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PB 303

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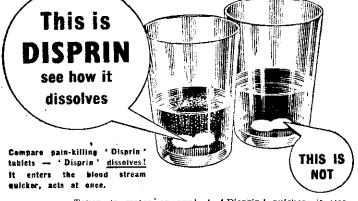
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### The Darkness and the Light

of Christian festivals, has always coincided with suffering, for the world has never been free of tragedy, and cannot be for men who are bound to a temporal existence. But seldom before have the peoples of the earth found themselves more greatly in need than they are today of the message that comes to them from Calvary. The Gospel story symbolises and explains the human situation; and although it seems at the Cross to end darkly, the words that live beyond it are of forgiveness and hope. No man who believes that message, and who learns how faithfully experience is reflected in it, can give himself up to despair. Doubts he may have, and searchings of heart and mind; but he must see in the end that sacrifice and atonement, noblest of conceptions, have for him the promise of salvation.

There has been much wickedness under the sun. Some thinkers, that the race deserves an ill des--now given full scope through the alone. invention of nuclear weaponsthe catalogue of sins and follies is only part of the story: there is also the goodness that is found in the darkest places, the devotion and fortitude of ordinary people, the humility and sacrifice which in many lives unknown to fame, and in some great ones, are like a reflected light from Calvary. It is easy to simplify history, easy to remember the cruelty which is the worst sort of immorality, and easy to forget that men have reached the heights as well as the depths. And the significant fact, surely, is their eyes are still searching for

15.

ASTER, the most solemn to struggle onwards—rather as if, like Simon of Cyrene, they carried a cross.

We have been told that events in the next few years may bring mankind to its gravest crisis. Some of us may feel that, if this becomes true, the present generation is being asked to shoulder an intolerable burden. It seems monstrous that those now living, a small company if measured against the numberless dead - whose transmitted impulses are still at work within us-should be faced with decisions so vast in their implications that a single mistake could mean the extinction of life on earth, or at best a decline of surviving remnants into a state of barbarism. In this situation it may be salutary to remember that pure thought, which has led us into danger, cannot by itself lead us into safety. There is a side of our nature, the province of religion, which can never be satisfied by the pursuit of knowledge. At Easter, a time of turning from history with a surfeit tragedy and hope which epitomises of misery, have been convinced the slow journey from darkness, we have an opportunity to distiny, that its destructive impulses cover again that we cannot stand

The problems which now conwill bring a fitting retribution. But front the world are not of our own making. If we share a little of the guilt, as all men must in every age, we share also the hope and promise without which mankind would long ago have ceased to struggle. The story of mankind is not a progress, or a search for happiness, but a testing of souls; and the true Christian, knowing that he stands in a world that has always been dangerous, will know also that there is nothing to fear when he hears again the Easter message. Good Friday in New Zealand sometimes takes a greythat if men dig themselves a pit ness from the season which adds to the solemnity of the festival. But the heavens. It is their nature to how often, on Easter Monday, and stumble and fall, and to rise again how fittingly, comes in the light!

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 1, 1955.