covenant, were they to lose their identity? Was nation-hood the cause of war? Was the League, in order to accomplish its purpose to supercede the nations of the world? The Church of England gave a negative answer to these questions in the Encyclical Letter from the Bishops issued at the Lambeth Conference of 1920.

"We cannot believe that the effect of the Coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth will be to abolish nations. Holy Scripture emphasizes the value of national life and indicates its permanence. The sense of nationality seems to be a natural instinct. The love which Christ pours into the hearts which are His, makes men cease to hate each other because they belong to different nations. Within redeemed humanity nations will not cease to exist, but nationality itself will be redeemed. We need not despair of this consummation because of any wrongs which have been done in the name of nationality, however recent and however appalling.

"Thus the purpose of God for the nations, as we conceive it, is that they should form a fellowship, as of a brotherhood or a family. They are intended, as nations, by love to serve one another. They are intended to develop distinctive gifts and characters, and to contribute them to the common good. There is no place in this ideal for jealousy or hatred, for ruthless competition, and for the ambition to conquer and enslave. Nor does the imposition of peace on the world by fear of the strong arm bring this ideal much nearer. For this ideal is essentially an ideal of freedom, the freedom of brothers in a family, wherein the immature and the weak have carefully secured to them the chance to grow and to grow strong." (1)

After describing these ideal conditions toward which Christians were working, the Letter recommends the League as the instrument through which these world changes will be brought.

"We commend to all Christian people the principles which underlie the League of Nations, the most systematic attempt to advance towards the ideal of the family of nations which has ever been projected. It has deeply stirred the hopes of those who long for peace on earth and increase of fellowship. But if any such league is to have success it will need the enthusiastic and intelligent support of millions of men and women. It is not enough that governments should agree to it, or statesmen work for it. The hearts and minds of the people of all countries must be behind it.

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(1) Lambeth Conference, 1920 Encyclical Letter p.19, S.P.C.K. London

In all nations a great change is needed, and is needed now. War weariness cannot unite and is not uniting us. Neither suffering of some countries nor the ambitions of others are making much impression on a paralyzed world. The world needs to recover feeling, but the feeling must be right and true. Before either peace or freedom can be established in security and joy, the fires of brotherhood must leap up in the hearts of the nations. This great change requires a miracle; but it is a change that can be wrought by the one Spirit of fellowship, which is the spirit of God. We must subject our wills and open our hearts to His influence, that He may work that miracle in the world." (1)

In the Resolutions of the Conference there is a clear indication that this group of Christians believed that war was only one of the evils to be swept away with the coming of the Kingdom. War grew from the chaos of social evils which were contrary to the teaching of Christ. As we read these Resolutions we sense the enthusiasm for the League, not only as a means of eliminating war - although that was important - but as an agency for bringing in the Kingdom. Resolutions 6,7, and 8, although they do not speak specifically of war, are quoted to show the emphasis on the bringing of the Kingdom, in which process the elimination of war will be one of the numerous blessed consequences. These are Resolutions concerning Christianity and International Relations.

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(1) ibid. p.20

"1. We rejoice that in these times of peril God is giving to His Church a fresh vision of His purpose to establish a Kingdom in which all nations of the earth shall be united as one family in righteousness and peace. We hold that this can only come through the acceptance of the sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His teaching, and through the application of the principles of brotherhood, justice, and unselfishness, to individuals and nations alike.

"2. The Conference calls upon the citizens of all nations to promote in every way the resumption of the efforts, interrupted by the War, to increase international comity and goodwill, and to secure expression for these by an increased recognition of international law and custom.

"3. The Conference, heartily endorsing the views of its Committee as to the essential Christian basis of the League of Nations, is of the opinion that steps should immediately be taken, whether by co-operation or concurrent action, whereby the whole Church of Christ may be enabled with one voice to urge the principles of the League of Nations upon the peoples of the world.

"4. We hold that the peace of the world, no less than Christian principle, demands the admission of Germany and other nations into the League of Nations at the earliest moment which conditions render possible.

"5. The Conference commends the Report of its Committee on International Relations to the careful consideration of the churches of the Anglican Communion, both in their Assemblies and in other ways, and urges upon all church members the importance of supporting the League of Nations Union.

"6. It is the duty of all supporters of the League of Nations to set their face against injustice to the indigenous or native races, and particularly in regard to such matters as the tenure of land, forced labour, and the trade in intoxicating liquors, and also the morphia traffic in China, and other abuses.

"7. The Conference records its protest against the colour-prejudice among the different races of the world, which not only hinders intercourse, but gravely imperils the peace of the future.

"8. The Conference, believing that nations no less than individuals are members one of another, expresses its grave concern at the evidence as to the disease and distress from which the populations in large tracts of Europe and Asia are suffering. It therefore calls upon all Christian men and women to support by every means in their power the action which is being taken, both by Governments and by voluntary associations, for the relief of this suffering." (1)

These resolutions pronounce a negative relation of war to the

(1) Ibid. pp. 25-20

coming Kingdom of God. War is not the agency to usher in the Kingdom. Rather the elimination of war is to be one of the steps in the gradual process of bringing the Kingdom on earth. War has no unique relation to this arrival. It is only one of the many evils, like disease and famine, to be dispersed in a developing process.

The selections that follow are given to emphasise the primary place that the League of Nations occupied in the thoughts of most Christian groups, both large and small. The problem of war was inseparably connected with the League. To think of war meant to think immediately of the League as the answer. The Churches felt a special responsibility for the League, believing as they did that without the Holy Spirit the world organization would be useless.

First is a 1918 United Free Church of Scotland Report:-

"In 1918 the Assembly gave cordial approval to the outline of the League of Nations for the abolition of war. The Committee have watched the development of the League and hail with satisfaction the fact that at length, after many delays, it has entered on its working career \* \* \*

"The Committee would again urge upon the Church the need there is to give driving power to the League through enlightened public opinion and awakened Christian conscience. The League of Nations will not move itself. Much good would follow if members of the Church would countenance and give active support to the Scottish Council of the League of Nations Union and its branches. This support would not be withheld if all were to visualise the fact

that here is the ideal of the Gospel, and that as an ally of all the Churches it may become the greatest factor of the day in preparing the way of the Lord for the Gospel of Christ to reach all nations. On the other hand, if the League is made of no effect, our hopes of peace to a war-tormented world will be quenched for years to come \* \* \* " (1)

The selections which follow are taken from news items from the Times.

"In a letter to Lord Grey of Fallodon, President of the League of Nations Union, the Archbishop of York writes,

"I heartily approve of the proposal to appeal to the clergy of my own diocese, and indeed of the whole country, on behalf of the League of Nations Union. The support of the League of Nations ought to be regarded by the Church of Christ as a charge laid upon its faith and honour. Of all citizens, the clergy of the Church ought to be foremost in the endeavour to arouse and sustain that strong and determined public opinion which alone can make the ideal of the League an active power in international life." (2)

"The Christian Endeavour National Assembly at Bristol yesterday passed a strong resolution calling on the Government to refer all outstanding matters arising from the war to the League of Nations immediately." (3)

- (1) United Free Church of Scotland Report of the Committee on Social Problems May 1920  
 (2) The Times May 21, 1920 18c  
 (3) ibid. May 25, 1920 7b



"The Wesleyan Methodist Conference at Hull yesterday sent an address of loyalty to the King \* \* \*

"Dr. Wardle Stafford, in his presidential address, said \* \* \* The present duty of the church was to throttle militarism and to insure against war. The future of the world was in the lap of the League of Nations, which was a league of brotherhood and political ally of the church. Disarmament in Germany must be followed by disarmament in other lands, and they looked to the Methodist Church in England and America to sustain this ideal and influence public opinion on the subject \* \* \*

"Mr. Walter Runciman moved a resolution authorizing the appointment of a committee of Conference to approach the Christian Churches of this and other countries with a view to common action designed to make the League of Nations effective in international life. Up to the present practical support of the League had been tepid, he said, and no one cared to take any responsibility with regard to it. The Supreme Council were usurping its functions, and England had not altogether clean hands on the subject. They must get rid of the old diplomacy, and in its place apply Christian principles to international relationships. \* \* \* Statesmen needed the support of the Churches in this matter, and he urged them to crush any sneer raised against the League, and to move out of the way any members of Parliament who had no faith in it.

"Dr. Maldwyn Hughes (London), in seconding, said it was not

merely a European question, but one which affected all lands, and so far no attempt had been made to mobilize the forces of Christianity in support of the League. A league of victors was not a League of Nations, and it was time that the Supreme Council made way for a great commonwealth of nations.

"The resolution was passed unanimously." (1)

"After a sermon in support of the League of Nations last evening at the Congregational Church of St. Anne's-on-Sea, the Congregation, at the invitation of Sir Charles Macara, rose and pledged themselves to promote the success of the League." (2)

"A campaign has been inaugurated by the National Free Church Council in support of the League of Nations. The 10,000 Free Church ministers of England are being asked to make special reference to the League in their sermons at an early date, and vestibule documents are being sent to each church in order that the congregation may individually sign and declare their allegiance to and sympathy with the ideals for which the League stands." (3)

"The Committee of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, of which the Archbishop of Canterbury is president, has addressed the League of Nations a memorial welcoming with gratitude and hopefulness the first meeting of its Assembly, as being an organization capable of

(1) ibid. July 16, 1920 14f  
(2) ibid. August 9, 1920 12d  
(3) ibid. October 4, 1920 7d

becoming the mouthpiece of mankind and the embodiment of its common brotherhood." (1)

One tangible effort toward creating a common brotherhood was the Disarmament Conference called by President of the U.S., Warren G. Harding, in 1921. Christians in the United Kingdom, enthusiastic for the League, were sensitive to the practical aspects of war prevention. They manifested a prayerful interest in Disarmament, feeling that it was a Christian concern.

In May 1921 a Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland reported to the General Assembly:-

"A \* \* subject on which no adequate progress was made - and one which lies very near to the heart of the Christian Church - is that of disarmament. Nothing was done to put a stop to the competition in armaments. Indeed, it is hard to see how much can be accomplished so long as powerful States remain out of the League \* \* All that the Assembly accomplished was that by a majority vote - seven States opposing - it was resolved 'to submit for the consideration of the members of the League the acceptance of an undertaking not to exceed for the next two financial years the sum total of expenditure on the military, naval, and air force provided in the latter Budget.' Even to this there are certain reservations. The Christian conscience of the world demands some more drastic action than this. We shall dishonour the dead who gave their lives in a war to end war for ever if we cannot speedily

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(1) ibid. October 15, 1920 9c

remove this menace to world peace. There is no security for a real brotherhood of nations when the civilized nations of the world go on spending 20 per cent. of their total national income on war or preparations for war, a larger sum than was spent before the victory which was to be the death of militarism. Here again the Church must speak with no uncertain voice." (1)

This concern with a practical problem like disarmament illustrates again the Christian conviction that war, of itself, brings no positive results - not even its own elimination. Victory in arms may give an opportunity, but the elimination of war is a continuous Christian work, to be carried on with all the spiritual equipment available, including prayer.

Three quotations from the pages of the Times show the interest of various Christian groups in the Disarmament Conference:-

"The session of the Congregational Union Assembly at Bristol \* \* opened with the passing of a resolution reaffirming faith in the League of Nations \* \* \*

"A resolution expressing satisfaction with the unanimity of the response to President Harding's invitation to the Washington Conference was also agreed to." (2)

"In the Church of England prayers were sanctioned for use on the Sunday before the opening of the Washington Conference\* \* \*" (3)

"The National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches appeals

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(1) United Free Church of Scotland Report of the Committee on Social Problems May 1921

(2) The Times October 6, 1921 7e

(3) ibid. October 14, 1921 10e

for the prayers of the people on behalf of the Washington Conference; urging that unless Christian principles prevail, all efforts of social reform in this and all other countries will be paralysed for generations and that we shall be in danger of an inter-racial war involving English-speaking peoples and the whole of Asia." (1)

The thought in this last quotation is characteristic of Christian thought concerning war during this period of enthusiasm for the League of Nations. It might be called a balance between politics and prayer. The League as a world-wide organization appealed to the imagination as a tangible agency for bringing the Kingdom upon earth. But Christians in the United Kingdom did not forget that it was a spiritual Kingdom; that without the Spirit of Jesus the organization would be dead; the plans would never move from the paper on which they were drawn.

#### Summary of the 1919 - 1921 period

1. The conviction that, by Christian effort, some good could be salvaged from war; out of the horror of the war had come the opportunity for the League of Nations.

2. War is not inevitable; men, working in harmony with the Will of God, could eliminate war from all future history.

3. The means for eliminating war were political and social, not ecclesiastical.

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(1) ibid. November 5, 1921 8c

4. Organizations were only a means; it was the Holy Spirit working through the organizations which would eliminate war.

5. A repudiation of any eschatology demanding the destruction by war of the kingdoms of the world as a prerequisite for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## CHAPTER THREE

1924 - 1931

LEAGUE SUCCESS AND A SPIRITUAL  
INVENTORY

The central core of this chapter is the report of the Commission on Christianity and War of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship. This commission, No.VIII, fully investigated the principal problems of Christians in relation to war. It is an excellent cross-section of Christian thought because different denominations and various theological points of view were represented. The report gives the essence of Christian thought on war for this period.

Preliminary to looking at the report, we should briefly review the activities of the League of Nations. From 1920 to 1930 the projects of the League constituted a success story. The fact that the C.O.P.E.C. was called at the time when the League was at the pinnacle of its prestige illustrates most effectively the Christian belief that war was essentially a spiritual problem. If Christians had viewed war as primarily a political, economic, or social problem, the investigation and searching inquiry of the C.O.P.E.C. committees would not have been instituted.

The League had been successful in settling the Aaland Island dispute, thereby averting war between Sweden and Finland. When fighting broke out between Albania and Jugoslavia over a frontier dispute

the threat of an economic blockade ended the fighting and a satisfactory settlement was made.

After endless discussion by ambassadors of various countries the problem of the disposition of Memel, on the Western frontier of Lithuania, was settled by an impartial Commission of the League.

The Iraq Frontier Dispute with Turkey, a most dangerous situation threatening war with Turkey, was ended by negotiation.

Large-scale financial reconstruction was given to Austria by the League raising a loan of L 27 million. As a result Austria was freed from financial and economic chaos or imminent danger of starvation and dissolution.

A loan of L 10 million was launched for Greek refugee settlement. This started the project by which more than a million Greek refugees were settled on the land or put in the way of productive employment.

The world political problems seemed, in 1924, to be adequately handled. It was because Christians were aware of the necessary balance between politics and prayer that they were disturbed. The spiritual elements necessary for the progressive elimination of war seemed to the Christians in the United Kingdom to be deficient.

The Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship was called at Birmingham in April 1924. It was hoped that this Conference would do for the social testimony, influence, and service of the Christian Churches in the United Kingdom what the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 did for foreign missions.(1) The movement originated with the Swanwick Conference of Social Service

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(1) see, The Review of the Churches The Work of the C.O.P.E.C.  
The Rev. Principal Garvie Vol.1 New Series 1924 pp.192ff



Unions, but as that Conference had no authority to carry out such a proposal, a Council of those interested was formed. Questionnaires were issued on such subjects as the Nature of God and His Purpose for the World, the Social Gospel, the Social Function of the Church, the Relation of the Sexes, Home, Education, Leisure, Property and Industry, the State, International Relations, and Christianity and War. In the composition of the Commissions care was taken to make them as representative as possible of different interests and standpoints, so as to avoid onesidedness, and to get such treatment of the subjects as would commend itself to the conscience of Christian people generally, while in advance of the uninstructed opinions that were current.

On April 8, 1924(1), the first business session of the Conference was held in Birmingham under the chairmanship of William Temple, the Bishop of Manchester. About 1,200 delegates from all denominations and branches of the Christian church (except the Roman Catholic) in Great Britain were present. There were twelve C.O.P.E.C. Reports; No. VIII, Christianity and War, being of special interest for us.

The Introduction gives notice that there was a mixture of unanimity and conflict within the Committee and that in some places the report expresses opposing points of view. These two points of view are the ever-present pacifist and non-pacifist. Some points of agreement and disagreement are summarized:-

"The Commission was formed of Christian men and women sharing certain broad convictions as to the Kingdom of God, and somewhat

sharply divided theologically, philosophically and politically. In regard to the actual reference of the Commission there was a very large measure of unanimity \* \* \* It was, however, impossible to reconcile fully the points of view of those who take the Pacifist position and of those who, while regarding war as irreconcilable with the triumph of the Gospel, cannot as yet condemn it in all circumstances \* \* \*

"All agreed that the full coming of God's Kingdom on earth involves the cessation of war, but that this can only be brought about from within, by the spiritualisation of man. 'Seek first the Kingdom of God' must be the real way of attacking the war problem. In a Christian social world order war would be impossible, just as a murderous attack on his neighbour on the part of an individual Christian is impossible. A Christian is not only concerned with doing the best he can with the world as he finds it, but with obeying the laws of the Kingdom of God. He wants to make the world a place in which the soul can expand fully, and develop its latent energies; the Christian politics and citizenship must serve this end, or cease to be Christian. War is fatal to these ideals.

"Differences arose on the interpretation of certain sayings of our Lord in regard to war and resistance to wrong, as well as in the conception the members of the Commission held of the value and functions of the State. It will be seen, therefore, that at a certain stage statements are included in the Report which

express the two points of view." (1)

The Christians composing this Committee did not resolve any of the crucial points of difference between the pacifist and non-pacifist positions. They re-examined the problem, and re-stated it in terms of post-war events but did not bring the two positions any nearer a rapprochement. Nor could they indicate a new strategy for resolving the central issue, "Is it possible for a Christian ever to take part in war?" However they found ground for agreement on many issues on the periphery - much more agreement than would have been possible during a war period. They were able to issue a unanimous statement on the question, "Is war right or wrong?":-

"It may be contended that when man's moral progress is complete, war will be no more, but that meanwhile man is not good enough to solve his problems without war, and that even those whose conscience is for themselves in advance of their own age or people, must bear the iniquities of others in submitting to, and even participating in modes of action which they cannot approve. In order not to be morally a stumbling-block to another, they must sacrifice the full expression of their conscience in their conduct: they must act on a lower level with their fellows rather than separate themselves from them \* \* \*

"Such a presentation of the moral situation makes a strong appeal to many, and one does not judge those who respond to it. But two doubts regarding its moral soundness at once arise. Is not conscience the one good which no man has a moral right to sacrifice?

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(1) C.O.P.E.C. Report VIII, Christianity and War pp.1-2  
Longmans, Green and Co. London 1924

Admitting in all humility that he may be mistaken, and judging with charity those who differ with him, for each man his own conscience must be the supreme moral authority. All else he may in love for others surrender, but that law within, for that links him to a wider moral community of God and mankind, and love for that is the supreme moral love. If this be so, in the second place, the best gift that any man in love for his fellows can bestow on them at any time is loyalty to that inner law. He misses a great opportunity if in just such a situation he does not maintain the supremacy of conscience." (1)

The Committee seemed to be holding close to the pacifist position in this high estimate of the value of the individual conscience, not only to the individual himself but to society. They appear to move even closer to the pacifist group in the next statements in which, first, a certain concept of national honour is depreciated, and secondly, the analogy between the army and the civil police force is depreciated.

"But it may be said we are surely to fight when our country's 'honour' is impugned. The word deserves consideration. For the honour of a nation works at times in a way opposite to the honour of an individual. An honourable man will take no advantage over his neighbour, either by violence, legality, or deceit \* \* A nation's 'honour' too often consists in scoring off a rival, and having to yield nothing. Individual honour, then, is opposed to excessive egoism, national honour is sometimes the same as

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(1) Ibid.

satisfied egotism. We must therefore scrutinise very carefully every claim advanced under cover of 'national honour.' " (1)

Then the "policeman" analogy was considered.

"\* \* \* the use of force in an ordered society is limited as far as possible. Moral obligations to the criminal are recognised. The policeman who uses unnecessary violence is censured by the bench \* \* \* But in war, not only the use of force, but falsehood, deceit, and the loosening of all moral bonds are justified \* \* It is thought by some misguided patriots a duty to hate women and children, and to demand reprisals upon them. Far as the treatment of criminals fails to be what it ought, there is not the remotest analogy between what is done to them to restrain them from wrongdoing, and what is done, justified, and even made boast of in war \* \* \* " (2)

Not satisfied with these denunciations of war, the Committee added another - the most damaging of all - war was futile.

"A consideration which must not be passed over in collecting the data for a judgment is the futility of most wars. They do not accomplish what they were intended to accomplish, however honest and honourable may have been the motives of those engaged in them, or when men look back upon them after a lapse of years they see that the ends, so far as they were legitimate ends, might have been accomplished in another way. Lord Salisbury admitted that in the Crimean War, Great Britain had 'backed the wrong horse' \* \* \* The war to end war has left Europe in a condition

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(1) ibid.

(2) ibid.

in which, unless the hearts of nations be changed, another war is being prepared." (1)

The Committee, still as a unit, attempted to discover "the Christian position in regard to war by analyzing the teaching, method, and example of Jesus." They agreed at the outset with many previous investigations that "there is no direct evidence that Jesus explicitly either condemned or condoned war. His view on the question must be attained by indirect means." The Committee, certain that the concept of the Kingdom of God was fundamental in determining the attitude to war, began at that point.

" \* \* \* the wideness of God's mercy and the power of His love accounts for the difference in our Lord's conception of the Kingdom from that of His contemporaries. He thinks of it as something growing (Mark 4); already present (Luke 11:20); yet still to come (Luke 11:2). The humble and childlike are already in the Kingdom, and the Kingdom is itself spoken of as an inward state (Luke 17:21). It would then appear that Jesus thought of God as winning His control of men by bringing them to a repentance ( a change of mind), so that they inwardly submitted themselves entirely to Him \* \* \* Every man who enters into such relations with God becomes both consciously, and in his unconscious dealings with his fellows, God's messenger to them, leading them to make a like change, and accept a like control. Thus the Kingdom as an individual state of mind and heart passes over into a universal reign of God over

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(1) ibid.

all men.

"The whole of Jesus' life and actions are seen to work towards this end. He made His aim the change of the individual, and the appeal made in life and teaching He confirmed in His death \* \* His God was love \* \* \* Thus His death confirms His message. But in another way also it confirms it. Facing evil and hostility, Jesus continued to meet them with love and forgiveness \* \* \* Jesus loves His enemies, and dies at their hands, because God loves His enemies, and seeks to save them from their sin. All this shows Jesus definitely regarding love as the power which is to conquer, and Himself trusting it to the end. It suggests a repudiation of all exclusive nationalisms and the establishment of a world-wide Kingdom of God, in which love will be the motive power of life." (1)

Endeavouring to investigate fully and impartially, the Committee then gave the teachings of Jesus which appeared contrary to this unbroken reign of love. These are well known. The quotation is given here in order to show the attitude of the Committee members.

"In apparent contradiction to all this about love, there is a great deal in the Gospel about the destruction of the wicked. There is the fate of those who cause little ones to stumble (Mark 9:42ff) - the hell of fire where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The wicked husbandmen are to be destroyed because of their unfaithfulness (Mark 11:9). We are to fear Him who has power to cast into hell (Luke 12:5). The unfaithful servant is to be

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(1) ibid.

cut asunder and to have his portion with the hypocrites (Matt.24:51). The unprofitable servant is to be cast into outer darkness, 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (25:30). And the blasphemer against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin (Mark 3:29) \* \* \*

"With these must be associated certain words of Jesus sometimes held to show approval of war. 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt.10:34). No one really believes that the object of Jesus' coming was to set man against man. But everyone knows that the choice between the old standards and the new that He introduced does bring division, and sometimes even war \* \* \* In a discourse at the Last Supper, Jesus is reported to have told His disciples to sell their garments and buy swords (Luke 22:35-38). A few hours later He rebuked one of the disciples for using his sword (Matt.26:52-53). So it does not look as if the words were to be taken literally. This statement is of such doubtful meaning that no certain conclusions can be drawn from it." (1)

Close attention was given to two of the sayings of Jesus which must always be evaluated in determining Jesus' teaching on war. They are "Love your enemies", and "Resist not evil." These have ever been subject to a wide variety of interpretation and used as "proof-texts" by all Christian groups from the most militaristic to the absolute pacifist. In the remarks that follow we see how close the Committee followed the usual pacifist interpretation.



"We will now look more closely at two sayings of our Lord which have most bearing on the matter. 'Love your enemies' (Matt. 5:43-48). This is noteworthy, not only as a principle of action, but especially because of the ground upon which Jesus urges it. 'That ye may be the sons of your Father in heaven.' The implication is that we are to do good to all men, bad and good alike, and to consider their welfare equally because God does so. It may be questioned whether national enemies or individual enemies were before our Lord's mind, but there is no reason to think that He would have countenanced different attitudes in the two cases. The reaction of love to hate is enjoined because it is God's reaction, and therefore of universal validity.

" 'Resist not him that is evil' (Matt. 5:38-42). This section naturally divides into two parts. There is first the statement of a general principle of retaliation and retribution: 'Resist not.' The second part consists of several instances of how this principle is to be carried out. The general principle is the important matter. If that is carried out, and the evil-doer is met with kindness, conciliation, and love, the action taken is a comparatively unimportant detail. But the instances still have some importance. 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.' This clearly implies that one should rather receive a repetition of the first injury than repay with injury in the same way \* \* \* 'Give to him that asketh' indicates that the generous spirit, even to the demands of a tyrant, is better than the opposite attitude. These indications, then, one and all

point to carrying out the principle of non-resistance to its fullest extent. They also indicate that it is not a negative principle, but is positively 'overcoming evil with good,' as St. Paul phrased it." (1)

After traveling this far in unity, the pacifists and non-pacifists parted company for a time, issuing separate statements concerning methods - not objectives. The objectives of Christian pacifists and Christian non-pacifists have always been the same. Even in time of war both groups wish to save Christianity in their nation, maintain Christian principles throughout the world, uphold justice, and secure individual freedom and liberty. The conflict arises between them in the choice of method. The non-pacifists hold that there are times when these objectives can be accomplished only by war. The pacifists say, "Never by war."

In 1924 the division was again, not on objectives, but on methods. Still searching for some common ground the non-pacifists began their separate statement by saying:-

"Among all Christians there should be, although there are not as yet, the following common convictions about war: (1) that war is contrary to the spirit and purpose as well as the teaching of Christ: (2) that a Christian is bound to do all he can to promote the interests of peace, and to prevent the provocation of war: (3) that any war of aggression of which the motive is greed, pride, selfishness, or worldliness is wrong, should be unreservedly

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(1) ibid. pp.49-50

condemned, and should be opposed by all available means of influencing public opinion and popular sentiment, not only by individual Christians, but by Christian Churches in their corporate testimony and influence." (1)

This statement is significant because of the unqualified assertion of the supremacy of the individual conscience over the claims of the State. The implications are not developed or explored by the non-pacifist group, but such a position as they have taken could easily foster a state of civil war within the nations. It is in fact what happened during the American Civil War, when General Robert E. Lee, believing the rebel cause righteous and the Federal cause otherwise, left the United States army to which he had sworn allegiance and joined the rebel forces of the South. This did not eliminate war, but prolonged the war. Lee was one of the greatest military leaders of his time, and augmented the resources of the South with his genius.

The next part of the non-pacifist statement struck into the heart of the contention with pacifists. It concerned the interpretation of the teaching to love the enemy.

"It is generally agreed that in morals absolute rules cannot be laid down; there are permanent and universal principles, but their application must be relative to time and place. A Christian must always love, and not hate; he must ever be willing to forgive and never seek revenge; he must be ready for any sacrifice which love and forgiveness may demand. What is not certain is whether love always demands non-resistance to violence, outrage,

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(1) ibid. p.52

or wrong, and that forgiveness must be offered whatever be the attitude of the person to be forgiven. It is not certain that resistance to wrong and holding back of forgiveness may not be the sacrifice which the highest moral interests may require \* \* To forgive an injury done to ourselves may be a clear duty; but not so clear the duty of allowing another, whom we could shield, to suffer hurt. More complex even is the situation of a government, with the responsibility of maintaining the order of the community, the obedience to its laws, of thus protecting the person and the property of its subjects \* \* \* " (1)

Non-pacifists must live uneasily with a dilemma which pacifists, not accepting war as a method ever to be used by Christians, do not have to face. The dilemma arises because war is evil and inadequate for fulfilling moral obligations, but at times it is necessary to use the evil to bring about good. There are times when "no other course" seems possible.

"It must be conceded that war is as inadequate and inappropriate a method of fulfilling a moral obligation as could well be conceived \* \* to limit its scope to the fulfilment of the moral purpose for which it may have been undertaken has hitherto passed the wit of man \* \* \* Admitting all this, Christian men have found themselves in a situation in which no other course than war for the safety or honour of the nation seemed possible. So far the Christian Church generally has not understood the teaching of Christ, or the spirit and purpose of the Gospel, as to regard

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(1) ibid. pp.53-54

war as for the Christian absolutely prohibited in such circumstances."<sup>(1)</sup>

They repeated what had been said numerous times before by non-pacifists; "that the teaching of Jesus was relative to time and place in its concrete applications of His enduring truth." The obligation of the small primitive Christian community differed from the obligation on one of the modern Great Powers. "It may be argued", they said, "that what was the duty of the small Christian community, passive submission and not active resistance, placed as it was at that time, is not necessarily the duty of a nation when confronted with an assault on its independence."

They developed the usual line of thought about the "evolutionary" character of God's revelation. These non-pacifists felt that, "Christian wisdom must under the guidance of the Spirit of God judge whether the stage of development has been reached when this element in the ideal can be fully actualised."

There was a note, almost of despair, as they looked back over history. "There are few wars which could be justified from the standpoint which has been enunciated, for neither in scope, purpose, nor result do wars generally conform to the moral requirements which the Christian conscience must affirm." (2) It might be inferred from this and the previous statements that the pacifist position is the ultimate Christian position, its only weakness being that it is too advanced for the 20th. century.

If the Committee's non-pacifist statement was distinguished in any one respect from previous pronouncements by similar groups, it

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(1) ibid. pp.54-55

(2) ibid. p.58

was upon its emphasis on the supremacy of the individual Christian conscience. This emphasis was maintained from the opening to the conclusion, which was a proposed pledge to be taken by all Christians. It placed a heavy burden of responsibility upon the individual, not only upon his conscience but upon his political intelligence. Each Christian was pledged to decide that his country had in good faith submitted its cause to an international Court, and after such submission had accepted the decision of such Court. In the face of political realities and organized propoganda the burden placed on the individual Christian appears most heavy. This is the proposed pledge:-

"Believing that Law must take the place of War in international disputes, we, the undersigned, solemnly pledge ourselves to withhold service from any Government which refuses to submit the causes of the dispute to an international Court, or which refuses to accept the decision of such Court. We will fight to defend our country in the event of an attack by another nation which has been offered arbitration, and which has refused it, but in no other circumstances." (1)

The pacifists then gave their separate statement, attempting also in the opening to preserve as much unity as possible. It is worthy of note that both groups attempted to preserve the fellowship. They sensed the danger of this contention in the Christian witness concerning war. The public might rightly ask how the Church could speak of peace if it could not eliminate the war in its own members.

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(1) ibid. pp.58-59

"All recognition of duty is subjective. Undoubtedly there must be a final good which is the aim of all life, and equally there must be an ideally right way by which that aim may be attained, but no individual has either a perfect conception of the aim, nor an unerring grasp of the method of its attainment. Each man must to the best of his powers, using all the light he can get, follow the way that to his conscience appears right, in reliance upon the Spirit of truth who guides into all truth those who sincerely desire to be led. Thus while every man must act according to the dictates of his own conscience and use every endeavour to gain all the enlightenment he can, no one has a right to blame another for acting according to his own. What follows is then in no sense meant as a condemnation of those Christians who do not accept Pacifism." (1)

Both groups seem to be saying, "War is a personal matter between God and each individual." The claims of the State, the responsibility to society, the duty of preserving liberty and freedom - all are to be considered in relation to the individual conscience. A Christian cannot place the burden of making a responsible decision on any agency external to himself. This was consistently a pacifist tenet, but would not have been supported generally by the non-pacifists during the war period. In time of the actual emergency the conscience to be followed was the conscience of the majority as embodied in the national laws and enactments. It was one of the most frequently repeated criticisms of the objectors that they were placing their

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(1) ibid. pp.59-60

individual wills against the will of the majority.

At the outset the pacifists made their position clear by stating that it was war which was under consideration and not the use of force generally. Their reasons for the condemnation of war follow the usual form. Rather than breaking any new ground they appear to be more of a re-statement. The reasons against war are based on the material and the spiritual aspects of the world; modern inventions have made the world so small that understanding and love are a necessity, and secondly, the life of Jesus is a condemnation of war.

"If we look upon the modern world, in which, owing to the development of rapid transit, all the nations are brought close together, we realise that if there is to be any enrichment of life for mankind generally, it can only come about by the cultivation of all that makes for mutual understanding and harmony amongst men, of sympathy and the power to understand another's point of view, of sincerity, and perhaps most of all the willingness to surrender one's own individual interests in deference to the wider interests of the whole. Now it is these that war tends to kill \* \* \*

"These considerations on the one hand, and the contemplation of Jesus Christ and what He stood for on the other hand, lead an increasing number of Christians to deny that war can under any circumstances be right. If war were a single simple phenomenon, merely one case of the problem of the use of coercion upon persons, it might be true that no general moral principle of Christianity could be urged against it. But it is a most complex phenomenon,



which, having its roots in evil desires, false aims, and sinful passions, of men, destroys human life, blights human happiness, increases the moral obliquity of mankind, and tends to perpetuate itself by preventing the growth of those spiritual qualities which are necessary for its extinction and producing those that make for its continuance \* \* \*

"Christians from St. Paul's time onwards have seen the whole significance of their Lord brought to a focusing point at Calvary; and it is surely in the light of the Cross, the supreme revelation of God's nature, that we can best interpret the fullness of Christ. On the Cross Christ declares not only the full horror of man's sin, but God's way of treating the sinner. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem, human history reached its greatest crisis; men were challenged to pass judgment upon man, to choose or reject the things that belonged to their peace." (1)

The pacifists took care to answer one criticism that was often directed at them, especially in time of war. It was that they "were doing nothing about it." This they denied. They were at all times actively engaged in spiritual warfare.

