

CARDINAL BOURNE ON THE ENDING OF THE WAR

PROBLEMS OF THE COMING PEACE.

Avenging justice is an integral part of charity—the charity which, in the hour of victory, we owe to our enemies. Cardinal Mercier stated that fact nearly two years ago when the power to deal justly with their enemies was still far from the hands of the Allies. His words were quoted and insisted upon in a statement which the London *Observer* was privileged to obtain from the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne, before the close of the war. His Eminence said:

"The terrible strain of war is now at last approaching its end. Only a few months ago it seemed as if it might be indefinitely prolonged. The sudden peril at the end of March and the beginning of April roused the whole nation and Empire to a sense, never before felt to the same degree, of imminent and present danger. The unity of command under the supreme leadership of a soldier of outstanding genius and deep religious conviction which was the immediate outcome of that black fortnight has resulted in a change in the battle area, east and west, so stupendous as to be termed by some miraculous. This at least is certain: prayers of a public and national character have during the last few months been poured forth to the Throne of God with a fervor and frequency not reached in the earlier stages of the war. Those who believe are conscious that the Almighty has not failed to give ear to their supplications.

"Every week brings us nearer to the day when the final issues must be decided, not in the field of combat, but at the council table. Those who have shown themselves staunch and brave and much-enduring in the often clouded seasons of the past four years will have to show forth truth and justice and self-restraint as the bright sun of the summer of victory begins to dawn upon them. God's help and guidance, invoked by constant prayer, are needed now as much as, if not more than, in the past.

The Immediate Need.

"The immediate need is that there be no relaxation of the self-imposed discipline which has hitherto prevailed. Food and fuel must be sparsely used even when peace has come, and due economy in their use is till then a condition of complete victory. The years that have passed in war have been so scarred by sadness and tragedy, so many in our midst have hearts sorrow-laden by their personal bereavements, that there is small fear that our rejoicing when peace is definitely proclaimed will lack the soberness and restraint that must mark all true and humble thanksgiving which is worthy of being offered to God. Let there be none of the light-hearted and unworthy manifestations which some years ago marked our victory in a very different struggle.

The Christian's Duty.

"What is to be our bearing when, conscious of God's help in the day of our direst need, we are entitled to hold ourselves as victors and are in the presence of a conquered foe? No one has set forth more clearly than the great Archbishop of Malines, Cardinal Mercier, the precise nature of Christian duty in such circumstances. In his letter of January, 1917, his Eminence traces with masterly hand the place which anger and passion and the spirit of just vengeance, as opposed to the vice of hatred, have in the virtue of charity.

"We are entitled to full and adequate reparation for the injuries and wrongs so wantonly, so unjustly, so unnecessarily inflicted upon us and our Allies by those who, for their own ends, provoked this awful struggle. We are entitled—nay, it is our duty—to take all lawful means to render remote and impossible the renewal of such unjust provocation. It will be seen how far these principles carry us from the foolish cry inspired by subversive elements in Russia some months ago of 'no indemnities and no annexations.'

"The task before the Allied nations is to mingle justice rightly with charity. As Cardinal Mercier says, 'There is no Christian justice without charity, and no charity without justice. And as avenging justice is a part of the virtue of justice, there is no charity without avenging justice. To desire to close our eyes to injustice, under the pretext of heroism in charity, and to allow the enemy to commit crimes with impunity because he is the enemy, is to fail to recognise the sovereign and necessary sway of charity in the organisation of the moral, individual, and social life of Christianised humanity.'

"No Place for Undying Hatreds."

"But when punishment has been inflicted, when reparation has been made, when there is solid evidence that the wrong done is acknowledged and that there is no desire to repeat it in the future, when there are real signs of sorrow and atonement—then we must be prepared to give the place in the world's development even to our enemies which their natural abilities and their legitimate achievements may justly claim for them. There should be no place for undying hatreds.

"This is the strenuous work to which the statesmen of the world will soon be called. It is hoped that it is already engaging their fullest attention. If the work be well done we may look forward to a stable and enduring peace, perhaps even to the realisation of the dream of a permanent League of Nations. If the work be done too hastily and without sufficient care, if a settlement be accepted which leaves even one international problem unsolved, those who come after us in the second or third generation may have to face again the same and greater horrors of international warfare in their day.

"May God be with us and guide those who have the handling of such weighty matters to a prudent, wise, just, and truly Christian conclusion. May all the Allied nations uphold those who are called to guide their destinies by striving to tread the true, straight course of mingled charity and justice."

Christianity and Labor.

In conclusion, Cardinal Bourne spoke of those social developments and reforms which in this, as in all countries, must be the great business of the coming days of peace. "There are millions of people," he said, "for whom the necessary conditions of life are never realised. All their lives they are forced to be content with dwellings that are badly built and equipped, unfit for a growing family, and wanting in ordinary conveniences. They are tied by the exigencies of their daily toil to a particular locality, and must perforce put up with the accommodation that they can find. Their weekly income will never rise beyond a miserable pittance; before their eyes is ever the spectre of the possibility of unemployment.

"But there is nothing in the nature of things to render such a condition in any way necessary. It cannot be urged that the goods of this world are insufficient for the maintenance of all those who dwell therein. On every side there are evidences of wealth and plenty. Money is acquired and heaped up in the ownership of individuals to such an extent that it must be quite impossible for the possessor adequately to control either its acquisition or its outlay.

"Such conditions are clearly unnatural and abnormal. The poor man is forced to struggle for his living wage obtained too often at the cost of strikes which paralyse industry. The rich are led to think that the accumulation of wealth is the main object of life, and the strike is fought by the lock-out. In both cases the sanctification and salvation of souls created for an eternal destiny are exposed to needless jeopardy. Meanwhile there is wealth in plenty to satisfy both worker and capitalist.

"The problem to be solved is to find a way of distributing the surplus wealth so that the poor man, manual laborer, or inferior clerk may have the additional remuneration that he so urgently needs; and the rich man no longer receive the heaped-up increment which he in no sense requires and cannot efficiently control.

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