"Between the cowardice which shirks moral responsibility and yields itself a victim to circumstances and the wise and passionate devotion which seeks and saves the lost there is a world of difference. The Christian is in a real sense called to struggle: only certain weapons are forbidden him. He cannot willingly use evil means to achieve good ends: such means do not, in fact,

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(1) ibid. pp.59-65

accomplish their purpose \* \* \* (1)

Here was the source of division in the two groups. They could agree on many elements in the problem. There were so many points of agreement that complete sentences could be taken from the separate statement of one group and placed with that of the other with out any disharmony. But to the question, "May war ever be used by the Christian to accomplish good?", one group answered "Yes", and the other, "No". The pacifists explained their traditional negative answer when they discussed the task of the Church.

"A great task that lies before the Christian Church is the abolition of war. How is this to be done? Deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of men is the conviction that there must be some power by which sin and evil in the world can be met and overcome. That power is love. There is a natural law in the spiritual world, and love that emanates from God is invincible \* \* It comes to this, we cannot overcome hatred by hatred or war by war, but only by the opposites of these. Evil can only be effectively overcome by the mightier power of love. The Church is the custodian of that mighty power, committed unto it by Christ Himself.

"The acceptance of such an alternative to the method of war as this calls for nothing short of a Holy Crusade. This Crusade must be conceived as a Great Adventure on the part of the Christian Church. The spirit of adventure is dependent upon a mighty Faith - a faith that is willing to take any risks because it is confident

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(1) ibid. pp.66-67

that God leads." (1)

With the conclusion of the separate statements the Committee members joined hands again as they considered, The Christian's Duty, both in time of war and in time of peace. Christians are always Christian - in time of war or in time of peace. This is one of the most distinctive Christian thoughts on war. Commenting on war-time duty the Committee said:-

"The conditions during war involve many moral and spiritual perils; and more than ever must the Church of Christ witness and labour for the Christian way of life, against hatred and cruelty, and for pity and helpfulness.

"However intense the feelings of patriotism, the Church as a universal community must never lend itself to any propaganda of prejudice and passion. It must be scrupulously just and even kind in its judgment of the enemy, and conscientiously honest in its scrutiny of its own nation and that nation's allies. In the lying which is regarded as a necessary weapon of warfare it can have no part. The Church must give itself to the ministry of intercession for friend and foe alike that misunderstandings and enmities may cease and love may prevail \* \* \*

"Not only for those whose consciences allow them to become combatants, but even for civilian workers, responsible servants of the Government, difficult problems arise, which cannot here be discussed in detail. While occasions for opposing the action of the nation in its emergency should not be sought, and relief of

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(1) ibid. pp.70-71

conscience where it is offered should not be refused, yet the conscience which has been, by prayer and scrutiny, purged of self-assertion, and has been submitted to the Spirit's guidance, must remain the ultimate authority for each man, but must be obeyed with charity for all who differ from its dictates \* \* \* (1)

After reading this series of war-time duties for Christians the question might be raised whether the pacifist or non-pacifist groups were the more idealistic. The pacifists surveyed history and said, "There has never been a Christian war - there can not be one." The non-pacifists looked at history and admitted there had never been a Christian war, but still believed one possible.

The Committee, turning their attention to the peace-time duties of Christians emphasized war prevention. The responsibility to support the League and to give it the required spiritual strength was stressed. They recommended various organizations such as the War-Resisters International, Society of Friends, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Convinced that education for or against war was of vital concern to Christians, the Committee looked critically at teaching, especially of history and geography. Of this they said:-

"A factor of primary importance is the teaching of history and geography; wrongly taught, those opinions are formed and sentiments cherished, which are the causes of war, but rightly taught, the hopes and aims of youth can be enlisted in promotion of peace \* \*(2)

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(1) ibid. pp.77-79

(2) ibid. p.87

Cadet and O.T.Corp were an even more serious problem for the Christian working toward war prevention.

"Cadet and O.T.Corps form a more difficult question than the teaching of history or geography. They are definitely a preparation for war, and seem to many incompatible with an educational training towards peace as the higher ideal. The value which is claimed for them is that they teach discipline, keenness, a proper pride and helpfulness to others \* \* \* It may be doubted whether, in pre-war days military drill, uniforms, and rifles were consciously associated in the minds of the Cadets with war at all \* \* \* That is no longer the case; training has become more technical \* \* \* the bearing of it all on national defence more direct. This is perhaps a passing phase \* \* \* If not, then it will be difficult for those who consider war wrong to square this cadet training with their reading of Christianity. 'Si vis pacem, para bellum' may or may not be a sound practical maxim, it cannot, when the preparations include the young, be said to create an atmosphere which exalts the virtue of peace." (1)

While considering the relation of education and war the Committee praised the peace efforts of the Student Christian Movement and took the occasion to quote the call to action which was issued by the World's Student Christian Federation at its international Conference in Peking in 1922. Following is the call:-

" 'We consider it our absolute duty to do all in our power

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(1) ibid. pp.87-88

to fight the causes leading to war, and war itself as a means of settling international disputes ... We desire that the different National Movements of the Federation should face fearlessly and frankly in the light of Jesus' teaching the whole question of war, and of those social and economic forces which tend to issue in war.' " (1)

The Committee commented:-

"There can be no doubt that in all countries to-day the youth of the world is ahead of the average opinion of the Christian Churches in its international thinking and in its determination to abolish war." (2)

The report closed with a call that "Christians restore the community of the Spirit among all communions in all lands in a common witness of the Gospel." (3) It was signed by; Alfred E.Garvie (Chairman), George Aitken, Bertram P.Appleby, G.F.Barbour, George M.Ll.Davies, Oliver Dryer, Lucy Gardner, John W.Graham, R.O.Hall, H.L.Jackson, Charles E.Raven, R.G.Routh, Francis Underhill, F.F.Urquhart, William E. Wilson.

With the name of F.F.Urquhart there was a note of reservation expressing his non-pacifist criticism of one of the findings.

" \*\*\* I cannot be content with the grudging admission, even of those who are not 'pacifists', that war may sometimes be permissible. So long as there is no universal State capable and willing to impose a just peace, war may, I believe, be the

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(1) ibid. p.91

(2) ibid. p.91

(3) ibid. p.93

sacred duty of a nation as the only means of preventing gross national injustice. On the other hand to wage an unjust war is a great national crime, and it is the duty of all Christians and all men to do what they can to prevent their country from committing it." (1)

The Committee, out of their group thinking, formulated six recommendations to present to the Conference.

"1. That the Christian Churches should in their public testimony and with all their influence oppose all policies that provoke war, and support all conditions in the relation of nations favourable to peace, and the agencies which promote peace.

"2. That they should unreservedly condemn, and refuse to support in any way, a war waged before the matter in dispute has been submitted to an arbitral tribunal, or in defiance of the decision of such a tribunal.

"3. That they should exert all their authority in securing protection from any form of persecution for those whose conscience forbids their rendering any kind of war-service.

"4. That by study of the New Testament in the light of the guidance of the Spirit, they should seek to reach a common Christian conscience in regard to war.

"5. That they should cultivate such intimate fellowship with the Churches of other lands that through the one Church of

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(1) ibid. pp.94-95

Jesus Christ the spirit of reconciliation shall triumph over all national prejudices, suspicions, and enmities, and that the churches of many lands may unitedly formulate a Peace-Programme which can be commended to all who profess and call themselves Christian, so that Christ shall reign as Prince of Peace.

"6. That the Churches should hold these principles, not only in times of peace, when their practical denial is not threatened, but that also, when war is imminent, they should dare to take an independent stand for righteousness and peace, even if the Press and public opinion be at the time against them." (1)

When these recommendations came before the Conference there were motions for amendments, and ensuing debate. In the debate we have a transcript of the unrehearsed spontaneous utterance of the moment which reveals the thought close to the heart. In its particular way, the debate on the proposed amendments is as revealing of Christian thought on war as the formal findings of the Committee. We see how far apart the pacifists and non-pacifists were; the harmonies of the conference table were broken immediately when the two groups were confronted with a life situation. Also, in contrast to the findings of the Committee, there was an unmistakable claim made for the supremacy of the State over the individual conscience. Part of the transcript of the debate follows:-

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(1) *ibid.* pp.99-100



"The Chairman said there were two or three amendments, one to insert, as a preamble to the first Resolution, the words 'That all war is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ.' Another, by the Rev.F.E.Hutchinson, was to the effect 'That in time of war more than ever the Church of Christ must witness and labour for the Christian way of life against hatred and cruelty and for helpfulness. It must resolutely seek to assuage passion and encourage that sensitiveness to truth and that Christian temper which can alone effect a real and lasting pacification'. The third, to be moved by Canon Compton, was to omit the words 'and refuse to support any war' from Resolution 2.

"MR.F.E.POLLARD(Reading) moved the first amendment on behalf of the Society of Friends. He wanted the Conference to assert a great and tremendous principle, by taking the words from page 52 of the Report in the non-pacifist section and embodying them definitely in a resolution. Some people might wish to qualify the principle, by suggesting that war, wrong as it was, could nevertheless be justified in certain circumstances by its aim, but here was no involved question of the degree of seriousness. If war was contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus, how could we justify the use of it, whatever the circumstances? He concluded by stating that if anyone held back from assenting to the amendment through a desire to keep himself free to suit his action to some conceivable emergency in the future, he should remember that war was not an occasional emergency but

a permanent institution for whose further existence anyone who hesitated to apply this Christian principle would be in a measure responsible. War was a tremendous educational force, hostile to Christianity at every point - were we going to allow it to continue?

"REV. A. D. BELDEN (Westcliff-on-Sea), seconding, urged the necessity of making as strong and emphatic a stand as possible against war. Even assuming that war might again become necessary, we ought to divorce the Divine name from a necessary evil. War is not Love to the uttermost sacrifice: it is not redemptive. If you are forced to take a lower position, at least dissociate from that position the name of Jesus \* \* \*

"REV. CANON W. C. COMPTON (Dover - Christian Social Crusade), in moving his amendment to Resolution 2, said he did not want the Resolution to be interpreted as being an endorsement by Copeck of the right of a citizen to disobey the laws of his country whenever his conscience bade him. The words of the Resolution would commit Copeck to the position that a sailor on board a ship would be justified, if his country were drawn into a war, in refusing to carry out his duty. He held that a man's individual conscience had not the right to set itself up against his country and his duty to his country. If there were occasion when we were justified in using force to resist evil in our individual life, we were also justified in using force, called war, in defence of what is right.

"REV.H.R.WILKINSON(Ipswich Diocesan Conference) said of course they were agreed that war was contrary to the teaching of Christ and agreed to urge that everywhere. But when a Government responsible for a people is driven to choose between disaster and a great sacrifice, were we to refuse to share that sacrifice? Were we to say that the sacrifices of those who gave themselves at the beginning of the war were wrong? Do not let it go out that Copec has said this. We should be met with the sneer, 'Oh, you are the people who not only teach what Christianity is, but want to govern the country as well.'

REV.MALCOLM SPENCER(Harrow - 'Social Function' Commission) spoke of the danger of taking the pronounced pacifist position suggested by the first amendment - the danger of assenting to generalities, which could not be sustained under pressure \* \* he urged that there was a time-element in the evolution of the moral capacity of individuals and of peoples. At present we had to assent to conditions in the government of nations which were non-moral, not just as a matter of policy but of principle. We must have a counsel of perfection, but must acquire power to carry it out in successive stages \* \* \*

"THE REV.G.A.STUDDERT-KENNEDY(London - I.C.F.) said he was so near to being a pacifist that he was not sure whether he was or not. Perhaps the only thing that kept him from being one was fear. He and many other people were certainly afraid of doing

again what they had once done. He had been one who believed during the war that, if we won a complete victory in the field, we could make a new world. He had said so with great emphasis, and he was very sorry and repentant now. He ought to have known that he was talking nonsense and he was anxiously seeking protection from doing it again. There was great danger of doing it again unless we protected ourselves. If it was a matter for individual conscience, that conscience must be strengthened to keep its vision clear once war had begun. We needed protection against the instinct to fight and die. The Church should pledge herself, for our Lord never meant the individual conscience to stand alone. He pleaded for a determination not to work in any way to support a war which had not first been submitted to arbitration. He claimed the right to mutiny and to lay down arms if necessary. Unless the Conference took a risk, humanity would fail again at the time of crisis, and would wake up to find itself very ashamed \* \* \*

"REV. ARTHUR G. PARHAM, M.C. (Oxford Diocesan Conference) asked the Conference not to pass a Resolution which would be widely misinterpreted by thousands of our Lord's servants who were looking to Copec for a lead. He did not suggest for one moment that war could be in accordance with God's will, but the third Resolution rested on the fundamental untruth that war was an individual question. It was the responsibility of the community which waged war. War was part of the penalty we might have to

pay for our share in the responsibility for the low Christian standard of mankind. If the same conditions arose again as in 1914, could there be any alternative whatever to exactly the same course of action? Could anyone suggest that the community would not be entitled to exert pressure on its citizens who refused to fulfil the obligations of citizenship?

"REV. LEYTON RICHARDS (Birmingham - Congregational Union) pleaded for mutual understanding of each other's positions by the delegates. Pacifists, he said, recognised that there were millions of conscientious assenters by whom pacifism had been misunderstood in two particulars.

"Firstly, it was not placing the individual conscience against the community, but when the two claims clashed, a Christian must give his allegiance to the higher community. Secondly, pacifism was not a mere negative, a mere protest. It rested upon positive applications of the principles of fellowship with all men, of the Fatherhood of God to all sons of men, and the enthronement of Jesus in the hearts of all men. For these principles Pacifists tried to bear, if need be, any temporary disaster and hardship \* \* \*

"DR. GARVIE said, in reference to the third Resolution, surely no Christian would desire conscientious objectors to be open to the same sort of legal treatment again as in the past. The Commission had not committed itself to the position that citizens were bound not to resist aggression, but had restricted

its observations to the case of war without arbitration. The Commission had not run away from the duty of the Christian in time of war, but had dealt fully with it in the last page. With regard to the amendment, was it merely a general statement, or was it to be taken, if passed, a decision for pacifism?

"After silent prayer, the Chairman put Mr. Pollard's amendment, which was carried. The first Resolution on the paper was then carried nem. con. Canon Compton's amendment was lost, and Mr. Hutchinson's was carried by a large majority. The other Resolutions were all carried decisively.

"REV. A. HERBERT GRAY, D.D. (Glasgow), who summed up, said he was still somewhat perplexed. If war were declared to-morrow, he knew what he should do, but he could understand those friends who would do something quite different, and he would wonder whether he was right. He was not ashamed of his attitude. The Christian principle was clear, yet it was difficult to be quite sure what, at any given time and place, was the exact right thing to do. He could not understand anyone being dogmatic about another's duty in so difficult a matter. There were fundamental differences involved which went down to the very depths of the Christian faith \* \* \*

"The problem of war was the supreme social problem, and the problem of abolishing it was the biggest of all \* \* \* He was quite certain that war was always an unchristian method of dealing with the contentions of civilisation, but where he differed from many people was in realising also that the exercise of

the Christian faith required very great grace, which many people and nations did not possess. When a nation or individual had not the qualities which made possible the employment of the Christian method, then they might have to choose between two courses, both of which were wrong. To him it was still an open question whether brute force, with all its horrors, might not be better than refraining from any action. Yet there was no doubt that spiritual forces were supreme over all other forces - all the world could not kill Christ till He Himself was sure His hour had come \* \* \* " (1)

Meeting at the same time as the Commission on Christianity and War was the Commission on International Relations. Two of their statements, one depreciating the value of nationalism and the other defining the unique mission of the Church, are of value in showing the state of Christian thought on war. The pronouncement against nationalism seems more revolutionary than anything said in the entire report of the Commission on Christianity and War. Implied in the statement is that the usefulness of national organization is past and should be supplanted by some new type of political order. The appropriate section of the report follows:-

"War as the method of settling disputes is clearly at variance with \* \* \* conceptions of Christian international relations. With this view the conscience of mankind is already in agreement, though much scepticism prevails as to the practical means of preventing

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(1) The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C. Christianity and War - Discussion  
Longmans, Green and Co. London 1924 pp.172-180

war. Christian efforts should be directed to the creation of such international public opinion and such international relations that war is really impossible. Organised Christianity, with this great object in view, should strive its utmost to eradicate all fundamental or even temporary causes of dispute \* \* \*

"The adoption of the principles set out above must involve a weakening and in many respects a breaking down of national boundaries. This is a result which need excite no special alarm. The doctrine of national sovereignty is a comparatively late invention. It has served its purpose in securing individual liberty and in the political and economic expansion of the nineteenth century. It is time, however, now that patriotism as a human motive should give place to wider conceptions. For many centuries the Christian Church was a supernational force making for the unity of civilisation. Christianity, which is still the greatest universal influence in civilised life, should definitely range itself on the side of frank recognition in political relations \* \* of the essential unity of the interests of all people \* \* \*" (1)

The statement which follows, describing the unique mission of the Church is one of the most clear pronouncements of this period that the Church, in world affairs, has a <sup>function</sup> which cannot be taken by any other organization. In the wave of enthusiasm for the League it was often implied that the League would bring in the Kingdom. All

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(1) C.O.P.E.C. Report VII, International Relations pp.36-37  
Longmans, Green and Co. London 1924



the Church had to do was to lend support and encouragement. This statement makes it clear that the responsibility of the Church cannot be placed on other shoulders.

"If, as we believe, it is the mission of the Church to act as the pioneer of the Kingdom of God, she cannot look to the due fulfilment of her mission in any unloading of her responsibilities upon bodies which do not acknowledge her unique sources of inspiration. For example, while Chapter VI shows how large an opportunity we believe to be open to the League of Nations in the world crisis of to-day, the League, however we may regard it, is not and cannot be occupied with the tasks or directed to the aims which are fundamentally and specifically the business of the Church. The Church must look for the building of a Kingdom which finds expression in a corporate life springing up everywhere, in national and racial communities acknowledging the same values, however variously they seek to incarnate them, with consciousness of interwoven destinies and recognition of a common Ruler \* \* \* " (1)

After the C.O.P.E.C. adjourned a period of 6 years elapsed before the Lambeth Conference was held. It is of interest to compare the statements of the two Conferences especially in view of the events which had taken place in the six year interval.

In 1925 the League, under the leadership of M. Briand of France, scored an important victory by settling the Graeco-Bulgarian dispute.

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(1) ibid. pp.118-119

Greek forces had actually crossed the frontier, and it was the vigorous action of the League, taken just in time that prevented another Balkan war. This successful action of the League enhanced its prestige throughout the Western world.

Another victory for the forces of international law and order was the series of diplomatic instruments for peace and arbitration drawn up at Locarno in 1925. Under these Locarno agreements Germany, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and Italy mutually guaranteed the peace of Western Europe; and Germany undertook to arbitrate all disputes with France, Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. The signing of these agreements marked a definite break from the war atmosphere; the words "allies" and "enemies" were never uttered by any delegate throughout the Conference. (1)

Next there was the program to "outlaw war". A plan started in U.S.A. and soon taken to France, it materialized in the Kellogg-Briand Pact which came into force on July 24, 1929. There were fifteen signatories. This new multilateral Pact was the most far-reaching engagement entered into by the sovereign states of the world. It was, practically speaking, irrevocable. The parties were not at liberty to give individual notice of withdrawal. They had renounced war and they were not free to change that decision. (2)

It seemed that there was at last a new international system to replace the discarded system of pre-war days. Its structure rested on a double foundation. The Covenant of the League and the Kellogg Pact formed a kind of Constitutional framework within

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(1) see: Encyclopaedia Britannica Pact of Locarno, pp.266-267 Vol.14,  
1945

(2) see: The League of Nations and the Rule of Law Alfred Zimmern  
Macmillan and Co. London 1936 pp. 390ff

which the public affairs of the world were to be conducted.'

However, this structure, so imposing in its facade, was found wanting in strength when the period of testing came. The first severe shock was the unprecedented collapse of the New York Stock Exchange which heralded the beginning of the world wide economic depression. Almost immediately, the States, instead of working co-operatively to ward off financial ruin, turned to individual, nationalistic measures. 1930 was the beginning of a period of uneasiness, a turning of the tide for the League of Nations. It was in this year that the Lambeth Conference was held.

Much that was said about war was identical with C.O.P.E.C.; perhaps some difference in statement, but essentially the same. As an example the following statement could be compared with the C.O.P.E.C. pronouncements in regard to patriotism and national honour.

"The Christian Church can make no terms with the idea expressed in the phrase, 'My Country, right or wrong'. Great as is the debt of service that a man owes to his Fatherland, the claim of Christ remains supreme, and the State can only demand the whole hearted loyalty of its citizens when its action is guided by the same principles as the private citizen is taught to apply in his relations to his neighbours \* \* \* If the Christian Church in every nation could refuse to countenance or support a declaration of war by its own government unless that government had inaugurated or accepted a bona fide offer to submit the dispute to arbitration, it would be doing no more than

insisting on the fulfilment of pledges solemnly made." (1)

Because of the pacts and treaties signed in the interval a new name appeared in an old theme - disarmament.

"The British Foreign Secretary recently asserted that disarmament was the acid test of the sincerity of the allegiance of the nations to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Unquestionably, the nations of the world are spending on armaments a sum far in excess of the minimum that we recognise to be necessary for the effective policing of the world \* \* \*

"National pride, the fear of unemployment, the influence of vested interests, dangers of internal disturbance, and the desire to maintain, or to change, the existing territorial system, all play their part in hindering any large measure of international disarmament. But we believe that 'the proper impulse has been given', and that by its patient and courageous support of all well-considered proposals for the limitation of armaments by international agreement, the Church may render effective service to the cause of world peace. The difficulties in the way are a call, not for despair, but for faith and perseverance." (2)

The Lambeth call in behalf of peace had a distinctive newness. It was a plea, well phrased and clear, that peace could be exciting and as demanding of sacrifice as war.

"The idea of peace seems dull and uninspiring when it is so presented as to mean little more than the maintenance of

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(1) Lambeth Conference, 1930

(2) ibid.

the existing order and concentration on material well-being. War has called into exercise some of the noblest qualities of our nature, by its demand for sacrifice, endurance, and co-operation for unselfish ends. Unless we can show that peace affords at least equal scope for these, we shall not succeed in evoking passionate enthusiasm for international peace. We must present an ideal of peace that is not static but dynamic; we must show that, if 'peace hath her victories, not less than war', those victories are only won by effort and sacrifice. The call of the Cross is not a call to ease and security but to conflict, danger, self-discipline and self-sacrifice. To nations, not less than to individuals, peace offers the alternative of ignoble self-indulgence or high tasks of service." (1)

Lambeth, like C.O.P.E.C. stressed the importance of the individual conscience in making the final decisions concerning war. It was a thought that had been given numerous forms of expression at the earlier conference and had been an ever present theme at the earlier conference. The Church of England statement at Lambeth did not diminish this emphasis. They said, "loyalty to our own country must be subordinate to the large loyalty that we owe to the whole human race for whom Christ died." The full statement follows:-

"As the Body of Christ, the Church is super-national; its task is to consecrate national life, but it is false to its mission when it identifies itself with the claim of any nation to self-aggrandisement and disregard of the rights of other nations. God is

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(1) ibid.

no respecter of persons, or nations; His fatherly love goes out impartially to all His children; and loyalty to our own country must be subordinate to the large loyalty that we owe to the whole human race for whom Christ died.

"Every Christian man is called to witness to this truth, and to face, if need be, the cost of his witness. Our prayers for peace must always be associated with the prayer 'Renew a right spirit within me'. Side by side with the building up of safeguards for international peace, we are called to work for the transformation of human character that will inspire a passionate hatred of injustice and falsehood and a passionate devotion to the living Christ." (1)

Of the resolutions passed, No.25 was the most significant for its thought on the nature of war. It was direct and unqualified in stating, "The Conference affirms that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2)

Lambeth, 1930, supported and strengthened the C.O.P.E.C. declarations, but did not add any pioneering thought.

The new treaties and pacts strengthening the League of Nations made a noticeable impact on the thinking of one of the committees reporting to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1931. They gave a "Resolution on Peace", in which they tried to give expression to the new spirit of the times and to the changed conditions under which the nations were living. The Committee said,

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(1) ibid.

(2) ibid.

"The international situation and its governing considerations have been so altered since the War, that a revolution has already taken place in that sphere, though statesmen have not always acted as if they realised this, nor have the peoples advanced their outlook to meet the new conditions." (1)

They felt that the future would be increasingly dominated by such instruments of Peace - the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaty, the Permanent Court of International Justice, and the Briand-Kellogg Pact renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. The public and the Churches had not risen adequately to this new spirit:-

"Public opinion has not advanced as quickly as the provisions in aid of Peace have been evolved; nor can it be said that opinion within the Churches has risen adequately to the new spirit of international agreements or to the teaching of our Lord on the questions of Peace and War." (2)

But in spite of these safeguards the Christian mind could not give up the thought of a possible war. What follows is the most significant statement in the "Declaration of Peace." It indicates that even in the days of Locarno and the Briand-Kellogg Pact that war, in the mind of the non-pacifist Christian, was still the final arbiter.

"If the time should come when a nation disregards its obligations under these instruments, or acts in such a manner

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(1) Church of Scotland

(2) ibid.

that some great Christian interest is imperilled, War may be imposed upon an unwilling Christian society as the least objectionable of the ways open to it, and a Christian might conceivably be so circumstanced that he could do no other than take up arms." (1)

After making their "Declaration on Peace", the Committee offered a set of resolutions:-

"1. The General Assembly gratefully acknowledge the success achieved in the endeavour to promote a better international understanding through the League of Nations, through the creation of the Permanent Court and by the signing of such pacts as the Locarno and the Briand-Kellogg Treaty, whereby means are provided for a peaceful settlement of international disputes; and in the light of these, declare that any nation which resorts to War in disregard of its obligations under these instruments, or pursues a policy inconsistent with their spirit, is acting contrary to the mind and will of Christ.

"2. The General Assembly urge the members of the Church to support such organisations as the League of Nations Union and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, and to foster in every possible way that international goodwill which will make for the realisation of the Christian ideal of Peace among the nations.

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(1) ibid.



"3. The General Assembly rejoice in the limitation of Naval armaments already secured, but declare their conviction that the level of armaments generally prevailing is still an incentive to a fresh and ruinous competition in equipment for War, and so constitutes a danger to the Peace of the World.

"4. The General Assembly look forward with hope to the Disarmament Conference, to be held in 1932, and call ministers and the members of the Church to sympathetic study of the issues at stake, and to earnest prayer to Almighty God that this great opportunity of advance towards World Peace may not pass unused, but that the nations may be willing to serve the high ends of God's Kingdom even at sacrifice, and to further His will for Peace on the earth." (1)

When these Resolutions came before the Assembly for approval there was a debate on No. 1. The occasion was a proposed amendment that would have placed the stigma of being "contrary to the mind of Christ" directly on war, and not on the breaking of treaties. The debate was between the pacifist and the non-pacifist groups in the Church of Scotland. Although these designations were not specifically called, the line of distinction is clear.

The proposed amendment was verbally no more than a phrase, but in meaning it was much more than that. The Resolution, as it was originally delivered pronounced treaty breaking contrary to the mind and will of Christ. This was no more than a general principle

of Christian ethics accepted by all Christians with little or no dissention. It only said that men and nations should keep their pledged word and was a safe, non-controversial statement.

The proposed amendment would have entirely shifted the meaning of the resolution as delivered, making it an unqualified condemnation of war as being contrary to the mind and will of Christ. That immediately placed it in the area of the pacifist and non-pacifist controversy.

The transcript shows that the elements of the New World - the League of Nations, the Locarno Treaties, and the Briand-Kellogg Pact had made no change in this damaging contention within the Church. It is an important document, showing as it does without any retouching the thought and emotions of a group of Christians as they discussed an actual issue about war. The transcript follows:-

"MR. OLIVER DRYER, Bonnyrigg, said that the motion of which he had given notice referred to Resolution 1 on page 539. It proposed to insert the words 'and in view of these and of the nature or effects of modern warfare, as now recognised, declare that war, considered as an institution for the settlement of international disputes, is incompatible with the mind and method of Christ, and therefore incompatible with the mind and method of His Church.' This would make the resolution a declaration on the ethics of war, and not merely, as it now stood, a declaration on the ethics of treaty-breaking. The words of the present amendment had appeared in the resolution submitted by

the Committee to last Assembly, but then they stood alone, and had been the subject of misinterpretation and criticism. They made no reflection on the political action of this nation in 1914. They made only the ethical pronouncement that the way of war was not the way of Christ \* \* \*

"They had been told that the Westminster Confession justified war in certain cases. He supposed that, had he been speaking from that place on what those divines wrote on theology, it would be well to speak with a degree of respect. But when those gentlemen of 300 years ago wrote about war, and it was quoted as having some binding authority on them to-day, he snapped his fingers at it. What did the men of the seventeenth century, with their polite, private, little squabbles, know of the thing that they to-day happened to call by the same name, war? Indeed, what did they know in 1914 of this thing, which, if continued, would blot out all civilization, Churches included \* \* \*

" \* \* \* they were asked now to declare that war was incompatible with the mind and the method of Christ, and therefore incompatible with the mind and the method of His Church. He would quote the similar declaration of the Church of England." - - - "

"MR. GORDON QUIG, Monifieth seconded. There was great courage displayed in section 7 on the Declaration on Peace, and all that the amendment implied was that the Assembly should instruct the Committee to display the tiniest fraction more of that courage.

In his experience with non-churchgoers, especially in the open-air meetings, he had discovered that the commonest attack hinged on the Church's attitude to war. They wanted to know where the Church stood, and at present no one could speak with certainty, because they had no clear pronouncement by the General Assembly. So people were sarcastic about their indefiniteness, contemptuous of their evasiveness, and accused them of inconsistency. He had often felt there was truth in the outburst of Karl Barth: 'In ethic, even more than dogmatics, the Church halts between Yes and No; is now silent, now vocal; but always two steps behind the world.' \* \* \* The amendment would remove this reproach so far as their Church was concerned. It made no reflections on their attitude to the war in 1914 \* \* \*

MR. COCKBURN said this was a delicate matter, and anyone in his position might seem to be throwing cold water on a well-intentioned amendment \* \* \*

"The crux of the amendment was the statement that war was incompatible with the mind of Christ. This made no allowance for a war of defence. It might well be that a nation, willing to arbitrate, to make concessions, to leave its quarrel to the settlement of the Permanent Court of International Justice, would still have war forced upon it. The proposed amendment seemed to say that even such a war was incompatible with the mind of Christ. That, his Committee did not believe.

MR. R. V. FERGUSON, Dunbarney, supported the amendment. The Convenor

had said that, when they had great things to defend, war was justifiable. What were those great things which they might be called upon to defend? Were any of them greater than the greatest thing which the Church of Scotland had to defend - even her principle? If he understood the mind of the Master aright, principle was to Him of greater value than life itself, and, when it came to an issue between principle and life, life had to go. Unless a seed fell in the ground and died, it abode alone; but if it fell to the ground and died, it brought forth much fruit. He therefore asked the Assembly to consider seriously the statement suggesting that war was justified when they had things to defend. Let them defend principle.

"MR. THOMAS FRASER, Grangemouth, said he would like to have asked Mr. Dryer one question. Was he of the opinion, as his amendment seemed to indicate, that a Christian nation should under no circumstances defend itself? If so, as the sons of the Covenanters, and heirs of a great inheritance which had been secured by their dyeing the heather with their blood for the sake of freedom, they could never listen to such a milk-and-water proposition, however much they abhorred war.

"MR. J. A. DEAN, Falkirk moved an amendment to the amendment; he wished to insert the words 'except in defence of international justice' after the word 'disputes'.

"By inserting these words they would be doing justice to the spirit of Mr. Dryer's amendment, and would at the same time be conserving one of the great privileges of a Christian government,

the protection of the oppressed. They believed that their Lord would have permitted the use of force rather than that the weak should be abused \* \* \*

"MR. WILLIAM WHITELOW of Hatton, elder, asked whether Mr. Dryer accepted the addition to his amendment \* \* \*

"MR. DRYER said that the addition to his amendment raised certain difficult questions of political expediency and loyalty. His amendment was definitely designed not to raise these questions, still less to prejudge them; but to raise the simple ethical question as to whether the way of war was the way of Christ. He could not accept the addition.

"MR. A. NEVILLE DAVIDSON, Aberdeen, said he had an amendment on the amendment to propose - Insert after the word 'disputes' in Mr. Dryer's amendment the words 'except in defence of international justice'. He said that the Assembly should hesitate to quench the noble spirit of Mr. Dryer's motion. The call of the time is for some bold and fearless pronouncement by the Church on the subject of war. War as a recognised institution for determining the relations between nations was surely utterly contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ; and they should be courageous enough to say so in no equivocal terms, But there were surely cases in which it was a Christian duty and a Christian privilege to defend the cause of the weak, if it be a just and honourable cause. And the Church should make no pronouncement which did not recognise such exceptional situations, and the demands they

might again make on nations to use force, if need be, in defence of international justice, He therefore moved the insertion of the justifying clause, 'except in defence of international justice' \* \* \*

"The vote was taken by a show of hands; Mr. Davidson's motion was put against Mr. Dryer's and carried. It was then put against the deliverance and defeated." (1)

This debate demonstrated again that Christians have not been able to agree whether war will be removed from history by gradual elimination or by repudiation. The pacifist position is that the only way is by absolute, unconditional repudiation. The non-pacifists believe that gradual elimination of the causes, evolution, is the only satisfactory way.

In considering the process of elimination, one error should be guarded against concerning pacts and agreements. The multiplying of pacts, even those constructed on Christian principles, might easily increase the causes of war rather than reduce them. If the non-pacifists will take arms to maintain justice and uphold the sacredness of obligations, any agreements which tended to increase Christian sensibility in international relations would increase the reasons for going to war.

The most certain way to remove war by the gradual process is to increase Christian fellowship and understanding among the peoples of the world. This is not only more certain than any other method, but also has the virtue of uniting all groups within the

Church. It is non-controversial between the pacifists and non-pacifists.

Christians, aware of the value of this method, had in the early years of the century projected a plan for promoting Christian friendship through the Churches. The first meeting of this organization, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, was cancelled because of the beginning of the war.

It survived the war, gained vitality in the post-war period, and in the 1930's the British Council of the Alliance was distributing a publication called Goodwill. The statement of objectives which follows shows the thought in the mind of the Christian organizers concerning the relation of friendship to war.

"I. That, inasmuch as the work of conciliation and the promotion of amity is essentially a Christian task, it is expedient that the Churches in all lands should use their influence with the peoples, Parliaments and Governments of the world to bring about good and friendly relations between the nations, so that, along the path of peaceful civilisation, they may reach that universal goodwill which Christianity has taught mankind to aspire after.

"II. That, inasmuch as all sections of the Church of Christ are equally concerned in the maintenance of peace, and the promotion of good feeling among all races of the world, it is advisable for them to act in concert in their efforts to carry the foregoing resolution into effect.

"III. That, in order to enable the different Churches to be



brought into touch with one another, steps should be taken to form in every country councils of either a denominational or inter-denominational character (as the circumstances of each case require), whose object it will be to enlist the Churches, in their corporate capacity, in a joint endeavour to achieve the promotion of international friendship and the avoidance of war, and that for the purpose a central bureau should be established for facilitating correspondence between such councils, collecting and distributing information, and generally co-ordinating the work connected with the movement." (1)

The British Council, in its Annual Report for 1930 spoke hopefully of the development of "the peace mind" or "the will to peace" in Great Britain. This development could be noted, said the Report of the British Council of the Alliance, in a series of resolutions passed by the Alliance which had gained acceptance in Great Britain. These resolutions concerning disarmament, arbitration, limitation of sovereignty, and the elimination of war cover approximately the same period as the present chapter. It will be of value to look at the section of the Annual Report containing them and see what it was that indicated the development of "the peace mind" in Great Britain during these years.

" \* \* \* if the mind travels over a longer period than the past twelve months, it is impossible not to mark with thankfulness and hope a steady growth of what may be called "the peace mind"

or "the will to peace" in Great Britain. Events have come to pass in the political, social and educational world which would have been unthinkable a dozen years ago and are commonplace to-day. Nor is this change of mind less apparent in the Churches, which are the special field of the British Council's work. The accredited religious leaders of the country, it is evident, are thinking more clearly and speaking with more frankness of the fundamental Christian principles upon which world peace can alone be surely based.

"A comparison of resolutions which have been passed at international gatherings of the World Alliance during recent years and which have been accepted as its own by the British Council are illustrations of this progress of thought.

"At Copenhagen in 1922 the International Committee urged the Churches 'to strive for the mental disarmament of the people in all countries and to lead them to insist upon a rapid and universal reduction of armaments and the adoption of methods of arbitration and mediation in the settlement of all international disputes.' At Stockholm in 1925 the same Committee called attention 'to the great principles of arbitration, security and general disarmament \* \* for which the World Alliance stands as an application in the political sphere of the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God on earth.' \* \* \* At Prague in 1928 it again urged disarmament and the judicial settlement of international disputes and requested the Churches to support the

idea that 'the peoples by accepting the bonds of their fraternal unity and the mutual compacts of concerted collaboration, should renounce their claim to unrestricted right of action regardless of international obligations.

"All these resolutions may perhaps be regarded as variations upon a single theme, but there can be no doubt that the resolution passed by the International Management Committee, must be taken as marking an advance in the exposition of the principles of the World Alliance parallel to the political principles embodied in the Kellogg Pact \* \* \*

"The Honorary Secretaries and the Rev. W. H. Drummond, D. D., attended the annual session of the International Management Committee held at Avignon last August. The following resolution \* \* \* was passed by the representatives of the National Councils then present; it was endorsed by the British Council last December and has received considerable publicity both in the Press and through the Churches:-

"1. We wholeheartedly welcome the solemn declaration made by the leading statesmen of the world in the names of their respective peoples, that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another, and agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts, of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means.

"2. We believe that war, considered as an institution for the settlement of international disputes, is incompatible with the mind and method of Christ, and therefore incompatible with the mind and method of His Church.

"3. While convinced that the time must come for the revision of existing treaties in the interests of peace, we maintain that all disputes and conflicts between nations, for which no solution can be found through diplomacy or conciliation, ought to be settled or solved through arbitration, whether by the World Court or by some tribunal mutually agreed. For this purpose we desire the immediate completion of such organisation as will provide means for pacific settlement of every kind of international dispute and will enthrone justice amongst all people.

"4. We earnestly appeal to the respective authorities of all Christian communions to declare in unmistakable terms that they will not countenance, nor assist in any way in, any war with regard to which the Government of their country has refused a bona-fide offer to submit the dispute to arbitration." (1)

It is appropriate to end with the note of hope expressed by the British Council, for the period of Locarno and the Briand-Kellogg Pact was a hopeful time.

Summary of the 1924 - 1931 period

1. Continuation of previous thought patterns; no new paths taken.

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(1) Goodwill Vol.V No.4 (New Series) October 15, 1930 pp.144-146

2. Re-affirmation of the necessity of a strong spiritual life if war was to be eliminated; C.O.P.E.C. meetings
3. War still the ultimate court of appeal for justice.
4. Increased reliance of Christians on agencies external to the Church; League of Nations, Locarno Treaties, and the Briand-Kellogg Pact.
5. Continued sharp division of opinion regarding the choice between unconditional repudiation of war or its gradual elimination.
6. Belief that many causes of war could be eliminated by increasing Christian friendship; World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

CHAPTER FOUR  
1933 - 1939  
AGAINST THE TIDE OF EVENTS

In the years between 1933 and 1939 there was a marked contrast between the deterioration of the world political situation and the positiveness of Christian thought on the elimination of war. Christians had always had the firm belief that war could be - should be eliminated. This was not a new idea for the 1933-1939 period, but rather a sharpening of emphasis.

The political decline was rapid. After 1931 the prestige and authority of the League went into a startling eclipse. In the short period of six years the Locarno treaties and the Kellogg Pact became of no effect. The last bits of the Versailles treaty were repudiated, and the world armament race became devastating to every national economy. However, the mind for peace continued to increase among the Christians of Great Britain. The emphasis in the thought was that now, because of the rapid advance of invention, the strides of pure science, the deepened insight growing out of the experiences of the war, and the growing Revelation of God given to mankind that war was at last to be eliminated from history.

The old troublesome question whether war had ever been right - the contention between evolution and the fiat of God in regard to war, was not raised. It was enough for large groups of Christians to agree that as the 20th. Century approached its second quarter it was time to eliminate war.

Charles E. Raven, giving the Halley Stewart Lecture of 1934 called war "an intolerable anachronism." He said,

" \* \* \* in this matter of war we have now reached a point at which it has become an intolerable anachronism. Yet if we are to outgrow it there is need both to provide an alternative method for effecting the purposes now served by military activity (so far as those purposes are ethically desirable) and to convince the race that in this alternative is to be found a fuller satisfaction than war could give. Man will not abandon war so long as he thinks it the only means for saving himself from destruction; he will not be educated out of it unless he can find other fields for the exercise of the qualities hitherto associated with battle. If there is a more excellent way promising better results and demanding a higher type of sacrifice, then to persist in war should become unthinkable." (1)

This would present no new problem for Christian minds, for the fullness of life is contained in the teaching and the life of Jesus. This has been one of the distinct features of the thought of Christians on war; it was not necessary for the completion of any part of life. Dr. Raven spoke of this;

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(1) Charles E. Raven Is War Obsolete? p.153 Halley Stewart Lecture  
G.A.Allen & Unwin Ltd. London 1934

"That there is a more excellent way is surely axiomatic for the Christian. Whatever his views as to the legitimacy of physical force or as to the case for war, he must admit that if justifiable at all it is only so as a last resort and as a second best. Even the most ardent militarist would only allow an appeal to arms when other methods were of no avail: if he were a Christian he would have to go further and allow it only if love made it necessary to strike." (1)

If it were only in love that a Christian could strike, then war had some obvious disqualifications. It was far too indiscriminate, and soon became completely beyond the control of any Christian direction. Dr. Raven reviewed, and repudiated, the analogy between the army and the police force of a city.

"It is here, surely, that the analogy between the use of the police in the treatment of crime and of soldiery in war - an analogy of very doubtful worth, but much employed by the critics of pacifism - gives us a result very different from what is usually put forward. We are always being asked whether, if we refuse to countenance military action, we would allow lunatics or burglars to terrorize or hold to ransom the community. For myself \* \* the answer to such a question would be that in fact the cases are not identical. We may not yet have reached the level at which coercive restraint of moral imbeciles and criminals can be superseded, though even here on sound principles we refuse to arm the police with revolvers, and regard their

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(1) ibid. p.156



task as reformative not retributive. War is a different matter; it is indiscriminate in its effects, retributive in its intention, and unsatisfactory in its results. Moreover, whereas every educational and social effort is used to discourage crime, no such effort has been used in those types of warfare as, for example, against frontier tribesmen where the parallel is least inappropriate. In the one case force is only used when other methods have been tried; in the other it is the first and almost the sole remedy to be employed \* \* \*

" \* \* the Christian must challenge every use of force with the question 'Is this love's best way?' So challenged, it is to me at least clear that war can be isolated from all other lines of action and condemned as violating the fundamental principles of Christ's religion." (1)

That the repudiation of war was an easy/<sup>step</sup> has not been a thesis of thoughtful Christians. The Christian way - either the way of the non-pacifist or that of the pacifist - is not easy. The sacrifices demanded by the former are much more obvious than those demanded by pacifism, but martyrdom is the pacifist's ultimate weapon against evil. Dr. Raven believed that Jesus taught this by His example. Speaking of the Cross he said,

"Humanly speaking, flight or resistance - that is the admission that the issue depended in the last resort upon military power - was the only practicable course. He refused to take it and forbade

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(1) *ibid.* pp.157-158

it to His followers. He saw it as the way to destruction without redemptive value. Rather let the warriors do their worst. The Cross should be His answer. He had used every other instrument in the armoury of love, had used it to the uttermost, and without avail. One only remained. His last appeal was not the warrior's but the martyr's. Love won by the arbitrament not of struggle but of suffering.

"Martyrdom is the Christian's ultimate obligation - to lay down his life for his friends \* \* \* If we are to get rid of war, it may be that the old obligation will have to be accepted afresh. But, for our present argument, the alternative to war is not necessarily so drastic. We have not yet exhausted, we have indeed hardly set ourselves to try other ways." (1)

For the group of Christians represented by Dr. Raven, the elimination of war demanded a willingness to die. War was not one single evil, it was a complex of all evils in the world. It was the spirit of war that put Jesus to death on the Cross. Willingness to follow His example was the daring attitude that the effort to eliminate war demanded. The overcoming of war was itself war - of a different kind.

"Peace can so easily become a synonym for ease and prosperity that unless we can present its claims in terms of romance and adventure, men at their best will surely spurn it. We have urged from the first that the appeal to dread and disgust or to security and material advantage does disservice to the cause;

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(1) ibid. pp.159-160

and it is perhaps on this account that so many Christians have seemed backward in its advocacy. \* \* \*

" \* \* in the service of the Prince of Peace those who enlist can find a moral equivalent and a satisfying alternative for war. A Peace Army, whatever we may think of the proposals recently made for its creation, is a necessity. But it already exists, and its name is the Church of Jesus Christ \* \* \*

"The Churches have denounced war as inconsistent with His teaching: the Nations have solemnly outlawed it. Surely there are among us men and women sufficiently adventurous, sufficiently Christian, to take up the ministry of reconciliation, to exercise it wherever the outlook is most dangerous, and to convince the world that the power of the Spirit is stronger than the arms of the flesh and that in these days warfare is as obsolete and as intolerable as slavery. The times are admittedly critical: at such a crisis the Christian should have no excuse for halting between two opinions: 'if the Lord be God, follow Him.' (1)

What was the Christian thought on war? War was one of the great issues of life - worth giving life to overcome. This was not a theoretical call. The events of the day pointed to a coming conflict.

Hitler was elected in January 1933. A new general election was called. While the election was pending the Reichstag building was mysteriously burned. This was the pretext for a round-up of

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(1) ibid. pp. 179-183

all political opposition. After the election all pretence of legality and constitutional form vanished. Large numbers of Jews, Social-Democrats, and Communists were driven from their homes and confined in concentration camps. When Hindenburg died in August 1934, Hitler combined the Presidency with his Chancellorship.

These events had repercussions in Austria, always politically sensitive to Germany. Here the Austrian Nazis and other political parties struggled for supremacy. International tension was increased by Italy and Germany supporting antagonistic factions with money and arms. Such happenings indicated the possibility of war.

Although war represents spiritual chaos and disorganization, the Christian point of view has always been that its causes are understandable by reference to the moral laws of the universe. Its causes can be intellectually comprehended. War is not due to the actions of a capricious God or a world governed by whim.

War, if it comes, demands a decision from every Christian. With this responsibility in mind, The World's Student Christian Federation, in 1935, devoted the first quarterly issue of its magazine entirely to the subject; Our Attitude to the "Next War". It is a valuable symposium of the thought of Christians faced with the possibility of war. The remarks of the Editor, Dr. W. A. Visser't Hooft will be helpful in understanding the articles. The Editor said:-

"The subject chosen for this issue of The Student World should not be taken to indicate that we take the inevitability of another war for granted or that we consider it a good thing that

'the next war' has again become a popular topic of conversations, speeches or articles. It means simply that since we know today that war is at least a possibility, it is our duty to make up our minds on the stand which we shall take towards the menace of war today, and perhaps to its actual reality tomorrow.

"The articles in this number should not be judged by the standard of originality. For the subject of war has been discussed so much that it has become impossible to shed much new light on it. If this number has value, it consists, on the one hand, in the picture which it gives of the present attitude of Christian students toward war and, on the other hand, in the fact that it puts the whole problem of war in the wider setting of the deep-seated sickness of our modern civilisation.

"With regard to the first, it becomes clear that large sections of the present student generation are haunted by the fear of war. This fear is, however, not so much the cowardly fear for the physical suffering which war implies but rather the very comprehensible fear for its 'metaphysical' implications. What they dread is the meaninglessness which war will bring into their lives. For to them war is not so much a question of death versus life, as it is one of 'a tale told by an idiot' against meaningful living. On the other hand, there are important sections of youth who seem ready to accept war. To them war still has a meaning because it is a regrettable but sometimes an inevitable means to serve the national ideal in the service of which they see the very purpose of life. But these two sections of the

present student body have at least this in common that they see war in the wider context of the whole meaning of life and the character of our modern civilisation." (1)

The rest of the statement of the Editor which follows is of interest because it gives his personal criticism of Christian peace efforts. It is not a criticism of its aims and objectives, but rather of its lack of method and positive program. His call for positive action is similar to that of Dr. Raven. Dr. Visser't Hooft said that the impotence was due to the largely negative character of most of the so-called pacifism. It lived too much by the grace of its opponent, and not enough by the grace of a positive reality which might counteract and overcome it. He continued:-

"It is on this point that the Christian message comes in. The Gospel has little to say against war but a great deal for peace. It does not say: 'Blessed are the opponents of war', but 'Blessed are the Peacemakers'. For it knows of a positive Will which makes for Peace, dynamic constructive peace, which means, not merely the absence of open war, but also the overcoming of those many injustices and divisions among men which make so-called times of peace a continuation of war in forms which are less violent but no less destructive." (2)

This emphasis on the positive aspects of Christian peacemaking was continued in the article contributed by Eric Fenn, Study Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and

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(1) The Student World Editorial pp.1-3 Vol.XXVIII First Quarter, 1935  
No.1

and Ireland. The essence of his message is that anything less than life totally dedicated to Christianity is inadequate for the task of eliminating war. The struggle for peace demands every area of the Christian life.

" \* \* the attitude which concentrates on the prevention of war, as practically all forms of pacifism do, is entirely inadequate to the political situations and untrue to the Christian faith. There are more fundamental things than the avoidance of armed conflict, issues which if left unsolved will make that conflict inevitable; issues which in my judgment can only find solution in a rebirth of Christian faith." (1)

The prevention of war had been so much emphasised in the post-war period, especially in discussions relative to the value of the League of Nations, that Fenn's next criticism seems a little discordant although it is in harmony with his own thesis.

" \* \* there is the radical pacifism which is finally convinced that war is so great an evil as to be impossible for Christians. Now, I suppose that if the highest good were the prevention of war, and if the Christian Church set itself to attain that good, it could be done. An unequivocal declaration from the millions of Christians in the world that they would under no circumstances take part in war, would make war at least highly improbable - and incidentally would compel the resignation of the majority of statesmen either from their governments or from the Church. But this imaginary act on the

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(1) ibid. p.25 "No More War" is not Enough Eric Fenn

part of the Christians would in itself do little more than stabilize the conditions of injustice and wrong which now make war likely." (1)

He elaborated his point by describing some of the current world problems which were insoluble by purely political means.

"Does not the Polish Corridor spell war - and yet can you change it and not make war certain? Austria and Hungary are words of ill omen - yet can you do anything for them without threatening countries such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, whose very existence depends on the maintainance of the Treaties? It is a desperate situation enough when to stay as we are would seem to be to accept war as inevitable, while to attempt to alter anything appears to be an even more certain road to disaster! Herein is the meaning of sin made manifest \* \* \*

"In such a situation the prevention of war is no solution, although it may well seem the only thing to attempt. Nothing is solved either by fighting or by refusing to fight. The problem of right and wrong, of wounded vanity or of greed, remains and is not dealt with." (2)

Coming then to the main issue, Fenn disregards the League of Nations, pacts, agreements, and covenants and places the Christian Church at the center of the war problem.

" \* \* I have used words like justice, evil, wrong, sin. Any true diagnosis of our sickness must. Now, it is precisely at

(1) ibid. p.26

(2) ibid. p.27



that level and in relation to those spiritual realities which are fundamental, that the Church makes its greatest claim. For who talks of a power that recreates personal relationships? Who claims to know the secret of forgiveness? Who speaks of a higher wisdom than that of justice, in the 'love that suffereth long and is kind'? Who claims to be in herself a new People, under new laws, obedient to a new King, transcending the natural barriers of race, nation, and class? The Christian Church. Therefore, the Church stands at the very centre of the international problem claiming to hold the solution: and conversely, it is in the question posed by the international situation that the Church must hear her greatest challenge \* \* \*

"The answer may include 'no more war'; it may include extreme pacifism; it may go further in its demands than Marxism. It must be radical. But it cannot be negative, nor can it content itself with anything less than fundamental causes." (1)

Fenn's was an uncompromising statement of a non-pacifist Christian. He left no doubt that there were many things in the world worse than war.

Another contribution to this special issue of the Student World was made by the leader of an Oxford Peace Group. He included a few pin-point summaries to show the clash of views and the nature of some of the discussions. There is nothing unusual about the remarks; the author himself calls them "hackneyed arguments" they give a first

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(1) ibid. pp.29-30

hand insight into the thoughts of a group of Christian students.

Following are the summaries of the discussions:-

"A.(a member of the Society of Friends) Christ refused force; therefore his disciples must follow the same way.

"B.The Friends' attitude to the Peace question is individualistic and has little to say to members of a community.

"C.Is it not morally obligatory to defend the state? Surely even a domestic police is incompatible with a general refusal to use force.

"D.Christians are certainly bound to accept the state as the organisation which unites them and their fellows; they cannot therefore escape its obligations.

"A.The only, and sufficient, answer is that we must obey God rather than man.

"B. & C. All schools of Christian thought would agree with this.

"A.To say that the lesser of two evils is right means that the Christian is forced to do evil, which is intolerable.

"E.As a compromise, suggests that Christians are not forced either to kill or to abstain from war. They might prevent war by determining on blockade measures, more humane, as well as more effective than killing.

"F. We can best attain our common objective by influencing and inspiring public opinion, each in his own sphere.

"G. That is too slow. War will be upon us before we have made any progress. The essential is to act now. Let Christians show their disapproval of war and of all that leads to it, e.g., by refusing to associate themselves with the machinery of militarism; army chaplains should be withdrawn and church-goers instructed not to support war or armaments, perhaps the strike weapon used." (1)

The author commented on the meetings and gave some of his own observations concerning the war attitudes of the students.

"Taken as a whole they show the cleavage that occurs in almost every type of society discussing peace problems, between the pacifist and the realist. There are on the one hand (and more than one member of our group voiced their position most clearly and helpfully) who will obey conscience and principle at all costs, who will not do evil that good may come, on the other, those who consider that individual protests will not avail to help the community out of a war for which as a community they are jointly responsible.

"Perhaps the most interesting thing about our discussions was the gradual emergence of a feeling that both these groups must be respected but that neither held within it the real Christian policy against war. There were increasingly thoughtful

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(1) ibid. British Students on War W.G. Moore pp.52-53

statements of a middle position, which would admit, indeed insist on, the right to protest against war as unchristian, but which would complete that protest by striving for a new citizenship, a new sense of responsibility for public affairs, that might mean, as a halfway house, sanctioning attempts to legalise force, if thereby war would be made less likely. (One or two members seemed definitely in favour of an International police force.) " (1)

This diversity of opinion in the Oxford Peace Group composed of S.C.M. members was especially interesting in view of the erroneous popular opinion due to a certain "resolution", that at Oxford the only attitude toward war was that of the radical pacifist. There had been much interest both in the United Kingdom and in America when in early 1933 the Oxford Union voted 275 votes to 153 in favour of the motion, "That this House will in no circumstances fight for King and Country." The motion was passed by an unusually large house, with a record number of applications to speak - 29 on either side. Public opinion was stirred. A letter to the Daily Telegraph spoke of "red tendencies at work" and "communism in the colleges." However, informed observers did not view the vote as subversive, and expressed the opinion that in a vote of the entire student body the motion would have been defeated. However, the passing of the motion was significant in one respect; the Union was fairly well representative of the more keenly political part of Oxford. (2)

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(1) ibid. p.54

(2) see: The American Oxonian pp. 109-155 No.2 VolXX April 1933

There was another pledge, which came to the public notice in 1935 that exerted a much wider influence in the United Kingdom than even the Oxford resolution. It was the "Peace Pledge" sponsored by Canon "Dick" Sheppard and a group of like-minded friends. The Pledge was simple and direct: - "I renounce war, and I will never support or sanction another."

The leaders of this pacifist movement sought signers over all Great Britain. "Dick" Sheppard expressed his ideas concerning the "plain man's" relation to war in his book, We Say "No". He blamed Christian men that the world was on the brink of war:-

" \* \* \* to-day the nations are arming. Twenty-one years after the outbreak of war, seventeen years after the Armistice, the skies are dark once more.

"We gave thanks to God that there would be no more war, but we wanted Peace without being willing to pay its price. It is our fault that the world trembles once more on the brink of the madness of blood.

"It is our fault - the fault of Christian men and women in all nations, but especially of Christian men, because we have been unwilling to accept the practical implications of our Christianity. Our faith has been a shadow, not a flame. We have worshipped God for an hour or so on Sunday, and tried to safeguard the rest of the week by means of a "gentlemen's agreement" with the Devil. So we have won the Peace that we deserve - a Peace precariously poised upon the points of bayonets.

"Peace cannot depend on armaments. It cannot be preserved by force. It cannot be organized, any more than Love can be organized.

"We all know that in our hearts. But we have been afraid to act upon that knowledge. 'It is not our business', we have said. 'We have given politicians a mandate - they know that we want Peace, that another war would mean the end of civilization. It is their job, not ours, to see that Peace is maintained, that war does not come again. And they also want Peace. They have told us so, over and over again, in their speeches. Surely we can leave it to them.'

"Well, we have left it to them. And they have given us mechanized armies, squadrons of battle planes that darken the sun, bigger and better bombs, more lethal poison gas. God help the Peace that rests on such foundations!" (1)

Canon Sheppard is following the strict absolutist pacifist thought. He does not say that organizations such as the League of Nations or the World Court are wrong, or not deserving of Christian support, but he by-passes them. He goes directly to the Biblical foundation of his declarations. His thought has one characteristic in common with all Christian groups, both pacifist and non-pacifist. It is the feeling of personal responsibility for war. Christians have ever been ready to take the guilt of war upon themselves. When faced with war it is a characteristic Christian thought that the terrible situation is due to deficiencies

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(1) H.R.L. Sheppard We Say "No" pp.2-3 John Murray, London 1935

in Christian practice. In the final analysis the individual Christians are more responsible for war than any group of politicians or any national state. In developing this idea Sheppard said:-

"I do not propose to attack the politicians. I give them every credit for sincerity. They are probably far wiser than I am. But the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, and I am God's servant, pledged to obey His word. I believe that, at this time, a special responsibility rests upon all individual Christians and upon the Christian Churches. I believe that the world is drifting towards war largely because we have not had the courage of our Christianity, and that, even at the eleventh hour, we may yet transform the situation if we forget all that we have been told about 'practical politics' and try instead a little practical religion. " (1)

He is giving notice that all the questions connected with a "just war" are not going to be considered. Such questions are concerned with the wisdom of man. God has given one Commandment to which man must give unquestioning obedience. All other duties, especially of a social or political nature are irrelevant. Speaking of the primacy of the demands of this Commandment Sheppard says:-

"The dangers that politicians<sup>SEE</sup> are real \* \* \*

"That does not affect our duty as Christians in the least.

"It only makes it more urgent. We have to change those circumstances.

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(1) ibid. pp.3-4

"We can do that by stating the Christian attitude towards war, the attitude that is crystallized in the words of the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill!'

"Suppose that the Christian Churches in this country discovered that Commandment, and stated it, and said quite simply that the words meant exactly what they said, and all the flags and the drums and the bugles in the world could not alter or modify them one jot or tittle.

"Suppose that all the individual Christians in this country did the same - and pledged themselves publicly, bound themselves by a solemn undertaking that they would have no part or lot in any future war, that no matter what the circumstances of that war might be, they would not take up arms.

"Suppose, in short, that we took God's word seriously, that we decided He meant what He said, and resolved to obey Him.

"Do you think that would have no effect? Don't you think that it would change the circumstances in which the politicians had to act and make their plans? Of course it would. They would be forced to try to find some other method of preserving Peace than armaments and Pacts of mutual assistance, which mean, in effect, agreements to fight." (1)

The difference between this thought and that of Eric Fenn's previously quoted is sharp. Fenn said that there were other evils much worse than war; if the Christians of the world refused to go to war the other evils would remain entrenched. Sheppard says, on

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(1) ibid. pp.4-5



the contrary, that war is the first and great evil. Let the Christians repudiate war and the political situations will change as a result. The Churches in other nations would be forced to change too.

"If the Christian Churches in this country took the line I have suggested, do you think that the rest of the Christian Churches throughout the world would remain silent? They would commit spiritual suicide if they did." (1)

Death is the ultimate defence against war and aggression for both the pacifist and non-pacifist Christian. The soldier faces it on the battle field and the pacifist faces death at home - either as a traitor, condemned by his own government, or as the victim of armed aggression of a foreign invader. It is an error to assume that the pacifist method is the safe way to save one's life. Any complete discussion of both the pacifist and the non-pacifist methods must end with the possibility of death. Canon Sheppard, after recognizing the military power of the Continental dictatorships, admits the possibility of invasion from them. His position remains uncompromising. It is interesting to note that his position is taken on an Old Testament Commandment rather than on any New Testament Teaching.

"But suppose I am unduly optimistic, suppose that we in this country pledge ourselves that never again shall we take part, in any circumstances, in war, and that our action awakens no answering echo in other lands. Suppose that the other Christian Churches of the world remain silent, that all the individual Christians in other lands merely shrug their shoulders, mutter

something about 'these mad English' and make no attempt to follow the lead we have given.

"Suppose that some Great Power, covetous of our wealth and possessions, takes advantage of our unarmed state, our pledge of non-resistance, to declare war upon us. Suppose we lose, one by one, <sup>OUR</sup> ~~at~~ Dominions and Colonies overseas, and that an enemy invades our shores.

"Does that mean that war is right, or that we were wrong when we decided to obey God's Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'?

"Right and wrong aren't fluid. The moral quality of an action doesn't depend on its results \* \* \*

"Does it make any real difference to the moral quality of this action of killing if I put on a uniform to do it, and if the majority of my fellow-countrymen consider it praiseworthy? I can't honestly think that it does. I have to answer to my conscience for what I do, and my conscience can't get beyond that injunction, 'Thou shalt not kill!' (1)

Since the Peace Pledge Union exerted considerable influence on the thought of Christians in the United Kingdom a summary of its history showing its rapid increase in size and popularity will be valuable in estimating the power of the pacifist appeal at this time.

The Union was the means by which Canon Sheppard hoped to realize his goal of unqualified renunciation of war by the citizens of the United Kingdom. The idea of the Pledge spread rapidly; by 1935 all

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(1) ibid. pp.6-7

radical pacifists were, for the first time, united in one body. They were brought together by the simple statement of complete renunciation of war made definite by the signature of a specific undertaking:

"I renounce war, and I will never support or sanction another." Though Canon Sheppard had appealed (in a letter to the Press) for the names and addresses of all who would make a similar declaration in 1934, it was not until 1935 that the signatories began to be in any way organized. Even then, in the early months, the organization was spontaneous, beginning with the calling together by keen people of fellow-signatories in their own districts.

It was in May that the movement emerged as the Peace Pledge Union, sponsored by about ten leaders of pacifist thought led by Dr. Sheppard, and including Brig.-Gen. F. P. Crozier, who had helped to initiate the movement and had been collecting the signatures at Walton-on-Thames. In July the movement was opened to women. The membership and organization grew so rapidly that within a month the headquarters had to be transferred to larger premises in London, and a considerable staff engaged. The Union opened an office in Brussels for the period of the World Peace Conference, and subsequently co-operated in plans for a pacifist international. Three mass meetings were held toward the end of November in Birmingham, Glasgow, and London - the last undoubtedly the largest gathering that had ever listened to a statement of absolute pacifism.

Figures that illustrate the movement's growth are those for the number of groups into which the 100,000 members were organized. At the

beginning of October there were 180; a month later, 250; and by December, 316. The number of Sponsors who guided the movement's thought and activities grew to 17, including H. Runham Brown, James Hudson, Aldous Huxley, Storm Jameson, George Lansbury, Vera Brittain, Rose Macauley, Canon S.D. Rorris, Captain Philip Mumford, Lord Ponsonby, Canon C.E. Raven, Siegfried Sassoon, Dr. Donald O. Soper, Bertrand Russell, and Arthur Wragg. (1)

This upsurge of the radical pacifist spirit in the United Kingdom took place at a time when the nature of world political events pointed increasingly toward war. In fact there was a war between Italy and Abyssinia.

In January Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Abyssinia, addressed an appeal to the League to support him against Italy, since the "defensive preparations" which the Italians were making in north-east Africa seemed not at all for defence but rather for invasion. The League, dominated as it was by the individual political interests of the Great Powers was unwilling to act. France, in particular, wished to avoid offending Italy. Laval, the French Foreign Minister, had just signed a comprehensive Franco-Italian Pact which in some measure had remedied the ill-feeling which had developed between the two countries following the Treaty of Versailles. Mussolini and Laval had held a private conversation in the course of these diplomatic talks, in which it was alleged a promise had been made not to interfere with Italian plans concerning Abyssinia. Almost every month until summer Abyssinia made an appeal to the League but these were kept off the agenda. Mussolini's war preparations in Eritrea went on smoothly. In

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(1) see: Peace Year Book - 1937 pp.99-101 Pacifism - Developments in  
Great Britain in 1936 H.S. Moore National Peace Council, London

April, 1935, British, French, and Italian statesmen met at Stresa to condemn Germany's repudiation of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. No reference was made to Abyssinia.

In May, 1935, a report was drawn up by Sir John Maffey, Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, embodying the opinion of the British Government about the Italo-Abyssinian matter. The report insisted that Italy would certainly do her utmost to secure control of Abyssinia, and then discussed what measures Britain should take to safeguard her interest. The main conclusion of the report was that "it would be a matter of indifference whether Abyssinia remained independent or was absorbed by Italy." (1)

In September the Italo-Abyssinian dispute finally came before the Council of the League. On 2nd October Mussolini ordered a "National Mobilization", and on the following day Italian troops crossed the Abyssinian frontier and the war had started. Rather half-hearted sanctions were participated in by both France and the United Kingdom. No decision could be made concerning oil, the most crucial item to make the sanctions really effective. Debate on this continued until 1936.

At the beginning of May, 1936, Addis Ababa was occupied by Italian troops, and on May 9th, the King of Italy was proclaimed Emperor, and the whole country officially annexed to Italy. "The sanctions which the League imposed did not prevent Mussolini from finishing the Abyssinian War to his own satisfaction. His success virtually killed the League, and before the eyes of all the world the

bubble of collective security was burst." (1)

During this depressing time of war and League impotency, Herbert H. Farmer added another to the number of absolute pacifist declarations. He expressed many of the same beliefs as Canon Sheppard; one of the most significant being that the embracing of radical pacifism by all Christians would of itself alter the fearful contemporary political situation. Too, like Canon Sheppard's, Farmer's pacifism was absolute.

"I am among those who have decided that henceforth they will under no circumstances participate in war \* \* \* By war I mean the actual or threatened use of wholesale, indiscriminate wounding and slaying of men by organized lethal machinery, in order to force them to do what, it is assumed, they would not otherwise do \* \* \*

"There is no question that if all Christians were to announce this, and to announce it on a religious basis, so that statesmen would know that nothing they could do by way of propaganda would move the inflexible refusal before God of millions of their best citizens, the whole situation would be radically changed \* \* \* The ever overshadowing threat of war is our real, historical situation to-day, and there is no prior reason why God should not be meeting us with a demand that we should set up an absolute refusal in the midst of it \* \* \* " (2)

It was the hope that the pacifist position could turn the political tide away from war that furnished the impulse for the

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(1) *ibid.* p.292

(2) Herbert H. Farmer *The Christian and War* pp.1-3

radical pacifist statements at this time when the world seemed rapidly approaching another disaster.

Christian thought concerning war, both pacifist and non-pacifist, is universal in character. Responsibility is not placed upon the Christians of any one favoured nation, but upon the Christian community of all nations. This note of universality is in Farmer's statement. He believed that Christian love should govern all action, and stated four principles in respect to the relation of force and love.

"If there is anything other than sentimentality in saying that God is love, and that we are ourselves being reconciled to such a God and commissioned to a like ministry of reconciliation, through Christ, then it must be possible to know in some measure when we are genuinely seeking it, to what extent we are making progress toward it, and, more particularly what kind of activities are a definite contradiction of, and hindrance to, it \* \* \* I submit that the following four principles in respect of force emerge from our experience in this sphere:

"(a) that the high ends of Christian reconciliation and love can never be served by the exercise of force alone,

"(b) that, on the contrary, the use of force is extremely liable to make those ends more difficult to achieve,

"(c) that, therefore, if force is used at all, it must be always and only as preparatory to the major appeal of love, and in a form that can be controlled and directed with discrimination

to that end,

"(d) that a use of force which in its essential nature makes such control and appeal impossible must under no circumstances be used; it is for the Christian finally prohibited." (1)

Farmer's criticism of the Christian compromise in regard to war; of choosing the lesser of two evils, is a clear exposition of the central place of unquestioning faith in the Christian pacifist's doctrine. Such faith eliminates all human calculation about such problems as preserving the home land from enslavement, saving the fruits of civilization and freedom, or even of upholding justice in international relations. It is not right for men to predict. God has given a Commandment and all that is required is to follow His command in faith. All prognostication about the future is irrelevant.

"Those Christians who share the writer's abhorrence of war, but do not share this sense of an absolute prohibition in regard to it, usually base themselves on a doctrine of compromise. The position is entitled to the greatest respect \* \* \*

"Now the argument from the necessity of compromise is, in the nature of the case, an argument from the supposed evil consequences of one course of action as over against another. When this is realized, a difficult prior question comes into view, how far the estimate of probable consequences should enter into the determination of Christian conduct. It is hard enough to estimate consequences of actions on grounds of ordinary worldly

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(1) ibid. p.5



wisdom, but in the sphere where ex hypothesi what is conceived to be the redemptive will of God, that is, a factor transcending history and man's natural understanding, is involved, does not such estimation become well-nigh impossible? Is it not of the essence of religious faith to be ready at times, in response to what is felt to be the inescapable imperative of God, to defy all the probabilities and obey, committing the consequences unto Him? Thus it was in a measure, I conceive, when Christ went to the Cross.

"Much of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the Church's witness against war, even when it has been an emphatic and vigorous kind, comes from over-readiness to argue on the basis of probable consequences, and not enough on the basis of the intrinsic wickedness of war in the sight of God, and the necessity therefore of repudiating it and taking the consequences of such repudiation \* \* \* Being based on an estimate of consequences, which none can demonstrate and any may question, the position lacks the passion and the obstinacy which can only arise from a religious awareness of the will of God, which must be obeyed come what may." (1)

After repudiating the accusation that the pacifist method of dealing with war is "doing nothing", he proposed a plan of positive action which Christians might develop.

"The negative prohibition which we conceive to rest on war

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(1) ibid. pp.8-9

springs from the positive imperative of love, which directs that every means must be used, at any cost, to set wrongs right and build human relations on a right basis; and such means, I conceive, might include forms of coercion other than the mechanized slaughter of war. Thus there are methods of what has been called 'non-violent non-co-operation.' There might be worked out in the family of nations forms of economic pressure to be brought to bear upon treaty-breaking nations, forms which are free from the major objection which lies against war, and which can be applied with something of the restraint and discrimination of judicial process, leading up to an arbitrated, and not merely punitive, settlement of the issues. It has yet to be demonstrated either on general grounds or on the evidence of particular instances, that war is the only method left open to men to achieve the ends of righteousness." (1)

In that same year in which Dr. Farmer was suggesting that Christians could find an effective substitute for war, Richard Gregg (2) was presenting a complete plan for such non-violent Christian action. The unique feature of his plan was that while it was non-violent it copied war in the strategy of attack and surprise. This was no mere coincidence, but was the result of conscious effort. The plan was so constructed as to use for this new moral warfare all the positive virtues of combat and all the knowledge of strategy accumulated by centuries of warfare. Nothing of value in the

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(1) *ibid.* pp.10-11

(2) Since Gregg was an American, his book does not properly belong here. However, this one exception is made because of the especial influence it exerted on Christian thought in the United Kingdom. It is referred to "The Power of Non-Violence" as "the text-

experience of the race would be abandoned. The emphasis would be shifted and the powers of combat redirected. There might be violent deaths, but there would be no violent killing. Gregg, in describing his plan said:-

" \* \* the similarities between war and non-violent resistance are not merely an interesting set of analogies. This entire chapter to this point answers two doubts, - namely, whether this method of struggle is not utterly foreign and new and suited only to Oriental peoples, and therefore whether it could be adopted by people with the modern Western attitude of mind. The facts that military virtues are used and needed in this new form of struggle, and that the principles of military strategy apply here too, show that if we adopt this new mode of settling conflicts we will not be entirely reversing our previous experience, we will not be abandoning the true principles and values that the human race has garnered from its age-long experience of war. \* \* \* " (1)

Because of the military mind of the West, the complete surprise of the non-violent method would completely startle the aggressor.

Mr. Gregg continues:-

"In the cases where Asiatics have tried to relieve themselves of the economic and military pressure of European domination they have complained that the West cannot understand any language but that of force. If that is true, it means that the West will be utterly unprepared and helpless in the face of well-disciplined, thoroughly organised and wisely led non-violent resistance,

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(1) Richard B. Gregg The Power of Non-Violence p.98  
George Routledge and Sons, Ltd. London 1935

especially if it is accompanied by an equally thorough temporary non-vindictive economic boycott. The strategic principle of surprise would operate most dramatically and effectively. To use non-violent resistance against the West would be complying with Napoleon's Sixteenth Maxim of War \* \* \* "(1)

Gregg even has an answer for the more than Unlikely situation of both sides in a conflict using the non-violent method.

"If in some future conflict both sides should use non-violent resistance, that side would win which most deeply understands and is best disciplined and prepared in this new method. That would be the side which achieved the most self-purification, which attained the most social truth and showed the finest love. It would thereby attain the greater inner unity and strength, the greater respect from its opponents and the public." (2)

He summarized the ways in which non-violent resistance resembles war:

- "1. in having a psychological and moral aim and effect;
- "2. in having one similar purpose, - to win the support of public opinion;
- "3. in being a discipline of a parallel emotion and instinct;
- "4. in operating against the morale of the opponents;
- "5. in principles of strategy;
- "6. in being a method of settling great disputes and conflicts;
- "7. in requiring courage, dynamic energy, capacity to endure

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(1) ibid. p.99

(2) ibid. p.99

fatigue and suffering, self-sacrifice, self-control, chivalry, action;

"8. in being positive and powerful;

"9. in affording opportunity of service for a large idea, and for glory.

"It does not avoid hardships, suffering, wounds or even death. In using it men and women may still risk their lives and fortunes and sacrifice all. Nevertheless the possibilities of casualties and death are greatly reduced under it, and they are all suffered voluntarily and not imposed by the non-violent resisters.

"It is more efficient than war because it costs far less in money as well as in lives and suffering \* \* \*

"It is realistic in that it does not eliminate or attempt to eliminate possibilities of conflict and differences of interest, and includes all factors in the situation both material and imponderable \* \*

"It does not require any nation to surrender any part of its real sovereignty or right of decision, as a real league of nations might. It does not surrender the right of self-defence, although it radically alters the nature of the defence. "(1)

Gregg's book had spoken on a timely subject. Defence, non-violent or otherwise, was much in the minds of all thoughtful citizens at the time. Not only was the spirit of international co-operation

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(1) ibid. pp.100-101

through the League rapidly disintegrating, but the auxiliary treaties and pacts which had surrounded it were being repudiated.

The period of fifteen months which began in March 1935 was marked by the open violation, on a scale unknown in post-war history, of international engagements. Herr Hitler determined to destroy the Treaty of Versailles, and as the power of Germany increased he adopted the method of direct repudiation. Before he began his campaign he had one thing to be gained from the Treaty of Versailles.

Fifteen years after the coming into force of the treaty the status of the rich Saar territory was to be decided by a democratic and secret plebiscite. The fifteen years elapsed in January 1935. The inhabitants were to choose between return to Germany, union with France and the continuance of the League administration. Of the 500,000 votes cast, 90 per cent were for Germany. The return of the territory to Germany took place on March 1st.

At the beginning of February, British and French ministers met in London and issued a statement of policy for the information of the German Government and other governments concerned. They expressed the hope that the German Government would co-operate in the proposed Eastern and Central European Pacts; and they suggested that the Locarno Treaty should be supplemented by an Air Pact. The German Government welcomed the Air Pact, and promised non-committally to examine the other proposals. The British Government accepted an invitation to visit Berlin.

Before this could take place the Government had occasion to issue a memorandum explaining to Parliament the reason for their rearmament programme. In this memorandum stress was laid on the threat of German armaments. This angered Hitler to such an extent that the proposed meeting was not held. The French Chamber was at the same time debating an increase in the French army. At this period of uncertainty Hitler made a sudden counter-stroke. On March 16th, 1935 he announced that Germany no longer considered herself bound by the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty, that the peace strength of her army would be fixed in the future at thirty-six divisions or 550,000 men, and that it would be raised by conscription. The invitation to come to Berlin was again issued to Sir John Simon and Mr. Eden of the British Government. During this visit Herr Hitler reiterated his welcome of the Air Pact and his dislike of the Eastern European Pact. He affirmed his pacific intentions. The size of the German army was irrevocably fixed, but Germany would consent, on land, to any limitation of material accepted by the other Powers. In the air she claimed parity with France; on the sea, she would be content with 35 per cent of British naval strength.

With the relation between the European states becoming more and more tense with the passing of each week, the problem for Christians in their relation to war became two-fold. How to prevent the war that seemed imminent was the first part, and what course to take if it came was the second part.

Christians like Canon Sheppard and Dr. Farmer had advocated just one course of action as the answer to both parts of the Christian

problem. The unconditional repudiation of war by the Christians of the world, they said, would both change the political conditions and give the Christians a positive course of action if war should come. Gregg had advocated a plan of non-violent spiritual warfare.

Separate answers to the two problems were recommended by Leyton Richards, a Christian pacifist. In the crucial time of May 1935 he advocated Disarmament, Arbitration and Federalism as a three-fold Christian plan for reversing the trend towards war. In view of the rapid decline of League prestige it is interesting that Richards believed his triple plan should be centered in this organization. Since ideas similar to his concerning Arbitration and Disarmament have been given previously the following section of quotations has been chosen to show Richards' thought on Federalism.

"In the light of our Christian Faith we are justified in claiming that - in a God-governed world - any policy which conflicts with the will and way of God as seen in Jesus Christ is bound in the long run to miscarry; and in the interests therefore of a stable world-order we need to discover a Constructive Peace Policy which the churches could commend and urge upon the statesmen \* \* \*

"The Church of Jesus Christ is called to renounce the way of war and to exalt the way of the Gospel. From a world, however, which is not yet prepared to live by the Gospel, the Church cannot of course expect a fully Christian allegiance; but she can at least encourage those movements which lead in the direction



of the Christian ideal. One of these movements to-day is represented by the rapidly growing conviction that the maintenance of world-peace is not the task of any single nation or of any group of nations, but is the collective responsibility of all the nations. That is to say, as under the federal system of the United States so in the world at large, if the weapons of war cannot be abolished they must be surrendered into the hands of an international authority, which will then act towards the several nations as the federal authority acts towards the several states of the American Union." (1)

For Richards, the pacifist, this was a compromise position. He was willing to take it, first, because the world was not ready for anything more advanced along the Christian way, and secondly, because it was action in which all Christians, pacifist and non-pacifist, could join. This last was an especially important consideration. At a time when the world was broken by all manner of schisms it was necessary for Christians to be as united as possible.

"I speak as a pacifist who believes that the way of war and the way of Christ can never be reconciled; but in a world which is not yet ready to take the way of Christ, I prefer half a loaf to no bread at all; and I am prepared therefore to join hands with all those lovers of Peace - pacifist and non-pacifist alike - who seek the disarming of the nations, even though - in a sub-Christian world-order - the price of disarmament is the

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(1) Leyton Richards Towards a Constructive Peace Policy for the Churches pp.16-17 Independent Press, Ltd. London, 1935

creation of an international force which shall be the agent of international authority. If a federal system can maintain peace, - as it does, - between warlike states in the American Union, it is not to be unduly credulous or sanguine to believe that - given similar powers - a League of Nations could preserve the peace of the world and finally eliminate armed force altogether from the intercourse of civilised peoples." (1)

The Christian never abandons his principles - only awaits their fulfilment in the future. Richards makes it clear that he is in no way suggesting a compromise if war comes. At that time the spirit of compromise is over, and the absolute principles go into practice. However, he hopes that all Christian groups can co-operate in preventing war according to his three-fold program.

"My purpose has not been to indicate how Christian people should react if and when war breaks out. On that issue I hold to pacifist convictions which are in no wise qualified by what I have said. But there is a prior question to which both pacifist and non-pacifist ought to be able to give a common answer:- What policy should Christian people urge and adopt in order to prevent War and to preserve Peace? To that question I have given a three-fold answer: Disarmament, Arbitration, Federalism, and all of them centred in the League of Nations. These, - in my judgment - are a necessary corollary of our Christian faith; and - as such therefore - they are the three main items in a Constructive Peace Policy for the Churches." (2)

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(1) ibid. p.17  
 (2) ibid. p.24

If Christians would sanction a super-government above the nations composing a world-wide Federal system, what kind of force would the super-organization use? Could Christians and especially Christian pacifists tolerate the use of armed force? Richards gives answers to these questions in a book published in 1935, the same year in which he advocated the "three-fold" plan to the Churches. His statements demanding the limitation of national sovereignty remind us of C.O.P.E.C. declarations.

"An increasing number of people see that the choice to-day is between international anarchy on the one hand (in which each nation is 'sovereign' and uncontrolled), and on the other an international order (in which nations are controlled by a federal authority as the citizen is controlled by the authority of the state) \* \* \* If this analogy is pressed it seems to point to what is called an International Police Force as the sanction behind international law \* \* \*

"It is to be observed that the function of an International Police Force is not to coerce the alleged wrongdoer into submitting to the will of the League of Nations, but only to compel him to submit his case to adjudication, so that justice may be done between him and the others. One frequently hears the plea that a nation's army or navy is its policeman, and that armies and navies exist for the same reason that the police force exists. But there is a cardinal difference between the two institutions. Police forces are not organised to fight each other, and armies

are; moreover, armies are forces behind rival litigants, while the police constitute a force behind the judge. In other words, the police method made the defence of the individual the obligation of society, while, contrawise, the military method, as it now exists, rejects the principle of social defence in favour of each unit defending himself. The one is a social instrument, the other an instrument of anarchy \* \* \*" (1)

The work of the international police force would not be war as it was generally understood, but a work of prevention. The force would stop the fire before it had time to grow large.

"The problem, therefore, which would confront an International Police Force is not the task of waging war against a recalcitrant nation-state, but the lesser and easier task of preventing its rearmament and inducing it to submit its case to the arbitrament of law. In the light of a century and a half's experience in the United States, it is well within the probabilities to affirm that these tasks could be performed without resorting to any other weapon than the force of world-opinion."(2)

Then Richards faced the question whether or not a Christian, especially a Christian pacifist, could actively associate himself in an International Police Force. The answer is "No." If the Christian does not believe in armed force, even its changed nature under international control and direction would not permit his participation. The escape from the dilemma is found in a compromise. The Christian who does not believe in force may still recommend the

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(1) Leyton Richards The Christian's Contribution to Peace S.C.M. Press pp.131-132 London 1935

Federal plan and its police force because it is a step forward; an advance in the right direction. Richards thought is as follows:-

"It remains now to examine the idea of an International Police Force in the light of Christian principle, and to ask whether or not Christian people contribute to world-peace by its advocacy and support.

"In so far as an International Police Force engaged in actual battle, its organisation and activity would be open to all the moral objections which can be levelled against war, and it is not possible therefore to contemplate a Christian's participation in military operations by an international force without disloyalty to his faith. The deviltry of war is not sanctified just because it is waged in the name of the League of Nations \* \* \*

"For himself, the Christian pacifist is prepared to take the risks of an unarmed international order, and to repudiate the way of war in any circumstances. But a world that is not fully Christianised will necessarily live on a sub-Christian level; and all therefore that the Christian has a right to ask from such a world is that it shall be true to the standards and methods to which it already consents. At the same time he will urge it, by every means within his power, to move persistently and progressively in the direction of the Christian ideal \* \* \*

"The Christian, therefore, who is persuaded of the essential iniquity of war cannot himself enlist in an International Police Force, equipped for military operations. But there is no moral inconsistency in associating this refusal with a recognition

of the fact that the organisation of an International Police Force, under a world-authority, would be a striking and significant step towards the realisation of a Christian world-order. The Christian citizen supports the organisation of law within the social order, without thereby approving all the practices and institutions of national life; he accepts courts of law, for instance, even though they resort on occasion to capital punishment." (1)

The thought that corresponds with that of the C.O.P.E.C. commission on the obsolescence of nationalism follows. Richards is even more critical of nationalism than the commission was.

"The foregoing chapters of this book have endeavoured to show that the chief enemy of the Christian ideal of world-peace is Nationalism, and that war under modern conditions means the suicide of humanity. The obvious alternative to Nationalism is Internationalism, on lines already drawn (though not completed) by the League of Nations. But this involves changes in national policy and qualifications of state sovereignty which cut sharply across prevailing traditions, deeply rooted in human habit and historic sentiment: and it is these traditions of Nationalism which prevent the organisation of the world in terms of collective rather than national responsibility for peace and orderly intercourse between peoples. The creation of an International Police Force might ensure this orderly intercourse;

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(1) *ibid.* pp.141-142

but its power would lie not so much in the armed sanctions at its disposal as in the public opinion by which it was directed and upheld." (1)

A final quotation from Richards is of value to show the harmony of his thought with that of Dr. Farmer in demanding that the Church abstain from calculating probabilities and seeking security. The Christian call, as these pacifists saw it, was a call to a "reckless" faith in the Cross.

"Since the close of the Great War an increasing number of resolutions in favour of peace, disarmament, the League of Nations, and similar subjects, have been enthusiastically adopted by ecclesiastical assemblies. There is no doubt that the Churches have awaked to the need of persistent emphasis on the side of peace: they believe in it and are prepared to work for it; but there is one qualification often explicit in the resolutions, and nearly always implicit. That qualification can be expressed in the current phrase 'safety first'! Indeed, it is not cynicism but sober fact to say that much of the enthusiasm for the League of Nations is due to the fact that it does not ask the signatory Powers to take any risks! 'Peace with security' is the popular slogan! So the League must have its forcible sanctions, disarmament must be gradual and all together, peace by all means so long as nobody wants to fight!

" \* \* the Church can share this passion for 'security' only

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(1) *ibid.* p.144

if she loses sight of the sublime and supreme risk implicit in a Gospel with a Cross at its centre \* \* \* the thing that impresses the Gospel reader most is the sheer recklessness of Jesus in fidelity to the will of God; and until the Church will carry that attitude into her plea for world-peace, she has not on this issue caught the spirit of her Master: He risked everything - friendship, the esteem of men, His own life, and, hardest of all, the safety of those He loved - rather than descend to methods incongruous with the Divine Love; and something of the same kind of daring is required on the part of the Church if she is to make her specific witness for world-peace." (1)

All these pleas to follow the way of the pacifist were made when the situation in Europe was becoming more and more tense. The chaotic nationalism which had started with the world wide economic depression in 1930 and which grew by rapid strides to be climaxed in March 1935 by Hitler's repudiation of the Versailles Treaty continued in the year 1936. It was in this year that the structure of the Locarno agreements tumbled.

It was Germany that seemed to cause this disaster. Hitler blamed previous actions of France and Russia. These two countries had signed a Pact in May 1935. This Franco-Soviet Pact had from the first been regarded by Germany as a military alliance directed exclusively against her and therefore incompatible with the Locarno Treaty. Germany protested against it with increased

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(1) Leyton Richards The Christian's Alternative to War pp.111-112  
S.C.M. Press London 1935



vehemence; and when, early in 1936, it was presented to the French Chamber for ratification, Hitler once more decided on a sudden counter-stroke.

Under the Versailles Treaty, Germany was prohibited from maintaining armed forces or constructing fortifications in the Rhineland; and under the Locarno Treaty, the signatories "collectively and severally guaranteed" to observe these provisions. In March 1935, Hitler had repudiated the Versailles Treaty, but had reaffirmed his loyalty to the freely negotiated Treaty of Locarno. On March 7, 1936, the German Government informed the British, French and Belgian Governments that the Franco-Soviet Pact, involving as it did obligations incompatible with those undertaken by France under the Locarno Treaty, had deprived that treaty of its "inner meaning". Germany, therefore, no longer considered herself bound by it, and was, on that day, reoccupying the Rhineland with German troops. In 1936 the Locarno structure collapsed. (1)

As Dr. G. H. C. Macgregor surveyed that contemporary scene he wrote, " \* \* for the Christian war is primarily a moral problem, and every moral problem is ultimately theological." The question he set himself to answer was what is the bearing of the New Testament doctrine as a whole on this particular question of war.

He voices the same opinion as Farmer and Richards, that the Church is too prone to calculate eventualities and make its decisions on the basis of security. The Church has no right even to ask certain questions about "What might happen if ....."? It is

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(1) see: E. H. Carr International Relations Between Two World Wars

the call to reckless faith repeated by a Christian pacifist.

"To thoughtful Christians nothing surely can be more disturbing than the fact that, when the Church discusses war and peace, the questions which usually arise are not on fundamentals - such as our conception of God and His purpose for the world, the authority of Christ and the scope of His Kingdom, the nature of the Church and <sup>her</sup> redemptive mission, the Christian conception of personality and the Christian method of overcoming evil - but on matters of political expediency, special instances and probable consequences: 'What would happen if .....?' 'What should we do when .....?' God as an active factor in the situation seems too ofte~~n~~ to be entirely left out. This book has been written in the conviction that the Christian Church has no right even to ask such questions, until she has first satisfied her conscience that she sees clearly what is the mind of Jesus Christ and whither His way leads. When she has done so she will follow that way, without undue concern that the world counts it quixotic, and in the faith that an act of obedience might well be answered by an outpouring of Divine Power which would change the whole world situation in ways we cannot even dream. If this be deemed incredible, what is there left for faith to cling to? Can we then in a few simple propositions sum up, in the light of our study of the New Testament, the duty of the Christian and of the Church? "(1)

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(1) G.H.C. Macgregor The New Testament Basis of Pacifism p.135  
James Clarke & Co.Ltd. London 1930

Dr. Macgregor has eight propositions. In them he calls on the Churches to act as a Christian community. They are to stand out from all secular organizations, and act in ways that are foolish according to the wisdom of the world. Without question he calls upon the Church <sup>NOT</sup> to ask security from the world. It is to act as a pacifist community. In Dr. Macgregor's eight propositions there is no place for propositions relative to a "just war." There <sup>ARE</sup> some portions of Dr. Macgregor's statements with which the non-pacifists could agree, but with the essential part of them, the demand for a reckless faith, they would disagree. From a practical point of view this is a summons for the Church to unite under the pacifist banner.

"1. Firstly, whatever be the verdict concerning the practicability of the way of Jesus under modern conditions, the Church will once again frankly confess, as she did at the first, that both His teaching and His practice are unequivocally 'pacifist', in the sense in which the word has been used throughout our study, and can lend no sanction whatever to war, which is rather seen to be the supreme denial of all that He taught and everything for which He stood \* \* \*

"2. Secondly, we shall insist that for the Christian the question of participation in war is ultimately a personal issue. The problem of war is morally so serious just because for so many it has become a matter of conscience. And there is only one kind of conscience, the individual conscience. Every ethical

movement gets its power from the attitude of persons, and all collective convictions draw their moral worth from the consciences of individuals \* \* \*

"3. Thirdly, in view of our study of the New Testament teaching concerning Church and State, the Christian will refuse to recognize the legitimacy of a dual standard of morality, one for the Christian qua Christian, another for the Christian citizen when acting as a unit in the State. We shall insist that for the Christian there can be only one ethical standard, that of Christ's teaching, and only one morality, that which results from contact with Christ and with the Spirit of His Gospel. The Christian cannot admit that the State is in any way sacrosanct, or endowed with any divinely-ordained supra-moral authority which gives it the right to ride rough-shod over the conscience of the individual Christian citizen \* \* \*

"4. The Church will acknowledge anew that, in distinction from the nation in its secular capacity, she has a peculiar function which can be fulfilled only when she commits herself unreservedly to the way of Christ as she sees it, without undue consideration of what appears to be immediately prudent or expedient \* \* \*

"5. As a first step in this new lead the Church will refuse to countenance war under any circumstances whatever, partly because even such a bare act of renunciation will signify a clean cut with the policy which has led to the present 'Fall of Christianity', but chiefly because such a refusal is<sup>a</sup> necessary

clearing of the way for a positive policy of reconciliation which must otherwise inevitably be stultified from the outset. She will state explicitly that the basis of her war-refusal is her reading of the mind of Jesus Christ \* \* \*

"6. Next, the decks having thus been cleared, the Church will be free, as to-day she is not, to take the lead in advocating such national policies as will remove the causes from which war is apt to arise \* \* \*

"7. Though the Christian cannot in his own person acknowledge one type of ethic qua Christian and another type of ethic qua citizen, yet he may concede that the witness, to which as a Christian he knows himself to be called, cannot reasonably be expected of a State which is still in large measure sub-Christian. It must be frankly recognized that the obligation and ability fully to practise the Christian ethic is strictly relative to the status of discipleship \* \* \* Only those have a right to be pacifists who see and are committed to that interpretation of the way of Jesus. For others duty may for the present quite conceivably lie along other lines. If a man has not seized the significance of the Cross as the only true Christian reaction to evil, then it is better for him to react by the way of war than not to react at all \* \* \*

"8. Finally, the Church's witness against war will be only, so to speak, a bringing to a focus of a wider witness against everything in our social and economic way of life which inevitably

produces conflict, not only between nations, but within the nations themselves. \* \* he who is committed to the Christian Pacifist faith quickly discovers that he is committed to more than perhaps he at first realized \* \* \*" (1)

That these recommendations would not be put into practise immediately and without internal conflict in the Churches is shown by the sharp contrast between the thought in most of the eight propositions and the speech made by Lord Halifax at a service of Prayer for Peace held at St.Martin-in-the-Fields in July 1937. Some of his opening remarks could be accepted by both pacifist and non-pacifist. He recognized that all Christians were united in their desire for peace. He told his hearers, "We well know the probable consequences for civilized society of the unchaining in war of all the worst of man's disruptive passions." (2) It was the interruption of God's purpose - the union of all men in Himself - that was the gravest consequence of war. War was the outcome of forces opposed to the will of God. Up to this point the pacifist and the non-pacifist could agree. The difference appeared as he continued:-

" \* \* many good people repudiate war altogether as being, by its perversion of the powers of human nature and its degradation of human gifts, wholly and always opposed to the will of God, and would tell us that the only way to convert the world and to be faithful to God's purpose is by the refusal in all circumstances to have recourse to the instrument.

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(1) ibid. pp.135-147

(2) Lord Halifax The Christian Attitude to War p.1  
Deverell, Gibson & Hoare, Ltd. London 1937

"I respect, but I cannot take this view. There is no Christian who does not feel how great a thing it would be to abolish war and secure the world against its recurrence. But in trying to do this, we have to recognize that war is itself only a symptom of a disease deeply seated in human nature - namely, evil - and while we rightly do all in our power to treat the symptom, we must face that fact that there can be no real or permanent cure of the symptom except by the eradication of the disease. We are also forced to admit that while war is the product and symptom of evil, it is plainly not the only manifestation of evil in the world, and it may well be that refusal to face war might have the consequence of encouraging in worse forms the evil of which war is the visible outcome. To Christian people, therefore, seeking to bring the world to loyalty to God, the problem must present itself in terms of a comparison of evils; of which war, however deplorable in itself, may legitimately in my view be felt in special circumstances not to be the greatest \* \* \*" (1)

As he continued the separation between the two Christian groups became more and more marked. One of the features of Christian thoughts on war is the tendency always to divide when the fundamentals are reached.

"It is also necessary to distinguish between what may be the duty of individuals and that of the organized society that,

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(1) ibid. pp.3-4

we call the nation. For the latter stands in the place of trustee for all its citizens, present and future, and is responsible for their well-being. And it might well be that action justifiable in the case of an individual dealing with his own could not be justified in the case of a trustee acting on behalf of others. Thus, indeed, may we reconcile the seeming contradiction in the New Testament between the injunction to extreme self-surrender in the individual and the commendation of rulers as those entitled to use force for the restraint of evil doers." (1)

In a comparison of the thought of Dr. Macgregor and Lord Halifax the distinction between the Church and the State is clear. Their inherent antagonism is revealed. Dr. Macgregor is asking that men live first as Christians and secondly as citizens. As members of the Body of Christ they are to live and act recklessly by the prudential standards of the world. Lord Halifax is asking that men think of themselves as citizens and Christians at the same time - as trustees of a heritage which must not be lost and of national resources that must not be wasted.

The different attitude to war grows from a different set of life values. To answer the question "What does a Christian think about war?" it is first necessary to ask, "What does a Christian place at the center of his life?" A Christian can have thoughts about various aspects of war - what causes it, how should it be fought, who should fight, what kind of weapons should be used, and

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(1) ibid. p.4



many others. However the real Christian thought concerning war is focused in the personal question, "Shall I participate?" After this is answered the others take their proper place in the structure as stones on either side of the key stone. "Shall I participate?" is the ever present question which the Christian cannot avoid either in peace time or in war time. He must decide in peace what he will do in war. His answer will influence the political situation in which he lives. That pacifists considered their method as a preventative of war is evident from the statements made by the various pacifist advocates during this time when Europe was preparing for World War II. Before entering upon that chapter we will look at the thought of two more Christian leaders, John Middleton Murry, a pacifist, and Leslie Weatherhead, a non-pacifist. Murry leaves no doubt about the antagonism between the state and the pacifist.

"The only possible position for a Pacifist, who is neither ignorant nor hypocritical, is one of resolute non-co-operation with the state in time of war. He is bound to refuse his service in any civilian capacity; and he is equally bound to refuse to pay all taxes demanded of him for the prosecution of the war. Thus he deliberately outlaws himself from society.

"There can be no doubt of the revolutionary implication of such an attitude. The Pacifist, moreover, desires and endeavours that this attitude of his shall become universal. If a Pacifist movement of this kind were successful, it would paralyse the activities of the state as a belligerent. And that is what the

Pacifist ultimately seeks to accomplish. Without the final aim clearly in view, a Pacifist movement becomes one of irresponsible individualism. The Pacifist must be prepared to accept the responsibility and the penalty for this final aim." (1)

Murry was specific in enumerating some of the ultimate results of such a program. The abandonment of war by the United Kingdom would mean the eventual abandonment of all that portion of the British Empire which did not voluntarily adhere to that loose federation - India in particular. The English white man would have to relinquish his profitable holdings, with revolutionary effects upon the internal economy of the home country. The Pacifists in Britain had not yet been faced with real opposition. He said:-

"Tolerated Pacifism - it is salutary for the Pacifist to acknowledge - is a by-product of successful Imperialism. The licence which, in the past, this country has been able to give to Quakerism and to conscientious scruple, has been largely due to the wealth it has accumulated \* \* \* the relatively free scope allowed to the Pacifist by English tradition has undoubtedly been due to our pre-eminence in capitalist accumulation and our privileged geographical position \* \* \*

"Our marginal economic privileges are disappearing: our insular invulnerability has disappeared already; and with them will disappear also the licence accorded to Pacifism. Had England been under the compulsion which has pressed on continental countries

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(1) John Middleton Murry The Necessity of Pacifism p.108  
Johnathan Cape London 1937

to maintain military conscription, Pacifism would have been in a very different position to-day. The Pacifist would have been plainly recognized for what he is - a revolutionary, and an outlaw from society \* \* It might have been better if the Pacifist movement had been compelled to undergo this arduous moral preparation for the task ahead of it \* \* \*" (1)

Like all pacifists, Murry had to face the ultimate possibilities of the position he was advocating. The country might be conquered, but in fact be unconquered. He explained:-

"If the enemy wishes to conquer this country, then we must let him. Perhaps there is no other way of destroying the illusion which, with the emergence of capitalist societies, is fatal to humanity itself - the illusion that a modern nation can be effectively conquered by war. Let Germany conquer Great Britain, and learn by experience what will happen to its Fascist army of occupation when it is spread through the cities and shires of this country. It would be completely disintegrated within a year; and long before that time the Fascist regime in Germany would have collapsed in ignominy. Before this assurance can be established in fact, it may be necessary that one country should take the risk. If that is so, there can be no doubt that the country appointed by economic privilege and political tradition to the privilege of breaking through the iron circle of capitalist necessity is this country of England." (2)

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(1) ibid. p.110

(2) ibid. p.114

Although Leslie Weatherhead was not a pacifist, his differences with them were not so great as might be imagined. He believed in the use of force, but advocated that certain definite purposes be fulfilled in using force. He said:-

"There is a place for force, in my view, if it fulfils a purely police function. And four points may be noted:

"1. Police activity is only aimed at the aggressor, or the wrongdoer. It doesn't, for example, hang the pirates' wives, or bomb their children.

"2. Police activity is not aimed at killing, but at making the offender a good citizen, if this can be done without endangering the lives of innocent victims.

"3. Police activity summons the offender to an impartial court, and punishment is inflicted by disinterested people.

"4. Police activity is capable of successfully achieving its objects. " (1)

Then, referring to the recent Czechoslovakian partition, he said:-

"Now, if war had broken out at the recent crisis, none of these four points would have been covered.

"1. Thousands of innocent people, including women and children, would have been killed. The main aggressor would have probably been the safest man in Europe.

"2. The aim of war, as against police activity, is to kill, and to kill as many of the enemy as possible in almost any way open to you.

"3. No impartial court and disinterested judge would have settled the matter. A war might have been kindled which would have ended Western civilization as we know it, and robbed the word 'win' of any meaning.

"4. War does not achieve its objective, for it usually sets free more evil in the world than the evil it seeks to abolish." (1)

After this general condemnation of modern war, Weatherhead proposed a substitute. He recommended that when the diplomats turned to the young men and asked them to go to war, the young men say, 'Wait a moment' and then elect their own representatives to discuss and solve the problem. This would lift it completely out of the field of diplomacy and place the solution on the basis of Christian fellowship.

" \* \* in any crisis, let all Christian people stand together and demand that before any fighting, a conference shall be held between those called upon to kill, and especially that Christian unity be put to the test. The Church of Jesus Christ is supernatural, it is supra-national, supra-political. Our unity in Christ transcends everything. It is the only thing with power in it that does. We are not followers of John Bull first and of Jesus Christ as well afterwards if it isn't too

inconvenient. We are His followers, first \* \* \* " (1)

However, events were soon to move too rapidly for Christians to elect their representatives and get together for discussion. World War II started by an air attack on Poland. When the people of the United Kingdom (through a representative) did talk to the people of Germany, it was about a declaration of war. In a broadcast addressed to the German people on 4th September the Prime Minister explained Britian's reason for entering into war with Germany:-

"You may ask why Great Britain is concerned. We are concerned because we have our word of honour to defend Poland against aggression. Why did we feel it necessary to pledge ourselves to defend this Eastern Power when our interests lie in the West, and when your Leader has said he has no interest in the West? The answer is - and I regret to have to say it - that nobody in this country any longer places any trust in your Leader's word.

"He gave his word that he would respect the Locarno Treaty; he broke it. He gave his word that he neither wished nor intended to annex Austria; he broke it. He declared that he would not incorporate the Czechs in the Reich; he did so. He gave his word after Munich that he had no further territorial demands in Europe; he broke it. He gave his word that he wanted no Polish provinces; he broke it. He has sworn to you for years that he was the mortal enemy of Bolshevism; he is now its ally.

"Can you wonder his word is, for us, not worth the paper it is written on \* \* \*

"In this war we are not fighting against you, the German people, for whom we have no bitter feeling, but against a tyrannous and forsworn regime which has betrayed not only its own people but the whole of Western civilization and all that you and we hold dear.

"May God defend the right!" (1)

Summary of the 1933 - 1939 period

1. Return to reliance upon the Church rather than to external organizations as answer to war; disappearance of hope in the League of Nations.
2. Increased recommendation of pacifism, both for individual and national life; emphasis on world-brotherhood as the answer to the war problem.
3. Emphasis on sacrificial death as the ultimate answer to war; martyrdom for the individual and the nation.
4. Difference between Church and State heightened; State could be sacrificed by Christians if they believed it necessary in the interests of love; demands of the individual conscience supreme over those of the State.

CHAPTER FIVE  
1939 - 1945

THE SECOND WORLD-WIDE "JUST WAR"

In May 1940, before the war was a year old, when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh, its Committee on Church and Nation faced the main issue of the day by opening its Report with the title "Peace and War." It is significant that even at this time of darkened international relations the Committee considered Peace at the same time they were discussing the war.

They adhered "firmly to the conviction that war as a means of settling international disputes" was "contrary to the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ." Its final abolition was "a supreme Christian duty." However, that judgment in no way mitigated the sharpness of their rebuke and condemnation of Germany, and their determination to withstand that nation by force of arms. Germany's persistent policy of armed aggression, if not successfully resisted, would have lead to the "overthrow of the liberty of Britain and of all nations." The Committee affirmed that Britain and France were justified in entering the war, in which the adversary was not merely an enemy state but "daemonic forces of evil which have captured the



soul of a people." It is clear that this group of Christians had not accepted the pacifist recommendation of not calculating the probabilities of a situation. Their decision to enter the conflict was based on a series of calculations and estimates - what might happen to their nation, what might happen to France, what might happen to liberty and freedom, what might happen to Christianity, what might happen ....on and on. Both the pacifists and the non-pacifists were committed to a plan of reckless living in their faith - the only difference was that their faith(in regard to war) demanded of them such opposite reactions to aggression. The Committee in giving their reasons for supporting the war said:-

"The Committee is persuaded that for this Empire the only alternative to war, after strenuous efforts for peace, was not only its own destruction and the obliteration of liberty and democracy throughout Europe, but the overthrow of everything which bears the name of Christian civilisation. Being thus firmly persuaded, it is further convinced that a free, honourable, and ordered life for Europe can only be achieved in one of these ways: by the resolute prosecution of this war to victory; by a change of mind and heart in the German people; or by such a transformation of the whole situation as will enable peace, righteous to all and with promise of permanance, to be achieved."(1)

These Christians speaking through this Report placed a high value on the State, a view contrary to the radical pacifist position.

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(1) Church of Scotland Reports to the General Assembly p.378  
Report of the Committee on Church and Nation May 1940

Murry, it will be remembered, had predicted that under the pacifist program the Empire would be lost, the national economy radically changed, and the nation itself ultimately occupied. It was the prevention of all these calamities that prompted the non-pacifists in the Church of Scotland, and in other Churches too, to support the war. It was saving these and other values that made it a righteous war. That thought is inherent in all the remarks of the Committee on Church and Nation.

They were anxious that the war should retain its character of righteousness and justice. Christians were told in Section 2 of the Report that they "must hold to Christian values and preserve the Christian spirit" even in the midst of war.

"We believe that notwithstanding our own shortcomings our course is righteous; the military struggle is but the outer expression of a spiritual warfare which will persist long after the nations have laid down their arms; what shall it profit to gain a military victory if in the process we lose our own spiritual standards? These standards cannot be put aside for the duration of the war; unless we Christians uphold our standards throughout the war, and in spite of the hard experiences of the war, they will not be at our call when the war is over."<sup>(1)</sup>

They believed that the Church had a particular duty to preach the fundamental doctrine of the brotherhood of man, to emphasise the Christian doctrines of righteousness, justice, and truth, and to teach all men to resist the inclination to repay the enemy in

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(1) ibid. p.381

his own coin, to avoid the "natural but un-Christian desire for vengeance." Here we can see some of the patterns of thought of the first war emerging. Even in the midst of war the sincere Christian has been aware that righteousness could not be suspended "for the time being." This is one of the implications of the "just war." If the methods of injustice, revenge, or retaliation are used then the character of the war, whatever its original cause, is so changed that Christians can have no part in it. It has ever been a necessary part of the concept of the "just war" that there were certain standards which could be maintained in the prosecution of the war itself. The Christian soldier could not cease to be a Christian while he was winning the war. The only legitimate end of all war was a just and lasting peace.

In speaking of the peace, the Report delivered to the Church of Scotland in 1940 said that the task of the Church was two fold:-  
 "(a) To prepare the Empire and the nations of the world for the creation of a just and lasting peace, and (b) change the spirit of present-day Germany."(1) It was not the duty of the Church to determine the form of organization around which the new Europe would be built. The concern of the Church was to bring to birth such a spirit of good will as would make possible the solution of the serious problems, and "such a love of liberty, truth, and Christian reasonableness as will evolve appropriate means of dealing with them and so build up an international code of law and justice and a comity of nations."(2)

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(1) ibid. pp.383-384

(2) ibid. p.384

War to the Christian is a continual living problem. Even when the climax of evil has come, war is declared, and the armies are in the field there is no decision which remains static for the Christian. The cause, originally just, may by a sudden and unexpected change in policy become unjust. Waves of retaliation may sweep across the country and infect the spirit of the Church itself. And finally a decisive battle may in one day change dangerous enemies to potential Christian brothers. Fluidity is a characteristic of the Christian's thought on war - especially if it is truly Christian. The contradictions in war are always a stimulation and challenge to Christian thinking.

It was these contradictions inherent in using an imperfect instrument such as war to accomplish Christian ends that were considered by the Bishop of Chichester (G.K.A. Bell) in a war-time book. He states the problem in the following way:-

"There can hardly be a greater contradiction than that between the teaching and example of Christ and war. Christ declares the fatherhood of God. War blasphemes God. The gospel affirms community. War denies it. The gospel stands for the imperishable worth of the individual personality. War shows the individual suddenly as 'an isolated, helpless, powerless atom in a world of irrational monsters'." (1)

Next he asks the two questions that had been asked so many times before:- "Is there such a thing as a just war? And is a Christian justified in fighting against the enemy?" (2)

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(1) The Bishop of Chichester Christianity and World Order p.73

(2) Penguin Books Harmondsworth 1940  
ibid. pp.79-80

In developing the answer to the first, he quotes the thirty-seventh Article of religion of the Church of England and also a pronouncement of the Roman Catholic Church:-

"The thirty-seventh Article of religion of the Church of England says: 'It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.' The Roman Catholic Church refuses to condemn war absolutely, but lays down the precise conditions with which a war must comply in order to remain within the limits of justice. These are set out, for example, in A Code of International Ethics issued from the Roman Catholic University of Louvain by the International Union of Social Studies. It is there stated that Catholic theologians and moralists have constantly and unanimously taught that for a war to be lawful, it must:-

"(a) Have been declared by a legitimate authority.

"(b) Have a just and grave cause, proportioned to the evils it brings about.

"(c) Only be undertaken after all means of peaceful solution of the conflict have been exhausted without success.

"(d) Have serious chances of success.

"(e) Be carried out with a right intention.

"They add farther that:-

"It is also necessary that moderation should characterize the conducting of hostilities and should keep the demands of the victor within the limits of justice and charity." (1)

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(1) ibid. p.p. 79-80

Could any modern war fulfil these conditions? Bell thought it would be very difficult. One difficulty which hindered making a judgment was the lack of any recognized power to declare that any particular war was just. On the other hand Bell thought it would seem clear that a war genuinely conducted for self-preservation was a justifiable war. In the present war, Great Britain could enlarge the "self" so as to include a continent like Europe, which appeared as a more or less consistent whole. Scrupulous care had to be taken to be sure that the particular war was a war of self-preservation and was not a preventive war. It appears that in his thought, a clear case of self defence was all that was necessary to determine the "just" character of any war.

Bell turned his attention to the second question, "Ought a Christian to fight?" He spoke of the two extreme positions; the man who would never fight, and the man who said that the demands of the state were always supreme. Of the pacifist he said:-

"The absolute Pacifist says that it is \* \* utterly wrong for a Christian to take part in war. It is a difficult position to justify in the world as it is. For it is not possible to conduct the daily business of the world except by the use of discipline and of some kind of force. To refuse to use force absolutely is logically, surely, to be anarchic." (1)

Likewise he considered the other extreme to be equally untenable for the Christian:-

"But there is the other view, which is the view of those who

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(1) ibid. pp.80-81

are not pacifists. Some would hold that a Christian is bound to fight whenever his country commands. It is to my mind impossible for a citizen to commit his conscience so unreservedly to the rulers of the State. It would seem to me that the only justification of combatant service which is ultimately defensible as a Christian view, is that which holds that a Christian is bound to fight for his country because of his duty as a citizen, unless he is absolutely convinced that the war which his country makes is unjust." (1)

He recognized the division among Christians as to the rightness of Christians undertaking combatant service. He sympathized deeply with the feelings of those who were tormented with the doubt of it ever being right in any circumstances - not to fight and die for your country - but to kill your brother. (This was the position of some pacifists - they were willing to die, but not to kill) "Should a man kill his brother?" That was the question, heavy with responsibility, that fell to each Christian to answer.

"No Christian can fight, as those serving with modern fighting forces are obliged to fight, save (as it seems to me) with extreme reluctance, sustained by a strong sense of duty, and the personal conviction that, in all the circumstances, no other course is morally possible for him. And when a Christian says he cannot fight, because his conscience will not allow him to kill his brother: then in my opinion such a man's decision should be

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(1) ibid. p. 81

accepted, and he should be able to count on the support and sympathetic understanding of fellow-Christians who take another view." (1)

However, Bell made his own position clear beyond doubt when he said, "It is the war of a barbarian tyrant against civilization \* \* This is a moment in human history when it is impossible for the just man to be neutral." (2)

(Of course, the pacifists would not agree that they were neutral - they believed that they were engaged in continual spiritual warfare. It is one of the many points of misunderstanding between the two Christian groups.)

William Temple, as one of the leaders in the Church of England felt the impact of these issues too. He gave his first war-time broadcast on October 3, 1939. In this he contrasted the spirit of the nation then with the spirit in 1914. The first war had come as a "painful and vexatious interruption of a manner of life" - in 1939 the nation had entered the war with the "deep determination, accompanied by no sort of exhilaration, but by a profound sadness" which was in strong contrast to the earlier attitude.

"We enter the war as a dedicated nation; and it is this fact which has called forth the response of the younger generation in so marvellous a manner \* \* The prevailing conviction is that Nazi tyranny and oppression are destroying the traditional excellencies of European civilization and must be eliminated for the good of mankind. Over against the deified nation of the Nazis our people

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(1) ibid. p.82

(2) ibid. p.83



have taken their stand as a dedicated nation." (1)

He declared the war to be a "divine judgment", a statement which gave rise to some misunderstanding. In order to clarify his position he wrote early in the war:-

"Apparently this language suggests to some people the notion that 'God sent the war'; and they refuse to believe this. Of course, they are quite right if they are rejecting the notion that God decided abruptly that Europe had become too bad to be borne with any longer, and by a momentary act of will let loose a war. But it is a terrible mistake to suppose that God's judgment is to be seen only in events which are due to His direct intervention.

"Alike in the Old Testament and in the New we are taught to trace God's judgment in the working-out of those laws of cause and effect in the moral world which are a part of creation as God has ordered it. As in the physical realm so in the moral realm, causes produce their effects. The law of gravitation does not control your will; you need not walk over the edge of the precipice; but if you do, you will fall to the bottom \* \* \* 'Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"Now, when by the operation of the law of God calamity comes upon us as a consequence of our neglect or defiance of His will, it is evident that this is properly called the judgment of God."(2)

Ever present for the Church leader was the problem of the conscientious objector. Although Temple could understand and even

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(1) F.A. Iremonger William Temple p.540 Oxford U.Press London 1948  
 (2) ibid. pp. 541-542

sympathise with the Pacifist position he could not agree with it. To the Pacifist argument he answered that in a fallen world the rightness of most acts is relative: "to kill is right, if at all, relatively and not absolutely; that is, it can only be right in special circumstances. But in those circumstances, it is absolutely right." He expanded this idea in a letter to a young friend in November 1939:-

" \* \* \* When I say that in the circumstances killing is right, I am not denying that it is sinful; but we are in a position, as indeed we frequently are in other relations, where the choice is between two evils. Every available course is in this sense sinful that it belongs to an order of things which has departed from the rule of God \* \* \* we are involved in an entanglement due to the sin of mankind, including our own, in which the best thing we can do is still a bad thing. None the less it is right to do it, because it is the best possible \* \* \* Where the method of redemptive suffering is possible and the people concerned are capable of rising to it, it is no doubt the best of all; but there is no way that I can see in which we could redemptively suffer so as to change the heart of Germany and deliver Poles and Czechs; and if there is, our country is not yet anything like prepared to do it. So once again we have to do the best we can \* \* \* and then God be merciful to us sinners!" (1)

In this letter the principle of redemptive suffering is recognized; the principle which was at the center of the absolute Christian

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(1) ibid. pp.542-543

Pacifist's attitude to war. Contrary to Temple, the pacifist would say that even though we cannot see how our suffering would change the hearts of the Germans toward the Poles, even if we do not think that our nation is ready for the great spiritual experience we must go ahead with it. It requires a supreme act of faith; we must go into it without seeing the final result.

Although Temple could not agree with that position, he treated sincere pacifists with unflinching consideration. He declared that they might be fulfilling a vocation to which God had called them; by refusing to fight they were showing to the world their faith in the supremacy of love.

However, he did not equivocate concerning his own position. That it was right and proper for a dedicated Christian to take active part in the war was clear in his own mind. He expressed this in the following letter:-

"Though you cannot advance the Kingdom of God by fighting you can prevent Christian civilization, or a civilization on the way to becoming Christian, from being destroyed and that is what we are now engaged in. If you look at the New Testament carefully there can be no doubt that there is a theology of the State as well as of the Church, and that it is our duty to do as citizens in support of the State things which it would be inappropriate to do as Churchmen in support of the Church and its cause \* \* \* The duty to fight is a civic duty which, if the cause is good, Christianity accepts and approves, but it is not a duty which has its origin in Christianity as such." (1)

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(1) p. ibid. p. 544

As a Christian, he recognized the sinfulness of war and the power of evil which might be unleashed in the heat of the struggle. However, once the decision had been made to engage in this imperfect means, there could be no half-measures or inefficiency on the part of a Christian nation. Following is his answer to a letter received by him after dams in the Ruhr had been bombed, flooding towns and farmland and killing many thousands of civilians:-

"The decision whether or not to go to war or to support a country in war is a desperately serious one, but whichever way it is answered, the answer must be regarded as carrying with it the full consequence. If we answered 'No', we ought to have been naturally ready for the establishment of the Nazi regime, Gestapo and all the rest of it, in England rather than fight. If we answer 'Yes', we must also be ready for what is required in order to defeat the enemy other than the infliction of useless suffering. I think there is no doubt that the bombing of the Ruhr dams was a perfectly legitimate act of war. There is a great deal to be said for refusing to fight, though I think myself that in this case it would be the shirking of duty. There is still more I think to be said for fighting in support of freedom and justice, but there is nothing whatever to be said for fighting ineffectively." (1)

If there was "nothing whatever to be said for fighting ineffectively", there was no confusion in Archbishop Temple's mind

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(1) ibid. pp.544-545

about effectiveness and retaliation. As a leader of his Church, he would have nothing to do with the latter. He felt that action growing out of hatred represented a "descent to the enemy level" which must be avoided at all costs. The letter that follows is a rebuke to an Anglican priest who had recommended reprisals:-

"A correspondent has sent me your article 'It is Time for Reprisals', and I feel obliged to express to you the distress and consternation with which I read it. I think its argument quite false and its ethics quite deplorable \* \* \* The proposal that we should decree that for every civilian life taken here, we would take ten German civilian lives, represents just that descent to the enemy level which we must at all costs avoid if we are to be able to stand for any principles at all in the world of the future." (1)

All during the war William Temple found it necessary to make clear his Christian position concerning the relations of reprisals, vengeance, and judgment. In all his public statements there was a sense of the heavy responsibility involved when any nation took upon itself the duty of meting out justice. It was a Christian duty which could not be shirked, but the Christian always had to remember that God was the final judge - men were only His instruments. There was always the same caution - under no circumstances must there be any vengeance.

In his presidential address to the Convocation of York, Temple

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(1) *ibid.* p.546

spoke of "just retribution" when he discussed the claims and temptations facing the clergy in their duty as ministers and spokesmen of the Christian Church in the time of war. The Times report of this address was as follows:-

"The treachery of the Japanese attack was but one more example \* \* of that repudiation of moral principle which was the essential characteristic of Axis politics. The recently published record of German atrocities in Russia repeated on a colossal scale the story of brutal and indeed apparently purposeless cruelty which was already familiar from activity of the same people in Poland and Bohemia. Increasingly the name of Germany was becoming for civilized peoples a name of hatred and execration.

(He agreed with the policy of the Government demanding retribution)

"For such crimes there must be punishment. The Prime Minister was undoubtedly right when he included retribution among our war aims; and the decision of the Allied Governments at the recent gathering at St. James's Palace to bring to justice those proved guilty of these abominations should be welcomed by all who recognize that the vindication of moral principle is a primary aim of civilized government.

(He distinguished between retribution and vengeance.)

" \* \* when we applaud the purpose of just retribution as a means to the vindication of moral principle we must take care that this is indeed the end we seek. For it is easy to slide from the obligation to impose retribution into the desire to

exact vengeance; and this is naked evil; evil in its own principle as an offence against love; evil in its political effects as calling forth bitterness, resentment, and, at last, retaliatory war \* \* \* Retribution is an element of justice, and justice is the primary expression of love; but vengeance, however great the provocation, is essentially a satisfaction of self-centred passion \* \* \*

(The Church was to speak for God, and not to please men.)

"We have lately been told that if we resist the cry for vengeance, we are out of touch with the feeling of the people. I am sure this is not true; but if it were true, it could make no difference. Our task is to express, not the feelings of the people, but so much as we can learn of the mind of Christ, terrible in His justice, yet all-embracing in His love." (1)

Four months later Temple again spoke of this ever present threat to Christian love when he presided over the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury. The Church had to sustain the people in their struggle for victory, and at the same time save them from evil passions.

" \* \* we have at one and the same time to do our utmost both in upholding the steadfastness and constancy of our people in carrying through the war to victory, and also in saving our people from so yielding to the passions of war that the nation is disqualified for using victory to God's glory and that they themselves become separated from His purpose of love \* \* \*

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(1) The Times January 23, 1942 2c

"I am convinced that to neglect either is, as I believe, to shirk the responsibility which in the providence of God the historical moment imposes upon us." (1)

(There could be no faltering, but there were many temptations)

"We need to be vigilant against all that tends to generate hatred or ill-will as contrasted with resolute purpose and devotion to justice. From time to time the Christian sentiment is profoundly shocked by the way in which news is presented, when that news is in itself a proper occasion for rejoicing. Thus when the R.A.F. lately did signal service to the Allied cause by the destruction in great measure of the Baltic ports at Lübeck and Rostock, this was in some quarters presented in such a way as to suggest that the destruction of historic buildings and the infliction of misery on multitudes of human beings were occasions for satisfaction rather than profound regret. This was part of a price - a bitter price - paid for conspicuous aid to Russia \* \* \*" (1)

When faced with reports of atrocities, the magnitude of which was staggering to the human imagination, Temple did not depart from his position. In a letter to the Editor of The Times, his closing thought is that Christians must make all this hatred and massacre the subject of constant prayer. There is no suggestion that the nation should take vengeance into its own hands.

"Sir, - You rightly give prominence in your issue for to-day to the appalling facts now coming to light with regard to Hitler's

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(1) ibid. May 20, 1942 7c



project for the extermination of the Jews. It is a horror beyond what imagination can grasp. I am assured by Free Church friends that I may write in their name as well as in that of members of the Church of England to express our burning indignation at this atrocity, to which the records of barbarous ages scarcely supply a parallel.

It is hard to see what can be done. At least we might offer to receive here any Jews who are able to escape the clutches of the Nazis and make their way to our shores \* \* \* Further, it could be announced that any person proved to be directly or indirectly concerned with this outrage would be held responsible when the war is over. But, indeed, the matter seems to be beyond earthly resources. It should be the subject of our constant, united, and most earnest prayer to Almighty God.

Yours faithfully,  
William Cantuar" (1)

The Archbishop did not confuse the plans of men with the will of God. He was especially distrustful of direct prayers for victory, and was considerably distressed when his name seemed to be connected with an appeal to Christians for direct, unqualified "victory prayers." On this occasion he wrote to the Archbishop of York (Dr. Garbett) who did not share his view point.

"I am afraid I distress you by the fact that the forms of prayer which I draw up do not contain direct prayers for victory. I have always felt that it is wiser to avoid this, and

have publically stated that it ought to be avoided. I am of course prepared to say, with the form in the Book of 1928, 'Grant us victory, if it be Thy Will; but I am sure that clause ought to be added in such a case, even though it governs all our praying at all times.

"But I have tried always to draw up prayers which do not range us over against any of our fellow-Christians in Germany or elsewhere, because it seems to me that the primary concern of prayer \* \* must be the approach to the Father of all men, with recognition that if we pray as our Lord taught us, we are never praying against each other, because we are always praying not that what we want shall be done, but that what God wants shall be done \* \* I regard this as really fundamental \* \* \*

"I was horrified when, in the exhortation inserted in one of the official forms, the words occurred: 'Do not hesitate to pray for victory!'; that came out with a note to say that it was issued under the authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Cosmo having in fact telegraphed to say that there wasn't time to let me see the form and he was assuming my agreement! But apart from that there has not, I think, been a direct and unqualified prayer for victory officially issued \* \* I think the maintenance of the spiritual fellowship of all Christians is for the Church a concern that takes precedence even of the military defeat of Nazi-ism.

"Dr. Garbett replied, in part:-

"I quite understand your views about prayer for victory, though I do not agree with them. I am afraid I have often told people not to hesitate to pray for victory, and I regularly pray for it myself." (1)

This problem of "victory prayers" was discussed by another Christian, John Hadham in his book, God in a World at War. Hadham believed that it was not enough that Christians should merely pray for victory. If prayers were to be effective co-operation with God, it was necessary constantly to work to better understand what God's conflict was. God was fighting to save the world from a hideous tyranny, not to secure a British victory over Germany and Italy.

"Because this conflict - in which He has been engaged since the menace of fascism first emerged - has resulted in war, military victory became part of His action. But it does not stop there; and the victory of Great Britain and the Dominions serves His purpose only if in the world they build after the war they are pledged also to serve his purpose. We have proclaimed ourselves engaged in a crusade for freedom and justice for the rights of small nations to live. Politicians may find these phrases just suitable means to stir up national effort for very different and less worthy ends. God takes them seriously."(2)

Hadham believed that all God needed was men to co-operate with Him, men equipped with the knowledge to understand, the will to act,

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(1) F.A. Iremonger op.cit. pp.555-556

(2) John Hadham God in a World at War p.70 Penguin Books 1940

and the courage to see big visions. He was convinced that if God found such men among the Christians of the United Kingdom they could be confident that his help would be with them in the actual battle. If they refused to recognise that God was fighting for the soul of Germany as much as for all those whom German National-Socialism had enslaved, and proposed to adopt a purely vindictive attitude towards her, then it was likely that victory would go simply to the biggest armaments and the most skilful generals. Neither side could count on God's help.

He turned his attention to a problem that always frustrated the prayers of some Christians in war time; "What was the value of prayer, since the enemy was praying too?"

"It is in the consideration of the implications of asking God for victory that we can see the answer to those who say, 'The Germans are also praying for victory; their bishops have ordered thanksgiving services for the battle of Flanders; the two sides cancel out, for God cannot fairly answer our prayers and not theirs, which are just as sincere.' God is not an automatic machine producing a slab of toffee to anyone who puts in any coin of the right size and weight. He will certainly listen to the German mother praying for her son as soon as He will listen to the English mother, but He will listen to the prayers of the two sides for victory according as He judges best. If He believes a German victory will serve His purpose, He will do His best to help Germany to win; if He does not, He won't." (1)

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(1) ibid. pp.71-72

These thoughts on the ways of God led Hadham to a consideration of the manner in which the conflict should be conducted. He did not think that any man could appeal for the help of God in killing those who were no longer in a position to carry on the war. He did not think that retaliation was ever justified in the sight of God as an end in itself. He thought that there was a "very real distinction" between performing such actions as were necessary to defeat the military force of Germany, and copying their methods "in order to teach them a lesson." Unfortunately such lessons could not be taught without Great Britain first learning the same lesson and becoming callously indifferent to unnecessary suffering in others.

" \* \* it is always true that God is not interested in just any victory which Britain might win. He is only interested in a victory which does lead to the beginnings of a better life for His children, and such victories cannot be obtained by copying the very methods which have brought the world to war." (1)

There were so many temptations in war-time that such a victory was very difficult to obtain. However, once the nation accepted the principle that they would be as callous, as brutal, as inhuman as the enemy a victory which would be of any service to God becomes impossible. Hadham recognized the effort this would require:-

"We may as well face that fact, even if it makes our task apparently more difficult and demands of each one of us a self-control which will not always be easy to maintain." (2)

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(1) o ibid. p.89

(2) ibid. p.90

Before proceeding we might, at this point, mention two characteristics of Christian thought which appear in the statements so far surveyed.

The first is that war is entirely evil and contrary to the mind of Christ. It may be necessary to engage in war, but the decision to do so is the less of two evil choices. Even when some good appears to be coming from the war there is an evil black hanging over it. In none of the statements is there any hint of a glory in war, but always a sadness for the sin of the world.

Secondly, it is God alone who is able and entitled to use war. Man has no right to use it for his advancement or his own personal ambitions or plans. Individual Christians and nations alike must place themselves in harmony with the Will of God. Any other attitude immediately removes the conflict from the category of a "just war."

One of the problems directly related to the all-important issue of winning a victory useful for God's purpose was the attitude of Christians toward the enemy, including the war criminals. Their attitude would in large measure determine the spirit of the final victory.

The Bishop of Chichester, speaking in the House of Lords said that he felt it was with the Gestapo and "the assassins and gangsters who ran it that the supreme guilt lay." Evidence from Germans taken prisoner in Russia had shown considerable disillusionment on the part of the soldiers, and increasing revolt among the rank and file against Hitler. According to the Times he said:-

"The most powerful and the most significant part of Germany and of German character was not all black. The true remedy for the atrocities was to fix the guilt on the real criminals - Hitler and his assassins, the Nazi Party, the Gestapo, and their satellites - and to declare as plainly that we took a very different view of other Germans who loathed the Nazi regime and that we appealed to them to join us from within Germany in overthrowing Hitler and his gang." (1)

Speaking on the same theme (war criminals), Dr. C. F. Garbett, in addressing the Winchester diocesan conference referred to some of the German actions as growing out of "the mind of the Hun."

"We are fighting not only powerful but desperate enemies who will use remorselessly every weapon of treachery and cruelty to gain their ends. The recent deliberate and wanton raids on our cathedral cities accurately express the mind of the Hun, the brutalized mind which abhors all that is venerable, gracious, and lovely, and hates it still more if it is associated with the worship of God." (2)

When later he spoke in the House of Lords as Archbishop of York, events of the war had not tended to mitigate Dr. Garbett's feelings about the "mind of the Hun." The Times reported him as saying:-

" \* \* in Poland there was going on one of the most horrible, appalling outrages the world had ever seen. We were witnessing the

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(1) The Times February 12, 1943 2a

(2) ibid. May 7, 1942 7d

deliberate and cold blooded massacre of a nation. The extermination of all the Jews in that country had been decided upon and it would be carried out \* \* \* The Government should state repeatedly and solemnly that when the hour of deliverance came retribution would be dealt out not only on the cold-blooded and cowardly brutes who were ordering the massacres but also upon the thousands of underlings who appeared to be joyfully carrying out those cruelties." (1)

Speaking again on this same subject when addressing a city meeting at Leeds, Dr. Garbett said that wherever the crooked cross went there were not only the four dread horsemen of the Apocalypse but a fifth who carried the instruments of torture. In suggesting a four-fold plan of action he said:-

"(1) Let the German people know what was being done in their name.

"(2) Let the German people also be told solemnly and repeatedly that sure retribution awaited not only the master criminals who had ordered these horrors but also their brutal underlings who were carrying them out \* \*

"(3) We must make it plain that refugees from the horror could find refuge wherever the British flag flew.

"(4) We must support the Government in the efforts they were now making, with other allied Powers and the neutrals to help the Jews now in danger and to provide succour for their refugees." (2)

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(1) ibid. December 10, 1942 8a  
 (2) ibid. March 15, 1943 2d



Other Christians were struggling for answers to this problem. In May 1941, the Church of Scotland, through its Committee on Church and Nation, grappled with it. "What should be the Christian attitude toward reprisals and war crimes?" This seemed to haunt Christians as they struggled to fit their faith to the new conditions. The Committee delivered a thorough and penetrating Report. The first part was a summary of the changed conditions brought about by mechanized methods of combat.

The Committee found that the distinction between combatant and non-combatant was no longer so clear-cut as it had been twenty-five years ago, and the registration of women for war service and their labour in munition factories put them on a war footing. The same was true of what were called the civilian activities of men and women in A.R.P. services. They were prepared to say that the war effort of the nation involved multitudes of man and women who could no longer claim the protection of non-combatancy. But even so, there was still a difference. However blurred the distinction, a line could still be drawn between combatant and non-combatant. If not, then there could be no complaint when German airmen machine-gunned children at play or men and women shopping in the street.

In one sentence the Committee stated the fear of retaliation which lurked in many Christian minds.

"There is no known method of keeping retaliatory measures within bounds; indeed the desire for retaliation grows as it is fed and it can acknowledge no bounds at all; it must be

restrained by impulses other than its own." (1)

The Committee listed three considerations to which Christians must give due weight in determining any course of action. In these were summarised some of the cautions and admonitions voiced by other Christians too; there must be righteousness, but no retaliation, any action taken must serve the purpose of God, and future needs of the world must be considered. The considerations, in part, were:-

"(1) 'The righteous indignation of the people' must prove its righteousness. The desire for revenge must not be allowed to masquerade as a demand for just retribution. And if retaliation is resorted to, mere revenge must be eliminated; the occurrence calling for retaliation must be thoroughly proved, and the measures adopted be proportionate to the misdeed.

"(2) The Christian must view the problem in the light of the attributes of God; the ultimate judgment, it must be remembered is not human but divine, and even States must work with that in view and for the advancement of God's purposes \* \* \*

"(3) The Christian must look at this problem with an eye to the future needs of the world. The world is threatened with barbarism, and our nation and its allies are fighting to establish the dictates of religion, morality, civilisation, decency and human brotherhood. Under the admittedly appalling pressure of unspeakable brutalities, the less our nation adopts retaliatory measures, the more unwillingly she enters into competition with foes who have proved themselves willing to

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(1) The Church of Scotland Reports to the General Assembly p.343  
May 1941 Report of the Committee on Church and Nation

stop at nothing, however degrading, the more hope there will be for the future welfare and peaceful settlement of Europe." (1)

In 1943 the same Committee issued another report for the guidance of Christians. The emphasis was somewhat different than in the previous one. This 1943 report emphasised the need for Christian judgment. The remarks were developed from the declaration of a Christian writer that of the four possibilities (vengeance, justice, sacrifice, and forgiveness), forgiveness was the only course of action which the Christian conscience could accept or the Christian Church approve. The Committee did not agree with this conclusion.

"In the view of the Committee this is for two reasons an untenable conclusion: first, because it is based upon a misapprehension and a misapplication of the Christian doctrine of forgiveness; second, because it fails to take serious account of the dreadful actualities of the existing situation.

"(1) Forgiveness is a personal act and derives reality from its personal character. It is not inconsistent with judgment and it does not exclude punishment. To be real it must be costly. On the Cross our Lord took the cost upon Himself, thus expressing not only the Divine mercy towards evil men, but the Divine antagonism against evil itself \* \* \*

"(2) there are circumstances in which the disavowal of penal action in the name of the Christian Doctrine of Forgiveness would be not only to misapply the doctrine, but, in so doing, to convey the impression that evil had been condoned. Such are the

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(1) ibid. pp.343-344

circumstances which prevail to-day. Cruelty, torture, terrorism, persecution, and mass murder have been practised on a scale, and with a ruthless calculation without parallel in the history of civilised society. \* \* \* It will be the duty of the United Nations to constitute a tribunal which will command respect in the eyes of the world. The task will be difficult, but its difficulty cannot absolve them from the responsibility of vindicating the Moral Law against those who have criminally profaned and violated it.

" \* \* \* The decision to bring war criminals to the bar of common humanity is indeed of most solemn import, for it implies acceptance on the part of the United Nations of the principles which they invoke. In judging others, they bring themselves into judgment." (1)

This has essentially some of the same thought as Randall Davidson's letter to Professor Deissmann in their correspondence following the first World War.

Another variation on this same theme was "The Treatment of the Vanquished Nations", one of the subjects investigated by a special Commission for the Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis, appointed by the Church of Scotland.

The special committee found that the main issue was a spiritual one, and one which closely concerned the Christian religion in whose teaching the treatment of the enemy has a prominent place.

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(1) The Church of Scotland op.cit. May 1943 pp.241-242

It could not be doubted that Christian principles required the unstinted extension of help to the enemy nations. There was nothing in Christian principle to forbid that the Christian's first thought should be for the victim rather than for the aggressor nations, but the duty towards the latter was also abundantly clear.

There was the further question of the infliction of punishment on those who by their malicious will brought this great evil on the world. The punishment of the evil-doer was always a matter that required careful thorough handling on the part of those who know their own sinfulness. It was of the utmost moment that certain necessary distinction and discriminations be made. The committee gave five principles:-

"(a) The simplest of these is that the punishment we inflict should be governed by a measured conception of justice and not dictated by any promptings of the spirit of vindictiveness.

"(b) Yet if we relied on this distinction alone, we should be carried no further than to the principle of 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth', part of the purpose of which was no doubt to forbid such uncontrolled vindictive action. The Christian principle, which our Lord set in such pointed contrast with this other, demands of us something better. It demands that in the infliction of punishment regard must be had both to the common good, and so far as the common good permits, to the ultimate welfare of those who are punished \* \* \*

"(c) It is also a serious question how far, in the absence of a generally recognised and generally effective international authority and tribunal, of which the aggressors and the victims are alike members, the powers normally vested in a criminal court can be transferred to the hands of the victorious parties in any international trial of arms, however just may have been their cause and however wanton the aggression of their enemies.

"(d) We must regard the people of Germany as being not only or entirely the willing abettors of Nazi aggression but also in very large part its victims. The fact that many Germans who hate and despise the Nazi outlook are now, under stress of war with foreign powers and through being kept in compulsory ignorance of the real causes of the struggle, taking active part against us, should not blind us to this more complicated nature of the real situation \* \* \*

"(e) As for the chief miscreants, the leaders of the Nazi policy, all will agree that they must be dealt with in such a way as to render them incapable of repeating the harm they have done. In their punishment the deterrent factor must receive first consideration. It will, however, be difficult to know how far down in the ranks of those responsible such treatment is wisely to be applied. To many the circumstances of the war's termination may in themselves bring full and condign punishment, in which case we may be largely relieved of the settlement of this

difficult problem; while with regard to the large mass of German fighting youth their punishment is in any case likely to be 'greater than they can bear'. The same considerations apply, of course, in different ways and degrees, to the cases of Italy and Japan." (1)

With this we end the concentration upon retribution and punishment, and again have a more diversified view. The portion that follows immediately is more or less dominated by the pacifist and non-pacifist controversy.

The Dean of St. Paul's (W.R. Matthews) writing on "The Moral Issues of the War" told Christians that they were taking the only right course in actively supporting the war. He used such standard proofs as self-preservation, support of liberty and justice, and preservation of Christian ideals - to quote him in detail would add no new material. However, it is of value to quote his criticism of the pacifists for it shows the complete disdain in which he as a non-pacifist held their position. There had been no change in such antagonism since the first war.

" \* \* \* it is difficult not to be struck by the fact that few, if any, conscientious objectors appearing before tribunals are moved to reject the comfortable alternatives suggested to them and demand a task which would make their sacrifice comparable with that of their fellow-citizens. There is a convention in some circles to speak of conscientious objectors as if they

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(1) The Church of Scotland Report of the Commission for the Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis, pp. 70-71  
May 1942

were all potential martyrs. This is, of course, ridiculous. We cannot tell whether a man is a martyr until he has been called upon to suffer, and conscientious objectors in this country seem the least likely of all classes of the community to suffer any serious inconvenience." (1)

After casting these doubts upon the sincerity of the Christian pacifists, he moves on <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ question pacifism at its very heart; the efficacy of suffering and the example of self-sacrifice as a means of over-coming evil.

"It seems obvious enough that any wide prevalence of the pacifist doctrine in the nation to-day would help to condemn the world to a long spell of the most stupid kind of tyranny. The belief that the forward surge of this evil power can be prevented by passive resistance is chimerical. To anyone who understands the type of man with whom we have to deal it is ludicrous to suggest that they could be deterred by the spectacle of the Peace Pledge Union gravely disapproving of their action. The Jews could offer nothing but passive resistance to their persecutors, and we know what has happened to them \* \* \* Nor can we admit that there is any substance in the dream that by degrees the example of passive protest would captivate the conquerors. The first thing which would happen in the subdued country would be the suppression of all peace propoganda, and the second would be the application of the Nazi technique to moulding the minds of children." (2)

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(1) W.R. Matthews The Moral Issues of the War p.33  
Eyre & Spottiswoode 1940

(2) ibid. pp.33-34



Now for the sake of sharp contrast we will place immediately beside this the war-time writing of G.H.C.Macgregor.

Dr.Macgregor considered that war was the crucial moral issue. In it was concentrated everything that was "fundamentally antagonistic to the principles of the Kingdom of God." (1) Consequently it marked the point at which the tension between the worldly order and that transcendent Kingdom reached the breaking-point, and "where the Christian Church must make its final stand." (2) How could the claims of Caesar be reconciled with the claims of God?:-

"No Christian can escape the agony of the dilemma. He is bound up with the community of his fellow-citizens in all the relationships and responsibilities of ordinary life. He cannot contract out of these relationships except by renouncing life itself. If he refuses loyal co-operation in war he seems to be declining to play his part in defending a social structure whose protection and nurture he himself still needs and still accepts. The Christian who refuses military service cannot therefore be said to be doing the ideally right thing. But the truth is that, for one who sees war to be utterly irreconcilable with the will of God in Christ, once war has broken out there is no way for the time being of reconciling God's claim upon him through the duty he owes to his fellows with God's claim upon him through the voice of his own conscience." (3)

For the Christian, both claims could not be satisfied wholly.

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(1) G.H.C.Macgregor The Relevance Of The Impossible p.60  
The F.O.R. Press London 1941

(2) ibid. p.61

(3) ibid. p.72

Either way he would have to confess that he had not wholly fulfilled the obligations of Christian citizenship. Yet it was just at this point where the Christian had to dare a discriminate judgment. The Christian must fearlessly confess that state and nation belong to the sphere of earthly and relative values, and that God alone has claim to absolute and unconditional loyalty.

"To one who sees in the words of Jesus the laws of a transcendent Kingdom given to be obeyed on earth, and sees in the Church Catholic and oecumenical the fellowship of the redeemed and the very Body of Christ the Redeemer, to such a one the obligation to maintain the unity and communion of that fellowship, even across the boundaries of warring states, may well seem to override every other loyalty; and participation in war, involving as it does the diabolical breaking of the Body yet again, may well seem an evil far more shameful than any failure in the duty of citizenship which may be involved in a refusal to uphold a national state by war." (1)

Dr. Macgregor declared that in the Cross the redemptive way of sacrificial love finds its perfect expression. It was Jesus' seal upon His assurance that man cannot cast out devils by the prince of devils, His witness to the weakness and folly of the sword, and to the triumphant power of the new way of overcoming evil with good.

"We err if we isolate the Cross as a unique divine transaction which has no bearing upon the ethic which Jesus taught or the way of life to which He called His disciples, having first trodden it Himself." (2)

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(1) ibid. pp.73-74

(2) ibid. p.82

As Dr. Macgregor looked to the future he saw a movement of many sincere Christians toward the pacifist position. "Every day it becomes clearer that, so far as he remains Christian, the non-pacifist is being inexorably driven nearer to the pacifist position." (1) The Christian conscience insists that there comes a point where it must take its stand upon an absolute.

"It is certainly too much to expect that the Church, in her official capacity, having rejected pacifism in the inter-war period, should become pacifist during the present conflict. But pacifist she must become when the return of peace gives her a second chance to re-think her faith - if at least she is not to surrender her last claim to the moral leadership of the nations." (2)

After seeing the decided contrast between Dr. Garbett and Dr. Macgregor, the one who believed that the war was saving Christianity, and the other who believed that only absolute pacifism could save the faith; we will survey the thought of Hugh Martin. Martin, who had been a pacifist and changed over to the other group, occupies somewhat of a mid-position between Dr. Garbett and Dr. Macgregor.

The question that Martin wants to deal with directly is, "May a Christian ever, with a good conscience, take part in war?" (3)

Before embarking on the main argument he wants to make two points clear. In the first place he was not defending war any more than the pacifist. War is anti-Christ. The pacifist abhorrence

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(1) ibid. p.84

(2) ibid. p.86

(3) Hugh Martin The Christian As Soldier p.9 S.C.M. Press London 1939

of war could not be "more profound" than that of the Christian non-pacifists. In the second place he wished to assert as heartily as any pacifist that the will of Christ was final. "When he has spoken, for me all argument ceases." (1)

After this declaration of the supremacy of Christ, Martin proceeds to defend the non-pacifist position, placing judgment in the key position, somewhat as P.T.Forsyth had done in the first war.

"The Christian law is love - all the time. But we must beware of sentimentality parading as love. There is sternness and judgment in the teaching of Jesus. A Christian must always love and not hate, be ready to forgive and never be vengeful. But it does not follow that love always involves non-resistance to violence and outrage. It is not clear that it is showing love to the aggressor to let him reap the fruits of his aggression, and still less clear that it is love to his victim to stand aside \* \* \*

"The antithesis between love and force is too easy. The opposite of love is hate, not force. Most of us, pacifist and non-pacifist alike, would agree that love must sometimes use force." (2)

Martin believed that although force could provide no ultimate solution, the fact did not make it valueless. It often provided the conditions in which alone a solution could be found. It could restrain and protect. It could bring a criminal before a tribunal

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(1) ibid. p.10

(2) ibid. pp.13-14

of justice, and see that its decision is enforced. The pacifists might respond that it was wrong to draw comparisons between the use of military force and police action. They were wrong, and this was part of the reason for Martin's distrust of the pacifist position.

"The best security for peace is a constant and constructive goodwill - love - ready to review political and economic conditions and to remove injustices. But if offers of friendship are rejected, if the verdict of arbitration is ignored, if an enquiry into access to raw material is boycotted by those who clamoured for it, if whole nations are brought up to believe in conquest and violence, if recourse to a peaceful settlement is refused - what then \* \* \*

"The retreat of the League of Nations, or rather of the nations comprising it, step by step in the face of aggression did not bring the world nearer to peace. The appetite of the aggressors had grown by what it feeds on \* \* \* To continue to tolerate the bully does not take us nearer the Kingdom of God. I have no desire to see the gangster inherit the earth." (1)

He directs a most sharp criticism at the pacifist doctrine that a Christian should act on faith even if the final consequences can not be predicted. Instead of faith, Martin describes this as similar to one of the Temptations, "Cast thyself down from thence, for He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." This recklessness advocated by the pacifists was nothing but tempting the Lord by

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(1) ibid. pp.17-18

by not looking at the probabilities of events "in this present stupid and wicked world." The absolute position was unreasoning; social progress called for compromise.

"At every step in social progress we are confronted by the necessity of compromise, pacifist and non-pacifist alike. The man who denies this is living in a dream world. The hope of the future is that we hate the compromise even as we make it. Is there not divinity as well as common sense in the maxim: Half a loaf is better than no bread?" (1)

Passing now to the thought of an absolute pacifist, C.J.Cadoux, we will notice his clear recognition of the spiritual difficulties of the pacifist during war-time. His statement is a contradiction of the belief that the pacifist makes his decision and then holds it in a mechanical and insensible manner.

"In the stress of the present conflict pacifism itself is under a heavy shadow, not simply because the war fever is unreasonably intolerant, but because it is so difficult for the Christian mind to see any alternative between the military defeat of Hitler and intolerable ruin \* \* \*

" \* \* the brutality and chauvinism of the Nazi government have been so gross and appalling that, unless it can be somehow overthrown and discredited, it does look as if the cause of Christian civilization (and therewith that of Christianity itself) will suffer an irreparable setback." (2)

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(1) ibid. p.22

(2) The Journal of Religion C.J.Cadoux Christianity and the Problem of War The Christian Pacifist Case pp.233-235  
Vol.XXI No.3 July 1941

Faced with these exceedingly difficult facts, the Christian pacifists nevertheless held the following three "main truths":-

"1.The treatment of man by man necessarily involved in war activities is irreconcilable with the standards of Christian conduct as given to us in the spirit and teaching of Jesus himself and of the New Testament \* \* \*

"2.War, however 'justifiable' in the view of those engaged in a particular struggle, in theory must, and in history and experience does, almost inevitably lead to further war and (as science progresses) worse war. In other words, on a long view, it bids fair to aggravate the disease of mankind instead of curing it.

"3.If the question be asked how, without violence, such as may sometimes have to take the form of war, intolerable wrong is to be prevented, the answer is that not the Sermon on the Mount alone but the whole example, spirit, and explicit teaching of Jesus and his earliest followers offer us a tolerably clear policy for the purpose of checking wrong. It is the policy expressed by Jesus in the words 'Love your enemies' and by Paul in the words 'Overcome evil with good' and furthermore conspicuously apparent in the unresisting submission of the Master himself to that death wherein his followers see the great redeeming act of God in his conflict with human sin." (1)

Cadoux did not plead for a "wooden or external conformity" to the letter of the New Testament. He knew that allowances had to be

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(1) ibid. pp.235-236

made for the fact that the scope and character of Christian responsibilities today are in many respects different from what they were in the first century in Palestine. But these changes did not mean that the main character of the Christian ethic was unrecognizable or that its authority was obsolete. In speaking of the essence of the Christian treatment of the wrongdoer Cadoux said:-

" \* \* the essence is (a) respect for his personal welfare - such respect as would not exclude forcible restraint and judicial condemnation, imprisonment, and the like but would exclude mutilation and death; and (b) the necessity and value of suffering, even to the point of the sacrifice of life, in cases where the appeal of Christian love is, for the time being, set at naught." (1)

Cadoux made a valuable contribution to the thought of the war period by his clear explanation of the pacifist concept of defence. He was aware of the appeal which the defence of the weak made to Christian men in determining them to take up arms. It appealed to their manhood and to their Christian teaching. It was not the defence that he questioned, but rather the method.

"In regard to the important problem of the defence of the weak; I would urge (a) that the difference of opinion concerns itself not with the question as to whether the weak should be defended but how they should be defended; (b) that no conceivable ethical system can provide an absolutely secure protection for them - on every ethical view their welfare and safety may

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(1) ibid. p.237



sometimes have to be sacrificed; and (c) that if weighty consideration is due to our moral sense of horror at allowing others to suffer, weighty consideration is also due to the moral sense of horror at stabbing, shooting, and drowning men, and starving out civilian populations. And I doubt whether, on a long view, our responsibility for the welfare of others can be held to justify an ethic contradictory of that which is really authoritative for our general and personal conduct." (1)

The last selections from Cadoux are two statements, one showing the difficult responsibility of the non-pacifist state, and the other pointing out the contribution to the spiritual order made by the pacifist witness. They are well-balanced, and represent a step toward bringing understanding to the two contending groups.

Cadoux concluded that as the world was presently constituted no political state could very well be pacifist. No state contained the requisite proportion of convinced pacifists among its citizens. The state had to deal with its problems, it could not wait for a better day.

"The state has, however, to deal somehow with the crying evils of the world, both within and without its borders; hence it has to exert some measure of injurious coercion on violent criminals and rioters at home, and, at times, it has to wage war against lawless men from abroad - and this because, as a state, it possesses against the transgressors no other weapon in which it trusts as promising sufficient power and promise of

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(1) ibid. pp.237-238

success against them. That state of things the pacifist ought frankly to recognize. He ought to abandon once and for all the attempt to show that a completely pacifist policy is open to his or any other nation, the members of which are individually lacking the one conviction that makes pacifist behaviour feasible and right." (1)

After giving this recognition to the opposite position he reminds non-pacifists that they have no right to overlook the practical and positively redemptive value of the Christian spirit even when acting nonresistently. All hypotheses used against pacifism ought to take account of the following facts.

"(a) the positive effects of gentleness, (b) the strict relativity of the policy of gentleness to the conviction of the individual who is to practice it, that is, its limitation to the convinced individuals, and (c) the high probability that if pacifism so far increased that its healing spirit dominated the policy of a whole nation its neighbors would move into a new and friendlier relationship with it, such as would put wanton aggression beyond the pale of practical politics." (2)

From this balanced thoughtful statement of Cadoux we move to <sup>J. H.</sup> ~~John~~ Oldham, a Christian leader whose thought was also marked by balance and temperance. Oldham was, during the war, editor of The Christian News Letter, a publication which exerted a considerable influence on a select group of Christian readers.

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(1) ibid. p.239

(2) ibid. p.240

One of Oldham's most valuable contributions to Christian thought of the time was the absolute necessity of maintaining Christian principles in all areas of personal life and national policy. So unique was his constant stress of this necessity that some quotations from his thoughtful and convincing articles in the News Letter will be valuable for our survey.

In the issue of April 2, 1941 he said, "As the war takes its course the contradiction between its necessities and the Christian purpose deepens." "What can we do?", he asks. Christians had "to seize every opportunity in speech and writing of holding before people's minds the ends for which the war is being waged." In proportion as these were realized, so Christians would shrink from actions incompatible with them. If these ends were sincerely intended, then the nation would have to be as different from the Nazis in aim and spirit as the "cruel necessities of war permit." There was "a lot of vile stuff being written in the press" which would drag them down to the Nazi level.(1)

On another occasion Oldham was commenting on a statement of Karl Barth in which Barth told Christians in the United Kingdom that resistance to National-Socialism was a duty of the Church - an act of obedience to Christ. In his comments Oldham said:-

"If that is true, we must resist equally the forces in our own society making for a secular totalitarianism. If there is to be resistance, it must be effective resistance. And for effective resistance it is necessary to oppose to the totalitarian

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(1) The Christian News-Letter J.H.Oldham, ed. April 2, 1941 No.75

conception of society an alternative political and social doctrine - a national social faith, which can be taught in our schools and propagated by the press, as the Nazi creed is taught and propagated \* \* \* I mean a conception of society which accords with the true nature of man and purpose of his existence and embodies values which determine our action here and now." (1)

Early in 1942 a copy of an article which appeared in the Sunday Express was sent to the editor of The Christian News-Letter.

The article opened by saying:-

"One thing Japan has certainly done for us. She has taught us to hate, to hate implacably and furiously. We scream for vengeance. Now, I am all for vengeance.

The article continued in this vein and concluded with:-

" \* \* I think there are times when for the greater good of humanity we should put aside our squeamishness and civilized rules for a moment and deal out retribution with ruthless horror as a deterrent and an example."

There could not have been a more perfect statement of the spirit which Oldham was constantly combatting. He said, "I rub my eyes." Of course he absolutely condemned any such vindictiveness. He said:-

"The Bible holds no truck with these confusions. It declares a universal right, an impartial judgment. Inhumanities are not one

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(1) ibid. August 6, 1941 No.93

whit less damnable when they are committed by Englishmen than when they are committed by Germans or Japanese. 'Reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?' " (1)

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had brought the U.S.A. into the war as a combatant, he spoke again of the necessity of keeping Christian ideals unimpaired. There was no tendency to discount or disregard the suffering and difficulties inherent in the struggle. On the contrary Oldham reviewed these before he made his plea. He told his readers that the flames of war, after Pearl Harbor, had engulfed the world, The sum of human suffering had swollen "to inconceivable proportions", and for hundreds of millions hunger and want would be intensified and prolonged. There was only one answer to the "gathering strength and momentum of the forces of death." It was "the complete surrender of ourselves to the power of the creative, lifegiving activity of the Spirit, in the unswerving faith that the ultimate reality of the universe is Spirit and all that that implies.(1)

Even though the war had covered the world with flames, no price was too high for the preservation of the slow, uphill gains of mankind in bringing public life under the rule of law and subjecting the use of force to moral restraints. He makes the plea, not only for an absence of vengeance or hatred, but for something even deeper than that - the admission that there are Christian values to be preserved even among the enemy.

"It would be a fatal mistake, which would defeat our hopes, to equate the spiritual struggle between the forces of death and of life with the armed conflict between the two groups of powers. The mistake would be fatal, because it would be completely unrealistic. Good and evil in life are inextricably mixed; they never separate themselves out into two sharply opposed camps. The forces of life are not extinct among those with whom we are at war. We have had recent evidence of moral forces in Germany courageously resisting and denouncing the evils of the Nazi regime." (1)

Because of ~~God~~ham's emphasis on the maintenance of Christian principles against the demands of the moment, he gave a sympathetic hearing to the cause of sincere Christian pacifism although he himself did not follow its thought and action. He welcomed the publication by the Society of Friends of a statement on Obedience to Conscience and told readers of the News-Letter that the pronouncement deserved attention.

" \* \* every responsible reminder of the claims of conscience, which are apt to receive short shift in war-time, is to be welcomed. The capacity to say 'No' to prevailing sentiment, custom and ideas is the mainspring of moral progress." (2)

His further remarks are of interest because of his special emphasis on the primary importance of making either the pacifist or the non-pacifist decision before God.

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(1) ibid. December 17, 1941 No. 112

(2) ibid. July 9, 1941 No. 89

He believed that the authentic note of a Christian decision to participate in war or to refuse participation must always be: "This is a terrible choice, but before God I can make no other." (1) No one who had not faced the pain involved in either choice and not felt the religious call of the position which he rejected had made a decision that was genuinely Christian. Like many other Christian non-pacifists Oldham readily agreed that war was most "emphatically not a method of the Kingdom of God." (2)

But the Christian was not only called to enter into a new life in the Kingdom of God, but was also at the same time a member of an earthly society sharing in its collective activities. It was on the reality of this collective life that Oldham made his non-pacifist decision. Making the decision before God created the only real bond of Christian unity which could survive all other differences of opinion.

"I am not trying to convert or persuade those who take the pacifist position. There is obviously much more to be said on both sides of the question. I only want to urge that the question is many-sided, and that the vital matter for the Christian is that he should make a responsible choice before God. The bonds which unite those who make such a responsible Christian choice, even though they reach different decisions, are stronger and deeper than the ties which link either group with those who on different grounds take the same position in regard to war as themselves." (3)

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(1) ibid. January 17, 1940 No.12  
 (2) ibid. January 17, 1940 No.12  
 (3) ibid. January 17, 1940 No.12

The final section of this chapter will be given to the thought of Christians concerning the termination of war - peace plans and methods for preserving the peace. There is a difference between these proposals and the proposals made during the first war. Then the emphasis was on the League of Nations plan that was to usher in a period of world democracy; the symbol of the New World. Now the emphasis is on force and power, and the necessity of remaining strong.

The Archbishop of Canterbury in preaching the Commemoration Sermon in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin spoke of peace aims. He was convinced that force was a necessary ingredient of justice; the problem for the Christian was not the use of force, but rather to prevent its use in the future by the powers of greed and injustice. He said:-

"Peace as a goal of educational or political effort must be conceived, not as a mere absence of fighting, but as a positive and dynamic force. Peace in the negative sense might be an ignoble thing; it might be grounded in complacency or cowardice; it might be an acquiescence in evil. Peace as the goal of our striving must be nothing less than good will effectively maintained against every form of greed!"(1)

He believed that peace would ask of the people, and especially of the young men and women of the post-war period, great sacrifices. There must be no slipping back into the self-seeking and self-indulgence of the inter-war years. Part of this sacrifice would

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(1) The Times June 22, 1942 6d



be the protection of good will.

"We must remain on a war footing that our assertion of good will against greed may be effective. And we must guard our hearts, as against the devil, from yielding to the temptation to use for our own greed the force which we maintained to uphold good will against greed of every kind."(1)

He further developed this concept of the use of force in the service of righteousness and justice in an address given at Dover. He condemned as intolerable the "naked arbitration of force irrespective of justice." It was against this that the nation was fighting. He was entirely convinced that they were right to fight to the bitter end. They were now doing what they could, "in a world where international relations were still but little organized, to put force at the back of justice." Christians had to make up their minds about it. Force must either be renounced altogether, as pacifists urged, or "subjected to the control of law."

The reason why the State itself had force at its disposal was not that force itself was the end of the State, but it was to secure that force was never lawlessly used. He could not see any reason for doubting that the same principle had to be applied to the dealings of nations with one another, and that there would be need to arm whatever authority was established to judge between the nations "with the means of enforcing its judgment." (2)

The use of force in maintaining peace was outlined by the

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(1) ibid. June 22, 1942 6d

(2) ibid. October 20, 1942 2c

Archbishop in a speech before the House of Lords. He said that there was need to clear up a good deal of the confusion in the minds of many people about what was called power politics. It was important to make it clear that power, though it was not an aim to be accepted as a governing principle of national policy, was "none the less a fact and would continue to be a fact which must be recognized and controlled." "One of the first interests in cooperation in the future" would be the recognition of the control of power, on behalf of the civilized world or groupings into which, by consent, it was divided, for the "practical purposes of maintaining peace."

The balance of power was not in itself a worthy goal, but it was "an indispensable condition to the achievement of any worthy goal." If the balance of power was to be the foundation on which the edifice of peace was built, it was indispensable that "the British Commonwealth be strong for that purpose." (1)

Peace maintained by the proper use of force was a theme on which the Archbishop of York (Dr. Garbett) also spoke. In the course of an address at Leeds he said that to secure peace after the war, the nation must first see that it entered into no commitments unless sure it could carry them out. After the last war the people refused to face the hard fact that, in an imperfect world, international law was futile without "force to assert its claims." An armed nation would have to be ready to take its part in taming "by force any nation which threatened to disturb world peace."

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(1) ibid. December 17, 1943 8a

This would mean the active cooperation of the three Great Powers - Russia, Great Britain, and the United States who must all agree to act as one against any nation which attacked any of them, or any nation associated with them. If Russia, Great Britain and the United States would act together to maintain peace, they might well be irresistible. The small nations could associate themselves with that alliance and cooperate with it in definite ways, but for a long time the real burden of responsibility would have to rest with those three. (1)

Peace maintained by power was proposed by the Archbishop Lord Lang when he spoke in Parliament. He said when the war was over the four great victorious Powers must be ready "to step in and accept a twofold responsibility; first, to effect the immediate and complete disarmament of the Axis nations, and maintain it until there was convincing proof that the Axis nations had abandoned their aggressive instincts; and, secondly, to be ready to exercise their authority, with force if necessary." <sup>(2)</sup> As a long-term policy he recommended that, as soon as possible, there should be the largest possible organization of nations capable of laying down a plan of collective security. (2)

The next recommendations for the conditions of peace which we will survey are cooperative productions from committees specially appointed to formulate and publish Christian peace aims. The first is from an interdenominational committee; the Churches' Peace Aims Group. Among the Church representatives to this organization

(1) ibid. December 10, 1943 2e

(2) ibid. April 15, 1943 8a

were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of Chichester, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the Free Church Council, the Secretaries of the Congregational and Baptist Unions.

We have the statement which they formulated and sent to the Federal Council of Churches of America. In it they recommended both spiritual and political standards and objectives for the peace. The work of the United Nations, the control of armed power, and religious freedom were among the subjects of the proposals quoted here.

"The present war is more than a conflict of nations; it is a conflict of faiths. Real victory depends on the clarity of our aims beyond the military defeat of the enemy, and on the completeness and sincerity of our dedication to those aims.

"We agree that 'the peace must provide the political framework for continuing collaboration of the United Nations and in due course of the neutral and enemy nations.' \* \* \* Moreover, we attach great importance to a vigorous dealing with the question of security, assuring to all peoples freedom from fear. The acceptance of responsibility by the United Nations should be preparatory to the inclusion of the neutral and vanquished nations in this Corporate system of world order as soon as political and psychological considerations permit \* \* \*

"There must be an adequate international control of armed

power , and we hope that the present association of the United Nations may develop into a world political organization in which would be vested armed power sufficient to prevent renewed aggression and the preparation of future wars. The vanquished enemies must be disarmed but there must be open to their citizens the same opportunities as other people to enjoy an equal share in all that conduces to the good life, so soon as and so long as their States behave as good neighbours.

"Not only the rights of conscience, of individuals, but the proper freedom of churches ought to be respected and preserved, with academic freedom to universities. No world settlement which does not give reasonable security and freedom to religious, cultural, and other minorities, and especially to the Jewish people, can be said to have succeeded.

"Above all else is needed the recognition of clear moral standards which nations and the citizens accept, in other words, the law and purpose of God, as a standard for our conduct and a law to obey." (1)

The second declaration on peace which we will survey is from the Church of Scotland Commission for the Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis. In thinking of a new international order they found that a successful conclusion to the war would be certain to lay upon the victorious nations "very grave and far-reaching

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(1) ibid. July 29, 1943 2c

responsibilities for reorganisation of the whole international order."(1) They discerned that "an overwhelming fund of power" was then likely to be concentrated in the hands of a few great peoples, and on their will the future constitution of the international order must largely depend. Unlimited sovereignty might have to be sacrificed.

"It is now widely believed that no plan can be successful which does not involve a real sacrifice by all the participating nations of some part of their present unlimited sovereignty. Some kind of federation will be necessary, and some kind of league; but even when this is granted, many difficult questions still remain open." (2)

The Commission then listed some of the principle questions which would have to be solved in order to create the conditions of a real peace.

"There is the question of the dominating position within such a league and federation, at least for a preliminary period and perhaps for a long time to come, of the Anglo-Saxon powers and their immediate associates. There is the question of the adjustment of relations between the democratic powers and Soviet Russia. There is the question of the relation to such a league of the federation of the vanquished powers. There is the question of the enforced disarmament of these latter. There are the further questions of the future status of colonies throughout the world, and of the all-important economic aspects of international

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(1) The Church of Scotland Report of the Commission for the Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis, May 1942 p.71

(2) ibid. p.72

relationships. There is also the question of the kind of armed power with which such a new international arrangement will be sanctioned and protected \* \* \* (1)

As a final selection of Christian peace plans we have one from an individual Christian leader; formulated after he had surveyed the peace aims of various national leaders, both in the enemy and the allied countries. After his extensive investigation the Bishop of Chichester (G.K.A. Bell) declared, "To my mind the most fruitful contribution to reconstruction is that contained in the allocution of the Pope to the College of Cardinals, delivered on Christmas Eve, 1939, setting out the five fundamental conditions of an honourable and just peace." (2)

These "five fundamental conditions" are given here in detail because (1), they were accepted by a Christian leader in the United Kingdom as his peace recommendations, and (2) on their own merit the five principles occasioned wide discussion in both the U.S.A. and Great Britain. They were an important stimulus to Christian thought. The principles, known as The Pope's Five Peace Points, follow:-

"(1) A fundamental postulate of any just and honourable peace is an assurance for all nations great or small, powerful or weak, of their right to life and independence. The will of one nation to live must never mean the sentence of death passed upon another. When this equality of rights has been destroyed, attacked, or threatened, order demands that reparation shall be made, and the measure and extent of that reparation is determined,

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(1) ibid. p.72

(2) The Bishop of Chichester Christianity and World Order p.94  
Penguin Books Harmondsworth 1940

not by the sword nor by the arbitrary decision of self-interest, but by the rules of justice and reciprocal equity.

"(2) The order thus established, if it is to continue undisturbed and ensure true peace, requires that the nations be delivered from the slavery imposed upon them by the race for armaments, and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to protect the right, may become an overbearing and tyrannical master. Any peaceful settlement which fails to give fundamental importance to a mutually agreed, organic, and progressive disarmament, spiritual as well as material, or which neglects to ensure the effective and loyal implementing of such an agreement, will sooner or later show itself to be lacking in coherence and vitality.

"(3) \* \* \* in order that a peace may be honourably accepted and in order to avoid arbitrary breaches and unilateral interpretations of treaties, it is of the first importance to erect some juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfilment of the conditions agreed upon, and which shall in case of recognized need, revise and correct them.

"(4) If a better European settlement is to be reached there is one point in particular which should receive special attention: it is the real needs and the just demands of nations and populations, and racial minorities \* \* \* they deserve to be examined in a



friendly spirit with a view to meeting them by peaceful methods, and even, when it appears necessary, by means of an equitable and covenanted revision of the treaties themselves \* \* \*

"(5) But even the best and most detailed regulations will be imperfect and foredoomed to failure unless the peoples and those who govern them submit willingly to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life authority, and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements. They must develop that sense of deep and keen responsibility which measures and weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God; they must cultivate that hunger and thirst after justice which is proclaimed as a beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount \* \* \*" (1)

The Bishop's comment was, "I have little doubt that if these Five Points could be accepted, and if the principles could be really applied to the concrete situation, the whole prospect of a new order and of genuine reconstruction would be immensely advanced." (2)

A timely pronouncement on reconciliation was made by a committee of the Church of Scotland in May 1945 when they said:-

"Judgment there will be in plenty with the ending of the war, but if judgment leave no place for the ministries of reconciliation, there can be no healing of the nations. Judgment

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(1) ibid. pp.98-100

(2) ibid. p.101

will not change the heart of Germany if her heart be hardened against it. Only the word of reconciliation can interpret the word of judgment. 'Thy Kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.' "(1)

The atomic bombing of the Japanese mainland brought the entire war to a close in August of that year. Speaking of the atomic bomb, President Harry Truman said, "We have harnessed the power of the universe." Christians were soon to find however that instead of the power being "harnessed" it was loosed. That startling fact dominates their thoughts during the next period.

#### Summary of the 1939 - 1945 period

1. Intensified pacifist and non-pacifist misunderstanding.
2. Reversion to old thought patterns; "absolute" teaching of Jesus versus the "just war" concept
3. General agreement among all Christians that war was "contrary to the Will of God."
4. No enthusiastic hope for the "New World" such as developed during the first war.
5. Reliance on force rather than on free co-operation for maintenance of the peace; decline of idealism.
6. Absence of belief that any good would come from the war itself.
7. Emphasis on state and corporate values as against individual conscience.

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(1) The Church of Scotland Reports to the General Assembly Report of the Committee on Church and Nation p.271 May 1945

CHAPTER SIX  
1945 - 1948

## THE ATOMIC TRUCE

The threat of destruction by the atomic bomb filled the minds of Christian men following the end of the war. The consideration of atomic power usurped the place of importance occupied by the League of Nations idea following the first war. True, the United Nations plan was in the minds of Christians, but it did not occupy the central position; it was seen in its subordinate relation to the effective control of atomic power. Questions of disarmament, reparations, and international relations - topics which had held the focus of attention in 1918 were on the periphery in 1945. They were grouped around the atom bomb as small pieces of metal in a configuration under the influence of a magnet.

During the period from 1945 to 1948 three published reports examined Christian thought on war in an atomic era. These reports, all in the United Kingdom, are sufficiently representative to form the basis of this chapter.

Before surveying the reports individually a brief general analysis will be helpful.

First, the members of these committees discovered that all the old problems of war were present - none had been lost - all were intensified. No new problems had been added. The words and phrases used by each group have a familiar sound.

The atomic discovery did not heal the breach between the pacifists and non-pacifists. It appeared immediately in the discussions and remained through the conclusions.

What then did the committees find?

They found all the old problems - intensified.

They found the pacifist and non-pacifist cleavage - intensified.

Our survey will not show any new truth - its main interest will be to show the rather circular paths the committees trod to come out at the same door by which they entered.

The first report is that of the Commission appointed by the British Council of Churches, "to consider the problems created by the discovery of atomic energy." Their first meeting was held less than six months after the close of the war; January 4, 1946. The varying Christian backgrounds represented in the Committee are shown in the following list of members:-

J.H.Oldham, D.D. (Chairman) Christian Frontier Council

The Rev.M.E.Aubrey, C.H., M.A., General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland

The Very Rev.Professor John Baillie, D.D., D.Litt., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh

Robert Birley, M.A., Headmaster of Charterhouse

Mrs. Kathleen Bliss, M.A., Editor, The Christian News-Letter

The Rt. Rev. The Lord Bishop of Chichester

The Rev. Principal R. Newton Flew, D.D., Principal of Wesley House,  
Cambridge

The Rev. Norman Goodall, M.A., Secretary of the International  
Missionary Council

Kenneth G. Grubb, C.M.G., Secretary-General of the Hispanic and  
Luso-Brazilian Councils. From 1941 to March 1946 Controller of  
Overseas Publicity in the Ministry of Information

The Rev. C. E. Hudson, M.A., Canon of St. Albans

D. M. MacKinnon, M.A., Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Keble College,  
Lecturer in Philosophy at Balliol College, and Wilde Lecturer in  
Natural and Comparative Religion in the University of Oxford

Sir Walter Moberly, K.C.B., D.S.O., D.Litt.

Professor A. D. Ritchie, M.A., Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in  
the University of Edinburgh

Dennis Routh, M.A., Former Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford

Mrs. J. L. Stocks, B.Sc. Econ., Principal of Westfield College,  
University of London

The Rev. J. D. McCaughey, M.A. (Secretary) (1)

The Committee, after considering the historical situation, believed that circumstances might arise in which readiness to use force might be the sole means open to the western democracies to defend their national way of life and to maintain the conditions essential to the growth of a world community. To refuse in such circumstances to have recourse to force for the protection of society against lawless aggression would seem to be a repudiation at a

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(1) The Era of Atomic Power Report of a Commission Appointed by the  
British Council of Churches p.3 S.C.M. Press 1946

critical moment of all that they had said ( in a previous part of the Report) about taking history seriously, the significance of democracy and the relation of power to law.

On the other hand, the question had to be frankly faced whether modern methods of war, culminating in atomic warfare, were not, in the hands of an aggressor, so destructive of the material basis of civilisation, and when employed by its champions so incompatible with its values that the defence of civilisation by such means no longer had any convincing meaning.

Secondly, and in particular, whether it was permissible for Christians, even in the defence of the highest human values, to participate in the use of such diabolical weapons of universal destruction.

According to the Committee the only solution could be found in international co-operation.

"The only way in which we can be relieved from the necessity of so desperate a choice is that proposed by the heads of the American, Canadian and British nations, and endorsed by the United Nations, namely, that steps should be taken for 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.' But if this effort should fail, and until the end is achieved, the choice between two equally intolerable alternatives remain to torture the Christian conscience." (1)

The depths of this dilemma could be probed - that the Committee

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(1) ibid. p.48

promised to do. However, their combined efforts could not carry them beyond the stage of analysis to a choice between either of the alternatives of the dilemma. They said:-

"We shall try \* \* to show the depths of the dilemma. We have no clear way of escape from it to propose. What we are disposed rather to urge is that in place of committing ourselves too easily to one or other of the terrible alternatives we should fully face the dilemma, live with it, endure its torment, commit it to God in prayer until fresh light is vouchsafed to us." (1)

They considered the mass uncontrolled destruction of the atomic bomb. The question had to be asked afresh whether the destruction of an entire population, including the aged and the young was not an act so absolutely wrong in itself that no Christian could assent to it or share in it. This led to a statement of the pacifist position, and the statement of the opposing view approving a "just war".

"The possibility that an uncalculating refusal to have anything to do with methods of warfare involving wholesale massacre, and the acceptance of the political consequences arising out of such a refusal, is a duty demanded of us by the present historical crisis, and one which every serious mind must weigh. Some members of the Commission take the view that in no circumstances whatever should a Christian approve the use of the atomic bomb or similar weapon of wholesale massacre." (2)

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(1) *ibid.* p.48

(2) *ibid.* p.52

Over against the unconditional character of this demand was set the no less insistent Christian responsibility to defend the fundamental rights and liberties of men and the institutions through which in society these were affirmed, protected and developed. The main stream of Christian tradition had recognised the legitimacy of war for a just cause. But had the atomic bomb changed this by its very material power. Could civilization be defended?

"It is, indeed, a question, as we have already noted, whether civilisation can be defended by the means that would now have to be employed in its defence; whether, that is to say, if war were to occur in the immediate future, and still more in twenty or fifty years' time, when the destructive power of weapons will have still further increased, anything at all will survive the conflict. But this does not invalidate our argument that democratic institutions are a profoundly significant transcription at the political level of Christian insight, and for this reason demand the active support of Christians. Even the chance of preserving for future generations the framework of free and responsible political action may be preferable to a surrender to tyranny." (1)

To say that a Christian statesman should never use the atomic bomb would immediately nullify the bomb as a deterrent for preventing war. From this point of view it was a serious question whether it was right for Christians to weaken the hands of their government by announcing in advance that, if hostilities took place, they would

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(1) ibid.p.53



have no part in them. Such an attitude, if adopted on a large scale, might have the effect of encouraging an aggressor and thus of precipitating the catastrophe which it was hoped to avert.

The Committee put forward all these questions, not to arrive at an answer, but rather to set forth and sharpen the dilemma. They wanted the Christians to live with it.

"We have deliberately set forth the dilemma in all its acuteness and have done all that we can to sharpen the opposition. We have added to the strain by our strong insistence on the significance of man's historical existence. We have no solution of the dilemma to offer. If the final test were to come in another war the members of the Commission would almost certainly find themselves divided in their choice; and this division is only a reflection of the present divided mind of the Church." (1)

The Church was not able, with its present insight, to pronounce between the two alternatives. It must throw the shield of its protection and sympathy over those who made either choice. Each was the expression of loyalty to one side of Christian obligation.

The Committee may have sensed that they would be criticised for finding nothing more than a dilemma, a fact which was rather generally known before the Committee met. They contended that their having no clear-cut solution to offer did not mean that they were left with a purely negative conclusion. On the contrary, from the discussion there emerged two positive results of the highest

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(1) ibid. p.56

practical importance:-

"In the first place, the intolerable nature of the dilemma by which we should be confronted by an outbreak of atomic warfare is an overwhelming reason for doing all in our power to further the proposal to eliminate weapons adaptable to mass destruction from the armaments of all nations \* \* \*

"Secondly, we believe that to live with the dilemma, refusing the false peace of mind which obliviousness to either disturbing alternative might bring, is a necessary discipline through which we must pass in order that the solution may in the providence of God in due time overtake us. Only through such a discipline also can we come to understand the deeper dilemma of our whole society, of which the ambiguities of war are only one expression \* \* \*" (1)

Our second report is from the Committee on Church and Nation of the Church of Scotland. Their investigation was stimulated by the findings of the British Council Committee.

The Church of Scotland group criticized the former committee for leaving the Churches with an irresolvable dilemma. They determined to find some specific answers. The method adopted was to propose definite questions to be answered in the course of their deliberations. The questions follow.

"(1) The first question to be considered is this: In what sense and to what degree has a new situation been created for

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(1) ibid. p.57

mankind by the scientific discoveries which led to the use of the atomic bomb?" (1)

There were two facts which had to be taken into account in answering this question. The first was "the obvious fact that these discoveries have abolished whatever remained of the rationality of war as a means of settling disputes between nations."(2) The objection that war was never a rational means of settling international disputes was sufficiently met by pointing out that war, however irrational as a means, had always been capable of rational justification in terms of the end which it was designed to achieve. It could be presumed, where a nation entered upon war in defence of fundamental human values and interests, that the preservation of these would be an ultimate gain to mankind far outweighing the moral and material loss which it must suffer. This presumption of the ultimate rationality of war, in the sense indicated, had itself ceased to be reasonable, at least so far as concerns those who would place a Christian interpretation upon such a phrase as 'fundamental human values and interests.' The Committee said:\*

"In the case of a just war it has hitherto been possible to presume that the good to be achieved or preserved would outweigh the evil to be endured or inflicted. No account is taken at this point as to whether the rightness or wrongness of war can be determined by such prudential calculations. The fact is simply stated as a fact that a presumption, hitherto regarded

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(1) Church of Scotland Reports to the General Assembly  
Report of the Committee on Church and Nation May 1946 p220

(2) 1946 p220

as reasonable, can no longer with confidence be so described \* \* " (1)

If so much as this was admitted, a second fact emerged which was equally relevant as indicating the changed situation of mankind. Recent history had given new and terrible insights into the power of those dark, irrational, nihilistic forces which had been seen erupting into civilised life. Irrational in essence, they assumed a perverted and plausible rationality. Directed to the ends of power and divested of the restraints of morality, their threat to humane and civilized life was the greater because within the order which they assailed these restraints were still acknowledged. A premium was now placed on swift and ruthless aggression by any power which deemed itself capable of delivering a disabling and paralysing attack, or which was convinced of the inability or unwillingness of its victim to retaliate.

"The second question considered by the Committee was this: In what sense and to what degree have the discovery and military use of atomic power created a new situation for the Christian Church?" (2)

Here again the answer appeared to be twofold. In the first place, the situation had been radically altered in one very important respect. The traditional Christian doctrine of war had hitherto been reinforced by four assumptions:-

"The assumptions were not determinative of the doctrine, but they were implied in Christian exposition of it. They were these: (a) that military operations could be made subject to the 'laws of war' through international agreement; (b) that minimal

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(1) ibid. pp.221-222

(2) ibid. p.223

decencies, such as the distinction between combatant and non-combatant could thus be preserved; (c) that Christian opinion could be used for the restraint of violence in excess of strict military necessity; and (d) that a 'just war', successfully waged could secure values for mankind outweighing the evil and suffering involved." (1)

Of these four assumptions it might be said that the first two had been clearly invalidated by recent developments; that the third had become meaningless in the context of atomic warfare; and that the fourth could no longer with the same confidence be maintained.

However, considering the purely ethical question the Committee explained that the absolute destructiveness of the atomic bomb changed the problem in degree - but not in kind. On the ethical level it was still the same problem. Nor was the problem altered in its ethical aspect by the fact that a nation which went to war under atomic conditions in defence of its most vital rights and liberties could not ignore the possibility that in doing so it might be contributing to the common ruin of mankind, and to the destruction of the culture and civilisation within which these rights and liberties inhered. Neither the pacifist nor the non-pacifist had ever construed the Christian ethic upon utilitarian premises.

The third and final question was;

"What counsel had it (the Committee) to offer to the General Assembly regarding the Church's duty of practical guidance in the present situation?" (2)

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(1) ibid. p.224

(2) ibid. p.225

In giving their decision, the Committee made its repudiation of pacifism clear and definite.

"It will clear the way for the statement of this final view if, first of all, the Committee expresses its continued dissent from the pacifist conception of an a solute ethic of love and non-resistance to which the Christian and the Christian Church should stand committed irrespective of the historic conditions and consequences of such commitment \* \* \*

"It is as Christians that we must decide, but as Christians who are like other men in the respect that we are historically conditioned, citizens of a nation and of the world, and with responsibilities in both aspects of our citizenship which are not lightly to be disowned \* \* \*" (1)

After this clearing of the ground, the Committee gave its final answer.

"Is it the duty then of the Church, despite these dangers, to denounce now and with regard to this interim period, (before international control), the use under any conceivable conditions of the atomic bomb? The Committee, after great heart-searching, finds itself unable to recommend such a course to the General Assembly." (2)

Our third report is from a special Committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in accordance with a resolution of the Church Assembly passed June, 1946; "to consider the report of a Commission appointed by the British Council of Churches,

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(1) ibid. pp. 228-229

(2) ibid. p. 229

entitled The Era of Atomic Power, and to report to the Assembly."(1)

The Committee was composed of 11 Churchmen in addition to Mr. Maurice B. Reckitt, Editor of Christendom; Dr. H. A. Smith, Sometime Professor of International Law, University of London; Sir George Thomson, F.R.S., Professor of Physics, Imperial College of Science; and Rear-Admiral H. G. Thursfield, Editor of Brassey's Naval Annual.(2)

After preliminary remarks concerning the history and development of new weapons and the normal emotional reaction against them the Committee spoke specifically of the atomic bomb and of restricting its use.

" \* \* we can say first \* \* that the atomic bomb is inadmissible as a means of attack upon objectives in inhabited cities. Its power is such that it will serve neither for 'precision' nor for 'area' bombing: it is essentially an instrument of 'obliteration.' Moreover, in comparison with the high-capacity bomb, which is said to be less dangerous to life and limb than to buildings, it is markedly lethal, even to persons far removed from the centre of the explosion." (3)

But might it be used in circumstances that did not oblige to the same discrimination - for instance, against an isolated armaments plant, a fleet at sea, a system of fortifications or a concentration of armour?

"As far as we can see, there would be no objection to using it against a military target (if such were found) which could be attacked without injury to human beings; but if human beings

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(1) The Church and the Atom p.5 The Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, Church House, Westminster 1948

(2) ibid. p.3

(3) ibid. p.15

were involved, it would be necessary to take into account peculiar properties of the bomb that appear to sort ill with the object of warfare, which is to overpower the enemy without doing more harm than necessary. Like certain gases and bacteriological devices, it is open to the objection that it causes death and aggravates suffering needlessly."<sup>(1)</sup>

This was never an easy argument to handle; but the principle to be observed was this: that the use of a given weapon might be said to cause needless suffering or death when there existed some other equally efficacious, but more humane, means to the same lawful military end. The question, therefore, was whether an atomic bomb, which undoubtedly caused great suffering and was conspicuously deadly, served any legitimate purpose with notably greater efficacy than other weapons.

"We must speak with reserve in this technical matter; but it seems to us that the only eminent advantage of a legitimate sort to be gained from using this bomb consists in the fact that one aircraft bearing it can do the work of many loaded with other missiles. Suppose, then, that there is an objective it is vital to destroy; that the defences are so strong as to preclude the approach of an adequate force armed with other bombs; and that there is no objection on other grounds than of inhumanity to the use of atomic energy: in such circumstances the suffering and death caused will not be needless. But in most imaginable situations the charge of inhumanity would lie."<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) ibid. p.45

(2) ibid. p.46



They tried to give an answer to the question most often asked: If one nation began hostilities against another by launching an attack with atomic weapons upon its principal cities, would a reply in kind be justified?:-

"To this we answer, first, that in all probability such an attack would, by threatening the existence of the community subjected to it, establish a 'present imminent danger' which would justify all measures genuinely necessary to self-defence. Secondly, since in these circumstances the only hope of effective defence would lie in bringing overwhelming force to bear upon the enemy immediately, it seems that the use of atomic weapons would be genuinely necessary. Thirdly, since it would also be necessary to use these weapons in the most immediately efficacious way, whatever damage and casualties were inflicted in so doing could rightly be regarded as incidental to self-defence." (1)

If this answer was correct, the Committee considered that any nation, or any group of nations, which was resolved to resist aggression of the kind supposed, should let it be known that it held itself entitled to defend itself in this way. On their judgment such warning might go far to prevent the abuse of atomic weapons.

After sketching the difference between Christianity and Russian Communism they referred to the ever-present peril of another world war. The fundamental conflict of the two world-views made it incumbent on the Church to take into consideration the possibility

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(1) ibid. p.52

that it might ultimately lead to an appeal to arms. Such an issue was a possibility; but it was not inevitable.

They took the occasion to repudiate pacifism.

"There are those who would say that the solution is to counter aggression by love. Ultimately that may be true. But is it applicable to the problem that confronts us? Or, to put it in another way, is it not the case that love demands chief consideration for those who are threatened by aggression? Would the abandonment of atomic weapons by the peace-loving powers that possess them contribute anything to the success of a world order founded on justice? It is difficult to think that it would. A nation that by disarmament rendered itself defenceless would not be assisting in the prevention of aggression, which is the only way to preserve justice in the world." (1)

The Commission summarised its findings in a series of conclusions from which the following three are taken.

"(3) By the law of nature every man retains the right to life, and to immunity from wounding, imprisonment or coercion, until the contrary is proved. In other words, natural human rights are 'in possession'. A belligerent, therefore, may not assume that he is justified in subjecting all enemy citizens without distinction to such force as he thinks necessary to his purpose, but ought to observe certain principles of discrimination \* \* \*

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(1) ibid. p.106

"(4) From the standpoint of moral theology, the use of atomic bombs must be considered in conjunction with other acts of mass-destruction, such as 'obliteration' bombing, and be judged by the same rules. The Commission holds that, except in rare cases of 'necessity' in the strictest sense, all methods of warfare are unjustifiable that violate either the principles of discrimination to which reference has been made or the limitations that derive from the nature and purpose of a just war. Further, the properties of the atomic bomb are such as to expose it to the same objections as poison gas and bacteriological weapons.

"(6) On the assumption that to-day possession of atomic weapons is genuinely necessary for national self-preservation, a government, which is responsible for the safety of the community committed to its charge, is entitled to manufacture them and hold them in readiness. The Commission believes, moreover, that in certain circumstances defensive 'necessity' might justify their use against an unscrupulous aggressor." (1)

As we read these three reports and follow the deliberations of these sincere Christians to their conclusions we may question if the two denominational committees truly solved the dilemma that the British Council group formulated and presented to them.

Is the dilemma still not present behind the recommendations? Unless the individual Christian gives his conscience over to some corporate group he himself must face the dilemma. Considered in this

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(1) ibid. pp.110-111

way it appears very much like the same one Christians have always faced when confronted by the evil of war.

It did not suddenly appear with the atomic age, nor from a moral standpoint was it made more acute.

Summary of the 1945 - 1948 period

1. Dependence upon some agency outside the Church to solve the problem; an international organization to control atomic power would enable the Church to give a definite answer to atomic war.
2. Increased misunderstanding between the pacifists and the non-pacifists; loss of the world by martyrdom versus loss by complete physical destruction.
3. The <sup>L</sup> <sup>A</sup> gain for reckless faith taken from the pacifists by the non-pacifists; willing to lose the whole world for the armed defence of principle.
4. Increased importance of the concept of the "just war"; worth ~~lo~~osing all of human history to maintain.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

When John Oman, during World War I said, "We should never accept war as eternally necessary", (1) he was expressing a conviction that dominated Christian thought during the entire period from 1914 to 1948 - even during the time that Christians in the United Kingdom were involved in two world-wide wars. To the question, "Is war inevitable?", Christians in Great Britain, both of the pacifist and the non-pacifist variety, consistently answered a definite "No". In order to emphasise the thought in another way X the question might be restated thus: "Is it God's plan to have war upon the earth?" The answer of Christians in the United Kingdom was a definite negative. To point this out might appear to be drawing attention to the obvious, but the conviction that war was not inevitable was so determinative in the thinking of Christians concerning war during the period under review that it is of cardinal importance.

The strong conviction that war was not imposed by the will of God, that it was not inevitable, but rather was a calamity which men brought upon themselves, sustained Christian men and women during the period of two wars in their hope of finally bringing in the Kingdom. Although not at all times expressed directly in words, there was always the firm belief that every effort made to eliminate war, and every prayer made for a just peace, was in co-operation with God. In the struggle to eliminate war there was never

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(1) p. 37, ut supra

an indication that Christians believed God to be neutral in the situation. Rather, He was concerned in a positive and creative way.

If war was not inevitable, if it was not decreed by God that the flames of armed conflict should burn the earth and its inhabitants, then there was a possibility of eliminating it from human life. Even more than a possibility - there was the clear responsibility to eliminate it. There is much evidence that the determination ultimately to eliminate war was always present in the thoughts of Christians from the first shock of World War I to the closing committee report on atomic warfare. Even during the time of hostilities when it would be understandable if energies were completely devoted to the sheer winning of the conflict, the hope of eliminating war was ever present. Many Christians, using a phrase made current by President Wilson, characterised the first war as "The War to End War." The objective of eliminating war was one of the few areas in which the pacifist and non-pacifist Christians, in spite of their many abiding differences, were united during the entire period.

Preaching the sermon of thanksgiving at the close of World War I, the Archbishop of Canterbury said, "I stand here, I speak here, today as one who, believing in our Master's promise, is bold to maintain - despite all our qualms, despite, nay because of, our experience - that, in His good time, the ending of war between Christian people is a thing attainable." (1)

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(1) p. 80, ut supra

One of the resolutions in the Encyclical Letter from the Bishops (Church of England) issued at the Lambeth Conference of 1920 stated:

"We rejoice that in these times of peril God is giving to His Church a fresh vision of His purpose to establish a Kingdom in which all nations of the earth shall be united as one family in righteousness and peace." (1)

The value of this abiding Christian hope for the elimination of war can be sensed in a description of student opinion prior to the second war:

"....it becomes clear that large sections of the present student generation are haunted by the fear of war. This fear is, however, not so much the cowardly fear for the physical suffering which war implies but rather the very comprehensible fear for its 'metaphysical' implications. What they dread is the meaninglessness which war will bring into their lives. For to them war is not so much a question of death versus life, as it is one of 'a tale told by an idiot' against meaningful living." (2)

Christian men and women, deeply concerned that war be eliminated, were certain that the responsibility for executing the task was theirs. Without any manifestation of egotism, Christian leaders throughout the period of our survey assumed that it was upon the Church and its members that the great work devolved. In a preamble to one of its declarations the World Alliance for Promoting Inter-

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(1) p. 97, ut supra  
(2) p.169, ut supra

national Friendship Through the Churches said:

"....the work of conciliation and the promotion of amity is essentially a Christian task...." (1)

There was no hint of trying to place this spiritual responsibility upon any special group in the nations such as the physical scientists, the psychologists, the sociologists, or the military. Each of the two wars was viewed with sadness as resulting from the failure of Christians, and the sin of a world at war was assumed by the Christians of the United Kingdom. This feeling of responsibility upon the Christians primarily for the elimination of war was especially evident during the period in which the League of Nations was being inaugurated. In 1920 a Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland reported to the General Assembly in the following way:

"The Committee would again urge upon the Church the need there is to give driving power to the League through enlightened public opinion and awakened Christian conscience. The League of Nations will not move itself." (2)

The Archbishop of York in 1920 wrote:

"I heartily approve of the proposal to appeal to the clergy of my own diocese, and indeed of the whole country, on behalf of the League of Nations Union. The support of the League of Nations ought to be regarded by the Church of Christ as a charge laid upon its faith and honour." (3)

In 1946, toward the close of the period under survey, a committee of churchmen representing the Christians in Great Britain reported concerning the problems raised by atomic warfare:

(1) p. 156, ut supra

(2) p. 99, ut supra

(3) p. 100, ut supra



".....we believe that to live with the dilemma, refusing the false peace of mind which obliviousness to either disturbing alternative might bring, is a necessary discipline through which we must pass...." (1)

Even in the face of the intolerable dilemma created by the physical destructiveness of atomic warfare, there was no hint that the burden should be passed to others. It was a discipline under which the members of the Christian church had to live. This certainty of the Christian responsibility for war when it came, and for its final elimination, was constantly in the minds of Christians.

If Christians, under God, were responsible for the elimination of war, what technique was to be used? On this critical point, from 1914 to 1948, there was a sharp division between the pacifist and non-pacifist group of Christians.

The latter maintained steadfastly that war would be eliminated only by a process that might be described as slow and painful evolution. They believed that the tensions and misunderstandings that broke out in war had to be overcome by a process of growth in Christian graces, the strengthening of Christian fellowship, and the elimination of unfair economic inequalities. All such changes required time, and it was necessary for Christians to work patiently, if sorrowfully, for <sup>the</sup> Kingdom of God to come in its fullness. During the time of growth, even while hoping and working for the elimination of war, the Christian might be forced by circumstances to participate in armed conflict for the protection of the objectives toward which

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(1) p. 286, ut supra

he was working.

On the other hand the pacifist Christians gave just as continuous and unbroken a witness for what might be termed the method of repudiation. As they surveyed history and searched the Scriptures, they declared that war would never be eliminated by the gradual evolutionary method. For them war was a serious spiritual disease that demanded drastic spiritual surgery. The only way for Christians to eliminate war from the earth was to repudiate it, once for all, without any reservations. The pacifist Christians maintained continually during the period from 1914 to 1948 that God had given a commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," and that unquestioning obedience to it was the only way to accomplish what all Christians so fervently hoped for - the final elimination of war from the life of nations.

In sharp contrast, the non-pacifists could not accept the method of repudiation, believing as they did that the Christian was responsible for predicting as best he could the possible results of non-participation in each particular war. The non-pacifist Christian felt obligated to face such questions as the following: If the enemy is not effectively resisted with force - What will happen to the national heritage of democracy? - What fate will befall my family and friends? - What limitations will be imposed upon the Church?

In 1914 Principal James Denney wrote to a friend:

"It is easy to quibble and be quirky about non-resistance in the abstract, or in the relation of a Christian individual to a persecuting pagan State, but I cannot understand - and don't want to understand - the man who thinks we should just sit still and let the Germans repeat in Kent or the Lothians what they have

done in Belgium." (1)

It is clear that Principal Denney, as a representative of his group, predicted what would happen if the enemy were not resisted with force. By that prediction he supported the war. At a later period (1924), in the C.O.P.E.C. report, a document which brought the pacifist and non-pacifist positions more closely in harmony than any other official report in the 1914-48 period, the conviction that war could not be eliminated by the act of repudiation was still maintained by the majority group.

"It must be conceded that war is as an inadequate and inappropriate method of fulfilling a moral obligation as could well be conceived . . . ., to limit its scope to the fulfilment of the moral purpose for which it may have been undertaken has hitherto passed the wit of man . . . . Admitting all this, Christians men have found themselves in a situation in which no other course than war for the safety or honour of the nation seemed possible. So far the Christian Church generally has not understood the teaching of Christ, or the spirit and purpose of the Gospel, as to regard war as for the Christian absolutely prohibited in such circumstances." (2)

In spite of their damaging indictment of war, these Christians still envisaged that non-participation might bring such losses that they and others would have to overcome their abhorrence of war and take part. In 1948 after the world had witnessed the staggering destructive power of the atom bomb, the majority of Christ-

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(1) p. 6, ut supra

(2) pp. 120, 121, ut supra

ians still felt it necessary to determine their decision to participate in terms of probable events. In 1946 the committee appointed by the Church of Scotland reported:

"It is as Christians that we must decide, but as Christians who are like other men in the respect that we are historically conditioned, citizens of a nation and of the world, and with responsibilities in both aspects of our citizenship which are not lightly to be disowned.....

"Is it the duty then of the Church, despite these dangers, to denounce now and with regard to this interim period, (before international control), the use under any conceivable conditions of the atomic bomb? The Committee, after great heart-searching, finds itself unable to recommend such a course to the General Assembly." (1)

On the contrary, the pacifist Christians, held as unflinchingly to the conviction that the effort to eliminate war should not be limited in any way by the calculation of the probable results of non-participation. Unconditional repudiation was their counsel to the distressed Christian community.

The Quaker, Dr. Salter, at the beginning of the First World War, declared in a public statement:

"Whatever is right is best. That is the first axiom of faith in God. Best now and best hereafter, best from the point of view of ultimate results.....If 'Thou shall not kill' is right, it is also best,..for individuals and the nation." (2)

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(1) p. 290, ut supra  
(2) p. 24, ut supra

Herbert Farmer, a kindred spirit, said in 1935:

"Much of the weakness and ineffectiveness of the Church's witness against war, even when it has been an emphatic and vigorous kind, comes from over-readiness to argue on the basis of probable consequences, and not enough on the basis of the intrinsic wickedness of war in the sight of God, and the necessity therefore of repudiating it and taking the consequences of such repudiation....." (1)

The following year G. H. C. Macgregor expressed the same sentiment as follows:

"To thoughtful Christians nothing surely can be more disturbing than the fact that, when the Church discusses war and peace, the questions which usually arise are not on fundamentals - such as our conception of God and His purpose for the world, the authority of Christ and the scope of His Kingdom, the nature of the Church and her redemptive mission, the Christian conception of personality and the Christian method of overcoming evil - but on matters of political expediency, special instance and probable consequences: 'What would happen if .....?' 'What should we do when.....?' God as an active factor in the situation seems too often to be entirely left out."(2)

This call for absolute repudiation was not changed by the events of the second war nor by the discovery of atomic power. In 1940 the commission appointed to represent the members of the British Council

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(1) p. 189, ut supra  
(2) p. 206, ut supra

of Churches published in its report the following statement representing, in its closing sentence, the thought of the pacifist members of this interdenominational group.

"The possibility that an uncalculating refusal to have anything to do with methods of warfare involving wholesale massacre, and the acceptance of the political consequence arising out of such a refusal, is a duty demanded of us by the present historical crisis, and one which every serious mind must weigh. Some members of the Commission take the view that in no circumstances whatever should a Christian approve the use of the atomic bomb or similar weapon of wholesale massacre." (1)

During intervals of peace, in periods of threat and danger, in war, in times of threatened world-wide destruction, the two contrasting methods for the elimination of war - repudiation vs evolution - were held by their respective advocates. The report, from which the above was cited, shows within its structure the presence of the two philosophies. After stating the pacifist position the committee continued:

"It is, indeed, a question, as we have already noted, whether civilization can be defended by the means that would now have to be employed in its defence; whether, that is to say, if war were to occur in the immediate future, and still more in twenty or fifty years' time, when the destructive power of weapons will have still further increased, anything at all will survive the conflict. But this does not invalidate our argument that demo-

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(1) p. 283, ut supra

cratic institutions are a profoundly significant transcription at the political level of Christian insight, and for this reason demand the active support of Christians. Even the chance of preserving for future generations the framework of free and responsible political action may be preferable to a surrender to tyranny." (1)

For the large group of Christians in the United Kingdom who believed in the gradual method for the elimination of war, there was a constant search for all the legitimate aid that could be secured - both within the Church and outside. During the period in the first half of the present century there was no indication of a feeling of exclusiveness about the agencies that might be used to accomplish the great task of elimination of war. Although, as has been pointed out, Christians were convinced that it was their special responsibility to eradicate war, there was no feeling that all their efforts should be directed through church organizations exclusively. There was no hesitation to use a purely political organization such as the League of Nations. Among Christians in the United Kingdom there was marked enthusiasm for the possibilities of such a world wide political organization as that represented by the League. At a later date, (1946), with the breakdown of the League keenly in memory, and in the face of the wholesale repudiation of treaties in the mid-1930's, one group of Christians held out the international agreement for the elimination of atomic warfare as the best hope for removing the world crisis. This desire to work through some international organization of nations

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(1) p.284, ut supra

stemmed from the conviction that war was only one (although a great one) of the evils of the world, and that to eliminate war it was necessary to eliminate many other kindred evils. With this world-wide view of the problem, Christians felt that an international organization of nations was the most efficient way to work. This enthusiasm is shown in many of the statements that were made by Christians in favor of the League following the first war. At a great public meeting in London on the first anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, the Archbishop of Canterbury seconded the following motion:

"That the public meeting of the citizens of London heartily approves of, and pledges itself to support, the Covenant constituting the League of Nations, as embodied in the Peace Treaty.

"That this meeting, moreover, approves of the general objects and aims of the League of Nations Union, and declares its willingness to support a National Union organized on a voluntary basis to strengthen the League of Nations as established, which will provide the machinery for the abolition of war, and for bringing about democratic control over international relationships."(1)

In May 1919, a report made to the United Free Church of Scotland stated:

"In accordance with the deliverance of last Assembly, the Committee did their best to stimulate the zeal of presbyteries in reference to the League of Nations."(2)

When the League of Nations collapsed and did not fulfill its function, this catastrophe deferred but did not eliminate the hope

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(1) p. 90 ut supra

(2) p. 92 ut supra



of Christians in international organization. In the closing years of the period under our observation, the Christians still hoped to find in an international organization substantial help in their struggle. The committee appointed by the British Council of Churches to investigate the situation as affected by the atom bomb reported:

"The only way in which we can be relieved from the necessity of so desperate a choice is that proposed by the heads of the American, Canadian, and British nations, and endorsed by the United Nations, namely, that steps should be taken for the 'elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.' " (1)

But with this hope for aid from international organizations went the strong conviction that such organizations, no matter how large, would be useless without the spirit of Christ as their motivating force. At the period of the most ardent enthusiasm for the League of Nations, the warning that the work must be spiritually motivated went hand and hand with the tributes. Following is a Times report of a sermon delivered by a leader of the Church of England in 1919:

".....even the League of Nations would be a mere baseless fabric unless it was founded upon a new spirit of brotherhood, a spirit which compelled men and classes and nations to regard themselves as one family under one Father." (2)

Christians were convinced that they were carrying on a work of the spirit and that the Spirit must be their source of power. Not only must any organization through which they worked be guided by

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(1) p. 282, ut supra  
(2) p. 86, ut supra

the Spirit of the Master, but the attitude of the people toward the organization must be one of Christian obligation and service. This thought was expressed by Christian leaders on many occasions such as in a sermon preached by the Archbishop of Canterbury, reported by the Times as follows:

".....the League of Nations - a Christian covenant if ever there was one - was not a matter merely, or even chiefly, for statesmen. It was a people's bond, a compact of self-restraint, an oath of fealty on larger principles than those of States and treaties - a fealty of Christian men and women to the Prince of Peace." (1)

The committee reporting to the United Free Church of Scotland in 1920 voiced the same sentiment as follows:

"The Committee would again urge upon the Church the need there is to give driving power to the League through enlightened public opinion and awakened Christian conscience. The League of Nations will not move itself." (2)

The Christians at no time viewed their work of eliminating war as merely political or social; it was first and foremost a spiritual work. In this connection it should be recalled that the C.O.P.E.C. conference which took a spiritual inventory of the nation was called at a time when international political organization seemed to be most successful. Spiritual life was needed to sustain the success, and it was hoped that the C.O.P.E.C. would do for the social testimony, influence, and service of the Christian Churches in the United

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(1) p. 91, ut supra  
(2) p. 99, ut supra

Kingdom what the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 did for foreign missions. (1) This is additional evidence of the conviction, manifested in many ways during the period in review, that war and its abolition were essentially Christian problems. If organizations of nations could be of help in the great task of eradicating war, they must first of all be motivated and sustained by the Christian spirit.

If war is not inevitable, if it is not according to the will of God, and must be finally eliminated, has war ever accomplished the ends for which it was launched? At the outset it should be said that there is scarcely a hint that Christians from 1914 to 1948 considered that war brought any glory to the nation. The only suggestion, and that was only in an indirect way, was that the nation received glory by defending a righteous cause. Perhaps the closest approach to a feeling of glory in war might be found in one or two of the declarations by William Robertson Nicoll during World War I. In a speech he said:

"If we had not been Christians, we should not have been in this War. It is Christ Who has taught us to fight for liberty, righteousness, and peace. It is He Who has taught us to care for small nations and to protect the rights of the weak, over whom He has flung His shield. That is why we are here to-day. The devil would have counselled neutrality, but Christ has put His sword into our hands." (2)

In this there might be noted a tone of glory, or at least a show of enthusiasm for war. But even such as this was lacking in later times when fellow Christians of following generations surveyed Europe

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(1) p. 108, ut supra

in shambles and two cities in Japan over which atomic dust was settling. Even in Nickoll's somewhat enthusiastic vein it would be hard to find any indication of glory for war itself. While Christians might in time of peace approve of or even extol military training for the young on the basis that it taught discipline or group spirit or cooperation, there was never any indication of this approval when armed hostilities actually came and the necessity of men killing men became a reality. We search in vain during 1914 to 1948 for any forthright and direct glorification of war by Christian leaders.

But to return to the original question: If war is not to be lauded for itself, does it at least accomplish its ends. Non-pacifist Christians consistently answered "Yes" to this question, - but with growing doubt. On the other hand, the pacifists, all during the period in question, held steadfastly to the belief that war never accomplishes its ends. That failure was one of their strongest indictments brought against it. Two representative statements show their firm conviction. The first, in 1924 when the pacifist group in the C.O.P.E.C. expressed themselves thus:

"The Christian is in a real sense called to struggle: only certain weapons are forbidden him. He cannot willingly use evil means to achieve good ends: such means do not, in fact, accomplish their purpose....." (1)

The second, from Herbert Farmer in 1935 when war clouds were gathering over Europe:

"The ever overshadowing threat of war is our real, historical

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(1) pp. 125, 126, ut supra

situation to-day, and there is no prior reason why God should not be meeting us with a demand that we should set up an absolute refusal in the midst of it..." (1)

The declarations of the non-pacifists on the affirmative side were at no time so definite and uncompromising, and as stated above, the element of doubt increased with passing of the years. The most positive pronouncements came at the beginning of the first World War. We find Principal James Denney writing in one of his letters late in 1914 as follows:

"Of course you can't save men's souls by force; but when men have been denying the rights of the soul, and trusting to brute force, you may convince them in war that a higher force still gravitates in spite of them to the side of right and vindicates it against lawlessness. That, I hope, is what is going to happen in the present war....." (2)

In another letter of the same period Denney wrote:

"The war is so engrossing that it is difficult to think of anything else. We are doing against the Germans what in Pitt's time we had to do against France, and I hope - and believe - we will be able to do it with the same success; there must be room for more than one nation in Europe....." (3)

Here there is a certainty that the war will accomplish its aim, and that some tangible good will come from it. Moreover, there is the conviction that past wars have accomplished their hoped-for aims. A similar hope was expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury when in

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(1) p. 186, ut supra  
(2) p. 6, ut supra  
(3) p. 8, ut supra

his Pastoral Letter he spoke thus:

"The spirit arrayed against us threatens the very foundations of civilized order in Christendom ... It can only be decisively rolled back if we, for our part, concentrate the whole strength of body, mind, and soul which our nation, our Empire, holds." (1)

Later, in 1924, in an era when the pacifist and non-pacifist Christians came closer together than at any other time in the years surveyed, there is a noticeable change in the non-pacifist attitude reflected in the C.O.P.E.C. report:

"A consideration which must not be passed over in collecting the data for a judgment is the futility of most wars. They do not accomplish what they were intended to accomplish, however honest and honourable may have been the motives of those engaged in them, or when men look back upon them after a lapse of years they see that the ends, so far as they were legitimate ends, might have been accomplished in another way... The war to end war has left Europe in a condition in which, unless the hearts of nations be changed, another war is being prepared." (2)

This attitude of doubt continued unabated to the close of 1948, and one of the significant differences between Christian thought during the first war and the second was the increasing doubt whether war, as it came to be carried on, was able to accomplish objectives which Christians might approve.

Pronouncements of the Bishop of Chichester made in 1940 typify the attitude of the non-pacifist Christians during the second war.

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(1) p. 13, ut supra  
(2) pp. 113, 114, ut supra

The war was a hard necessity thrust upon Christian men and women. Necessity was emphasized; the objectives that might be fulfilled received slight notice.

"There can hardly be a greater contradiction than that between the teaching and example of Christ and war. Christ declares the fatherhood of God. War blasphemes God. The gospel affirms community. War denies it. The gospel stands for the imperishable worth of individual personality. War shows the individual suddenly as 'an isolated, helpless, powerless atom in a world of irrational monsters'..." (1)

He continues:

"No Christian can fight, as those serving with modern fighting forces are obliged to fight, save (as it seems to me) with extreme reluctance, sustained by a strong sense of duty, and the personal conviction that, in all the circumstances, no other course is morally possible for him." (2)

The trend toward questioning continued into the period of 1946 when Christians re-examined their duties concerning war in an era of atomic power. The colossal destructiveness of atomic weapons led sincere Christians to doubt even more strongly whether war could accomplish any of its proposed objectives. The source of doubt did not grow from any historical survey of past wars or what might have appeared the futility of the war recently closed, but rather from the fear of unleashed atomic energy.

"In the case of a just war it has hitherto been possible to

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(1) p. 224, ut supra  
(2) p. 227, ut supra

presume that the good to be achieved or preserved would outweigh the evil to be endured or inflicted. No account is taken at this point as to whether the rightness or wrongness of war can be determined by such prudential calculations. The fact is simply stated as a fact that a presumption, hitherto regarded as reasonable, can no longer with confidence be so described..." (1)

A committee of the Church of Scotland struggling with the same problem, reported in 1946 to the Church in the following vein:

"The traditional Christian doctrine of war had hitherto been reinforced by four assumptions:-

"The assumptions were not determinative of the doctrine, but they/<sup>were</sup>implied in the Christian exposition of it. They were these: (a) that military operations could be made subject to the 'laws of war' through international agreement; (b) that minimal decencies, such as the distinction between combatant and non-combatant could thus be preserved; (c) that Christian opinion could be used for the restraint of violence in excess of strict military necessity; and (d) that a 'just war', successfully waged, could secure values for mankind outweighing the evil and suffering involved." (2)

After enumerating these four cardinal points, the committee declared that the first two had been clearly invalidated by re-

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(1) p. 288, ut supra  
(2) p. 289, ut supra



cent developments; that the third had become meaningless in the context of atomic warfare; and that the fourth could no longer with the same confidence be maintained.

However, even though warfare was, by general admission, becoming less and less likely to fulfill its aims, the non-pacifists were not driven into the camp of the pacifists. There remained one significant value in war that made it of use, in the last resort, to the Christian community. In the final extremity and in the face of a ruthless aggressor, war could save and protect the nation. At this point it will be helpful to recall that in the C.O.P.E.C. report where the value placed on war as an instrument of national policy by the majority of Christians was especially depreciatory, there was a note of dissent by one of the committee members. The dissent stated in part:

"...I cannot be content with the grudging admission, even of those who are not 'pacifists', that war may sometimes be permissible. So long as there is no universal State capable and willing to impose a just peace, war may, I believe, be the sacred duty of a nation as the only means of preventing gross national injustice." (1)

In the public meeting there was debate upon the acceptance of the recommendations made by the <sup>C.O.P.E.C.</sup> committee and the record shows that the preservation of the state and the freedoms enjoyed under it was a highly cherished objective in the minds of many Christians. We find in one portion of the record of the debate the following:

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(1) p. 131, ut supra

"Rev. H. R. Wilkinson (Ipswich Diocesan Conference) said of course they were agreed that war was contrary to the teaching of Christ and agreed to urge that everywhere. But when a Government responsible for a people is driven to choose between disaster and a great sacrifice, are we to refuse to share that sacrifice?" (1)

That war could at least save the nation and some portion of the Christian civilization within it was the opinion expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury during the second war.

"Though you cannot advance the Kingdom of God by fighting you can prevent Christian civilization, or a civilization on the way to becoming Christian, from being destroyed and that is what we are now engaged in." (2)

At the close of the period of our survey, after the application of atomic energy to the implements of warfare, two representative groups of Christians in Great Britain declared that war could be tolerated because, by it, the state or some portions of it might be preserved. The Church of Scotland approved the following from its committee:

"It is as Christians that we must decide, but as Christians who are like other men in the respect that we are historically conditioned, citizens of a nation and of the world, and with responsibilities in both aspects of our citizen-

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(1) p. 135, ut supra  
(2) p. 231, ut supra

ship which are not lightly to be disowned..."

The concluding remarks followed:

"Is it the duty then of the Church, despite these dangers, to denounce now and with regard to this interim period, (before international control), the use under any conceivable conditions of the atomic bomb? The Committee, after great heart-searching, finds itself unable to recommend such a course to the General Assembly." (1)

The same necessity for the self-preservation of the state is embodied in the following statement approved by the Church of England from the report of its committee:

"On the assumption that to-day possession of atomic weapons is genuinely necessary for national self-preservation, a government, which is responsible for the safety of the community committed to its charge, is entitled to manufacture them and hold them in readiness." (2)

The preservation of the Christian state or a state on its way to becoming Christian, the final objective which non-pacifist Christians were certain war could accomplish, occupied an important place in Christian thought concerning war from 1914 to 1948. This does not mean that the state per se was glorified by any group of Christians in the United Kingdom. They did not maintain that the state existed for itself or that the sacrifices of war should be endured to keep the state in existence as an

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(1) p. 290, ut supra  
(2) p. 295, ut supra

intrinsic good. The importance of the preservation of the state was always considered in relation to the Christian civilization within its borders. The state was the repository of precious spiritual values, and for the majority of Christians the state was important because it provided a needed framework in which the Church could build the Kingdom. Remarks made in a debate in the United Free Church of Scotland General Assembly during the first war illustrate this sentiment:

"On many questions the Church must exercise a wise toleration. But when ultimate issues were raised she must safeguard her very existence. Was it not the same with the State? The State was not merely a secular institution. It was a spiritual entity.....When a State was in imminent danger, when all that it stood for, the precious human, the spiritual interests were threatened, could it permit members to refuse their assistance without putting them to some disadvantage?" (1)

The value of nationhood and of national life was emphasised in an Encyclical Letter issued at the Lambeth Conference of 1920 (Church of England):

"We cannot believe that the effect of the Coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth will be to abolish nations. Holy Scripture emphasizes the value of national life and indicates its permanence. The sense of nationality seems to be a natural instinct..... Within redeemed humanity nations will

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(1) p. 43, ut supra

not cease to exist, but nationality itself will be redeemed. . . . . They (nations) are intended to develop distinctive gifts and characters, and to contribute them to the common good." (1)

The most marked deviation from the consistently held idea of the value of the Christian state among the non-pacifist Christians came in 1924 in the reports issued by committees of the C.O.P.E.C.

"The adoption of the principles set out above must involve a weakening and in many respects a breaking down of national boundaries. This is a result which need excite no special alarm. The doctrine of national sovereignty is a comparatively late invention. It has served its purpose in securing individual liberty and in the political and economic expansion of the nineteenth century. It is time, however, now that patriotism as a human motive should give place to wider conceptions." (2)

It is important to notice however that in this criticism the negative remarks are directed toward nationalism in the most narrow sense of that word. In 1946 the Christians that met in committee for the British Council could see that in spite of a precarious peace, and the material and spiritual chaos of Europe, at least they had retained their nation and the heritage of democracy. If all other aims of the second war had been lost, at least the nation remained. The period under review ends with

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(1) pp. 94, 95, ut supra  
(2) p. 140, ut supra

the pronouncement of the non-pacifist group that the nation is worth saving even at a cost staggering to the imagination. The non-pacifist dominated committee, after admitting that it was an open question whether anything would remain after an atomic conflict, continued:

"But this does not invalidate our argument that democratic institutions are a profoundly significant transcription at the political level of Christian insight, and for this reason demand the active support of Christians. Even the chance of preserving for future generations the framework of free and responsible political action may be preferable to a surrender to tyranny." (1)

The pacifist Christian attitude toward the value of the state during the years under review was so radically different from that of the non-pacifist Christians described above that there was an impassable chasm separating the two groups. The pacifists were ready, at times almost eager, to sacrifice the state for what they considered higher values. There is a call for a change in the state in Studdert Kennedy's poem Old England (2), but the pacifist Christian attitude toward the state signified something much deeper than change in economic or social structure. They viewed the nation as absolutely expendable. During some of the darkest days for the British Empire in the early years of the first war, Dr. Salter, the friend of the Archbishop of Canterbury, published the following statement:

"There is a great place waiting in history for the first nation

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(1) p. 284, ut supra  
(2) p. 57, ut supra

that will dare to save its life by losing it, that will dare to base its national existence on righteous dealing, and not on force, that will found its conduct on the truths of primitive Christianity, and not on the power of its army and navy. And there is a great place waiting in history for the first political party that will dare to take the same stand and will dare to advocate the Christian policy of complete disarmament and non-resistance to alien force." (1)

During 1933 to 1939 when the pacifist Christians were the most outspoken of any time in the period from 1914 to 1948, Canon "Dick" Sheppard of the Peace Pledge Union declared his lack of concern for the existence of the state. There were, according to him, more primary considerations for Christians when confronted with war or the threat of war.

".....suppose that we in this country pledge ourselves that never again shall we take part, in any circumstances, in war, and that our action awakens no answering echo in other lands. Suppose that the other Christian Churches in other lands merely shrug their shoulders, mutter something about 'these mad English' and make no attempt to follow the lead we have given.

"Suppose that some Great Power, covetous of our wealth and possessions, takes advantage of our unarmed state, our pledge of non-resistance, to declare war upon us. Suppose we lose, one by one, our Dominions and Colonies overseas, and that

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(1) p. 23, ut supra

an enemy invades our shores.

"Does that mean that war is right, or that we were wrong when we decided to obey God's Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill'?"

"Right and wrong aren't fluid. The moral quality of an action doesn't depend on its results....." (1)

John Middleton Murray was even more outspoken in his disregard for the state and the values embodied in its life. There was no doubt in his mind about the fundamental antagonism between the state (especially in time of war) and the pacifist Christian when he said:

"The only possible position for a Pacifist, who is neither ignorant nor hypocritical, is one of resolute non-co-operation with the state in time of war. He is bound to refuse his services in any civilian capacity; and he is equally bound to refuse to pay all taxes demanded of him for the prosecution of the war.

"There can be no doubt of the revolutionary implication of such an attitude. The Pacifist, moreover, desires and endeavours that this attitude of his shall become universal. If a Pacifist movement of this kind were successful, it would paralyse the activities of the state as a belligerent. And that is what the Pacifist ultimately seeks to accomplish. Without the final aim clearly in view, a Pacifist movement becomes one of irresponsible individualism. The Pacifist must be prepared to accept the responsibility and the penalty

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(1) p. 182, ut supra



for this final aim." (1)

To understand fully the Christian thought on war these two very opposite ideas concerning the state must be held in mind. They influenced all other areas of thought concerning armed conflict. For the non-pacifists the preservation of the Christian state might justify war, even if that was the only objective to be secured. For the pacifists the continuing life of the state was an objective least worthy of a Christian's consideration.

At no time in the entire period, even during the war days, did the pacifists officially make any indication that they were willing to compromise at all on their position. One exception to this general rule of no compromise was made immediately before the second war by Leyton Richards when he suggested that the nations of the world form an international police force. However, he was quick to add that this was a compromise of the absolute position and that no genuine Christian pacifist would accept duty in the international force. The positions of the two groups of Christians seemed irreconcilable.

The attitude of non-pacifists to the pacifists ranged all the way from denunciatory to conciliatory during the period of our study. During the first war there were judgments made upon the pacifists which were frankly derogatory. The biographer of William Robertson Nicoll, certainly sympathetic with his subject, describes Nicoll's attitude in an unmistakable way:

".....Nicoll found it difficult to tolerate doubters and shirkers."

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(1) pp. 213, 214 ut supra

"To him pacifism as a doctrine appeared not merely unchristian but immoral...." (1)

Principal James Denney during the same period was equally strong in his condemnation. In a letter he said:

"If a Christian cannot side in it (the war) and strike with every atom of his energy, then a Christian is a being who, so far as this world is concerned - and this is the world in which we have to do right and wrong - has committed moral suicide, and I have no interest in him." (2)

The secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury in a letter expressed the feeling of the Archbishop as follows:

"...he cannot himself regard as reasonable or consistent with Christian common-sense the position of those who claim for themselves and their property the protection of a civilised order of society while repudiating its corresponding claim upon their service..." (3)

In another letter the Archbishop referred to the absolute pacifist Christians as "These hopelessly unreasonable people." (4)

Nor did the United Free Church of Scotland majority show a more conciliatory attitude toward the minority group. When in one of their General Assembly meetings it appeared that encouragement might be given indirectly to members of their own church who were pacifists, the following comments were made in the course of the debate on the resolution in question:

"Mr. David Woodside, Glasgow, seconded, and said that it

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(1) p. 3, ut supra  
(2) p. 16, ut supra  
(3) p. 15, ut supra  
(4) p. 18, ut supra

seemed to him the whole paragraph was wrong..... If it received the imprimatur of the Assembly, then the impression would go abroad that the house sympathised with the view expressed.....this paragraph contained most objectionable teaching. Indeed, it seemed to him that the whole thing resolved itself into pure anarchy. The last clause was most assuredly Bolshevism. (Applause) .....It was suggested that if a man could only prove his sincerity he might do anything.....The State had dealt very tenderly with the conscientious objector, and he thought that there was no need that the Assembly should attempt to make the State more foolishly tender still. (Applause)" (1)

In time of war there were many other objectives more important than healing a breach in the ranks of Christians, especially when one portion of the fellowship appeared to the other to be very close to heresy. However, when the stress of the first war was over, the attitude became more conciliatory, even to the extent of admitting that the minority group might have some elements of truth on their side. One of the committees of the C.O.P.E.C. in 1924 recommended:

"That they should exert all their authority in securing protection from any form of persecution for those whose conscience forbids their rendering any kind of war-service." (2)

However, it was this recommendation that caused some of the sharpest debate when the work of the committee was submitted for approval. The two groups of Christians, in ultimate objectives

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(1) p. 44, ut supra  
(2) p. 131 ut supra

so similar, but in methods so different, never at any time reconciled their differences. As could be naturally expected, feeling against the pacifists rose during the second war. A conciliatory statement like the one made by J. H. Oldham shows him not as representative, but rather as a pioneer:

"I am not trying to convert or persuade those who take the pacifist position. There is obviously much more to be said on both sides of the question. I only want to urge that the question is many-sided, and that the vital matter for the Christian is that he should make a responsible choice before God. The bonds which unite those who make such a responsible Christian choice, even though they reach different decisions, are stronger and deeper than the ties which link either group with those on different grounds take the same position in regard to war as themselves." (1)

There was a spirit of toleration evident in the post-atomic period. The committee appointed by the British Council of Churches to investigate and report upon the Christian obligation in atomic war arrived at the conclusion that the Church was not able to pronounce between the two alternatives (use of atomic power or repudiation) and must throw the shield of its protection and sympathy over those who made either choice, since each was the expression of one side of Christian obligation.

During the entire 1914 to 1948 period there was one persistent source of misunderstanding between the two groups which continued unabated. The nature of the misunderstanding appears in a letter written by Principal James Denney in 1914 when he said:

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(1) p. 267, ut supra

"The war presents to every creature whose country is involved in it the one great moral issue of our time; and for a man to say he can do nothing in it is to vote himself out of the moral world." (1)

The word "nothing" is the key to the misunderstanding. In the second war, W.R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, expressed the same feeling when he said:

"The belief that the forward surge of this evil power can be prevented by passive resistance is chimerical. To anyone who understands the type of man with whom we have to deal it is ludicrous to suggest that they could be deterred by the spectacle of the Peace Pledge Union gravely disapproving of their action." (2)

In their own defence, the pacifists always declared that they were active; in fact, were acting in ways that would finally be more effective in changing the world than all the armed forces that nations could muster. The pacifist members of a C.O.P.E.C. committee explained their position when they said:

"On the Cross Christ declares not only the full horror of man's sin, but God's way of treating the sinner. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem, human history reached its greatest crisis; men were challenged to pass judgment upon man, to choose or reject the things that belonged to their peace.

"Between the cowardice which shirks moral responsibility and yields itself a victim to circumstances and the wise and passionate devotion which seeks and saves the lost there is a world of difference. The Christian is in a real sense called

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(1) p. 6, ut supra

to struggle: only certain weapons are forbidden him." (1)

These and similar explanations were to a large extent fruitless for both factions. The misunderstanding continued.

In view of the unhealed breach between the pacifists and the non-pacifists it is important to remember that the latter did not reject the concept of Christian conscientious objection. In fact non-pacifists recommended and prescribed it for one specific situation - that of an unrighteous war in which a Christian might be called to serve. The majority of Christians in the United Kingdom continually held the belief that a Christian should not in any way support an unrighteous war, no matter what the demands of the state might be. The responsibility for this crucial decision they maintained rested directly on the individual. War always confronted the Christian with a personal decision. He could not escape his responsibility by placing his conscience in the keeping of some other person or group. This conviction was well enunciated by Dr. G. H. C. Macgregor, who, although belonging to the minority group, in this instance spoke in harmony with non-pacifist thought when he said:

"...we shall insist that for the Christian the question of participation in war is ultimately a personal issue. The problem of war is morally so serious just because for so many it has become a matter of conscience. Every ethical movement gets its power from the attitude of persons..." (2)

In the early years of the second war (1940) the Bishop of Chichester said:

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(1) p. 125, ut supra  
(2) pp. 207, 208, ut supra

"...there is the other view, which is the view of those who are not pacifists. Some would hold that a Christian is bound to fight whenever his country demands. It is to my mind impossible for a citizen to commit his conscience so unreservedly to the rulers of the State. It would seem to me that the only justification of combatant service which is ultimately defensible as a Christian view, is <sup>t</sup>hat which holds that a Christian is bound to fight for his country because of his duty as a citizen, unless he is absolutely convinced that the war which <sup>h</sup>is country makes is unjust." (1)

When P. T. Forsyth declared that the organized church, rather than the individual, should decide on the righteousness of the war his thought was without question an exception to the majority opinion of the non-pacifist group to which he belonged. (2) His is the only outstanding exception to the generally held opinion that the critical decision to participate or to refrain from participating in any given war is a duty that falls on each individual Christian by virtue of his faith. If the war in which he is requested or ordered to participate does not display the characteristics of a "just war", then there is only one course of action open to the Christian. He is to refuse absolutely to have any part in it. This was embodied in a pledge which one of the C.O.P.E. committees recommended that all Christians take.

"Believing that Law must take the place of War in international disputes, we, the undersigned, solemnly pledge ourselves to withhold service from any Government which refuses to submit the causes of the dispute to an international Court, or which refuses to accept the decision of such Court. We will

(1) - 227 - at 227

fight to defend our country in the event of an attack by another nation which has been offered arbitration, and which has refused it, but in no other circumstances." (1)

There is an unbroken testimony to this belief during the period under review. In this area the contention between the pacifists and the non-pacifists was not that the pacifists refused to participate in war, for that right of refusal was maintained by the majority for all Christians, but rather that pacifists did not consider the war on its own merits, but condemned it on the general principle of rejection of all war. There was no question whether Christians had the right to refuse service in an unrighteous war. (2) The following excerpts indicate how generally this proposition was maintained.

The C.O.P.E.C. commission recommended:

"Any war of aggression of which the motive is greed, pride, selfishness, or worldiness is wrong, should be unreservedly condemned, and should be opposed by all available means of influencing public opinion and popular sentiment, not only in individual Christians, but by Christian Churches in their corporate testimony and influence." (3)

The Lambeth Conference, 1930, declared:

"As the Body of Christ, the Church is super-national; its task is to consecrate national life, but it is false to its mission when it identifies itself with the claim of any nation to self-aggrandisement and disregard of the rights

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(1) p. 122, ut supra

(2) see p. 225 for six accepted characteristics of a "righteous war" (ut supra)

(3) pp. 118, 119, ut supra



of other nations. God is no respecter of persons, or nations..

"Every Christian man is called to witness to this truth, and to face, if need be, the cost of his witness. (1)

On the eve of the second war Leslie Weatherhead declared:

"The Church of Jesus Christ is supernatural, it is supra-national, supra-political. Our unity in Christ transcends everything. It is the only thing with power in it that does. We are not followers of John Bull first and of Jesus Christ as well afterwards if it isn't too inconvenient. We are His followers, first...(2)

During the early years of the second war J. H. Oldham wrote:

"...every responsible reminder of the claims of conscience, which are apt to receive short shift in war-time, is to be welcomed. The capacity to say 'No' to prevailing sentiment, custom and ideas is the mainspring of moral progress." (3)

A companion idea was held with equal consistency. If men entered a righteous war as Christians, they should make every effort to remain Christians during the entire conflict. Every Christian was Christ's at the beginning, during the ordeal, and to the end. Leading Christian thought steadfastly maintained that it was inadmissible for a man to become less than a Christian once he had made the solemn decision, before God, to participate actively in the conflict. If Christians ceased to be true to their highest ideals, then all the positive reasons for entering the war were

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(1) pp. 145, 146 ut supra  
(2) pp. 217, 218 ut supra  
(3) p. 266 ut supra

nullified. Outstanding leaders such as Randall Davidson, J.H. Oldham, and William Temple untiringly wrote and spoke against any tendency in Christian thought or action that seemed to indicate a "downward drag". The United Free Church and the Church of Scotland issued timely warnings to their members that the righteous war must be conducted by a righteous nation composed of righteous men and women.

In 1915 the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland spoke as follows:

"The one thing we cannot afford is to be without God in the world. Let us pray for victory for our righteous cause. Let us entreat Him who alone is wise and strong to grant us, if it be His holy will, a speedy and happy deliverance from troubles.

"Let us pray also, as Christ our Master has taught us, for those who are now our enemies, guarding our hearts against the spirit of hatred and retaliation..." (1)

During the first war Bishop Gore wrote:

"It is our privilege in every way to support our soldiers and sailors in a just war...and to pray for God's blessings on our arms... But it is our duty also to remember the perils of military enthusiasm, and to keep our minds full of the ideals and laws of the Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth, so that there may be a steady and quiet and constant counterpoise<sup>u</sup>

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(1) p. 40, ut supra

to the emotions of war." (1)

Again in the second war the Church of Scotland declared:  
"We believe that notwithstanding our own shortcomings our course is righteous; the military struggle is but the outer expression of a spiritual warfare which will persis<sup>t</sup> long after the nations have laid down their arms; what shall it profit to gain a military victory if in the process we lose our own spiritual standards? These standards cannot be put aside for the duration of the war; unless we Christians uphold our standards throughout the war, and in spite of the hard experiences of the war, they will not be at our call when the war is over." (2)

William Temple felt constrained to rebuke in the following manner an Anglican priest who had recommended reprisals:

"A correspondent has sent me your article 'It is Time for Reprisals', and I feel obliged to express to you the distress and consternation with which I read it. I think its argument quite false and its ethics quite deplorable... The proposal that we should decree that for every civilian life taken here, we would take ten German civilian lives, represents just that descent to the enemy level which we must at all costs avoid if we are to be able to stand for any principles at all in the world of the future." (3)

During the same period John Hadham wrote:

"...it is always true that God is not interested in just

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(1) p. 52, ut supra  
(2) p. 222, ut supra  
(3) p. 233, ut supra

any victory which Britain might win. He is only interested in a victory which does lead to the beginnings of a better life for His children, and such victories cannot be obtained by copying the very methods which have brought the world to war." (1)

J. H. Oldham, commenting on a newspaper article demanding "retribution with ruthless horror as a deterrent and an example" for Japan, said:

"The Bible holds no truck with these confusions. It declares a universal right, an impartial judgment. Inhumanities are not one whit less damnable when they are committed by Englishmen than when they are committed by Germans or Japanese."  
(2)

This courageous demand of J. H. Oldham that Christians always remain Christian, seems an appropriate place to conclude the final chapter of our survey. His demand embodies the Christian thought on war par excellence. The strict requirement for an unbroken continuity of individual Christian witness, in war as well as in peace, gave all Christian thoughts on war their distinctive character.

Christian thought in the United Kingdom, at its best, always started with the question, "What, according to the life, teachings, and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, should I do in this situation?" There were instances, at times numerous, when there was a decline from the high ideal, but the upward pull was always present. Even when sincere Christians found it necessary to choose opposite

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(1) p. 241, ut supra  
(2) p. 265 ut supra

courses of action, as they often did, both started with the same question concerning personal duty as a follower of Jesus Christ. It is this ever-present prior question that makes Christian thought about war unique. It is in the unity of this inescapable discipline of following Jesus at all times that Christians of a future day may find the unity for all their other thoughts concerning war.

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