

**"WHO WAS RIGHT?"**

The **Annual Sermon**

ON

**OUR . . . .  
COWARDLY  
WAR. . . .**

*Hayds*

BY

**CHARLES F. AKED, D.D.,**

*Minister of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool.*

**PREACHED ON PEACE SUNDAY,**

**December 22nd, 1901.**

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor;  
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

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SECOND EDITION: TENTH THOUSAND.

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ONE PENNY.

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## Our Cowardly War.

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Luke iv. 18, 19.

**A**ND Luke adds, in his own graphic way, "that the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fastened upon Him." I don't wonder. The wonder would have been if His hearers had not been startled beyond measure. For it must have seemed to them an audacity of the most frightful kind—this of which the Stranger was guilty. He had opened the Scriptures at a prophecy of Isaiah, had read part of it, and then stopped in the middle of a sentence, refused to read on to the end, closed the book, and handed it back to the attendant priest. And why? Open the Scriptures yourself at this place in Isaiah. Notice how the sentence goes on: "And the day of vengeance of our God!" Jesus refused to have anything to do with that. He had come to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; He had come into the synagogue, and according to ancient usage had claimed the privilege of reading the Word. He set Himself to read a passage, to make it His own, to claim it as His, to identify Himself with its meaning and message—and He absolutely declined to inaugurate His public ministry by the repetition of threats about the Day of Vengeance of our God! No; the Son of Man had come to save men's lives—not destroy them. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, because He was anointed to preach good news to the poor, to bring sight to the blind, to proclaim to the captives open ways, and to all the acceptable year of the Lord!

It is in this spirit that I ask you to approach the dreadful matters which we must discuss to-night. The air is heavy with our sighs this Christmas time, and men's hearts are very sad. But will you try to come to the consideration of our war with the South African Republics with this same Spirit upon you—a spirit of compassion, of pity, of love? If it be permissible to speak this personal word, I ask you to believe that throughout all these long and hideous controversies, through all these black and bitter years, I have at least tried not to discuss the war from any lower platform than this. I do not claim to have succeeded. But whatever failures there may have been, through my own faults and infirmities of temper, I know in my own heart that I have tried to look at facts and forces, men and movements, through the eyes of the Son of God.

And if you think about it for a minute—if men outside had thought about it at all—it is obvious that we, who from the very first have condemned the action of Great Britain, could have had, can now have, no motive in the world but a generous, a pure, a lofty one. We have had everything to lose by our action, and nothing to gain. It is open to you, of course, to say, "Then more fools you to take such a line; you deserve all you have got, and

more." But this is not the point for the moment. The point is that we must have been actuated by no sordid, no selfish motive—no motive other than the highest, for we have risked so much, and dared so much, and lost so much by the stand that we have taken. A detestable person, a clergyman of the Anglican Church, has suggested that we have been after "cheap notoriety." Well, if we have, we have succeeded in getting it cheap enough—cheap and nasty! We have lost friendships—I speak for myself; I have lost some friendships that I could well afford to lose, and some others that were of value to me, and the loss of which is a real and abiding loss. We have closed against ourselves certain avenues of usefulness. We have shut ourselves out from certain platforms. We have deliberately sacrificed position and influence in other movements. Some of us have incurred great financial loss. We have opposed ourselves to the full set of popular passions; we have been made to feel as though we were aliens in the country of our birth. We have been branded as traitors to the land we love. We have offered ourselves as targets for misrepresentation, calumny, and abuse. We have abandoned our reputation for every filthy blackguard to spit upon it. We have been prepared, and we are still prepared, to

" Stand pilloried on infamy's high stage,  
And bear the pelting scorn of half an age."

And all for what? Because in God's name we could do no other. Because in no other way could we keep our own hands clean from blood-guiltiness. Because we would not "crucify humanity upon a cross of gold" nor betray the Prince of Peace who has redeemed us. In theological language, but with more than theological meaning, *We have saved our souls alive.*

In my Annual Sermon upon the War, preached twelve months ago to-night, I claimed that we were entitled to have our opinions listened to with some respect because our views, our predictions, our whole outlook upon national affairs, had been justified by the course of events. I said then—

"No prophet of evil ever had speedier and completer justification by the course of things than we have had, who from the first have held out against this contemptible and cowardly war. We have said that it would be a long, a costly, a terrible, a bloody struggle; that it would involve frightful loss, misery, and shame, that it would leave behind a train of race hatred which would kindle the very fires of hell. We have a right to be heard. We were right when we foretold the loss and misery and shame, when we declared that the Boer would fight for his fatherland as the ancestors of the Boer fought in the swamps of Holland, and broke the haughty power of Spain by Harlem Meer and the land-locked Zuyder Zee. And we have a right to speak to-day."

But I go far further to-night. And I declare, not merely that our opinions are entitled to respect, but that the opinions of the advocates of war are entitled to no respect and no credence whatever. For as often as ever a statement of theirs has been brought to the test of experience it has been shown to be wrong. There is not a prediction of theirs which has not been falsified; not a

prophecy which has not been torn in pieces. It is not only that they have made many mistakes; they have made nothing but mistakes. Their brag and bluster, their froth and folly, their puerile ignorance and paltry ineptitude—Heavens, how pitiful it all seems to-day! First of all, there was to be no war; it was only a game of bluff. Chamberlain was to bluff Kruger by tall talk, and with mighty show of "If you don't look out" we should make old Kruger knuckle under. If the opposition would only not oppose, not cross Mr. Chamberlain's game, he, by great swelling words of almightiness, would do the trick! Then after that, when President Kruger struck, then it was going to be a little pic-nic; 30,000 men, a loss of not more than five hundred in killed and wounded, three months out and home again—and that was all! After the first blow, the dirty Boers would cut and run; they would have no stomach for another fight; we should just crumple them up and eat our Christmas dinner in Pretoria. Which we did—as prisoners! When we had Bloemfontein, that was the end of the Free State. When we had Pretoria, that was the end of the Transvaal. Then severity was to teach them a lesson; farm-burnings, desolation, would soon settle the business. In September, 1900, fifteen months ago, the Government declared that the war was practically over. In November, 1900, thirteen months ago, they said that it was over. Then Lord Kitchener assured those naughty Boers who would not come and be killed that if they did not mind what they were doing he should charge them with the board and lodgings of their wives and children, etc., etc., etc. If we were to import into our discussion that rage and bitterness which the advocates of the war have imported into theirs, how we could hold them up to ridicule and contempt! Did ever people brag with less cause? When was want of sight and sense so rapidly followed by disaster?

But in these high things, mistakes like these are criminal. Rulers of a great Empire, with four hundred millions of subject peoples, cannot be permitted to be such utter and hopeless fools. Ignorance, ineptitude, drivelling incompetence to see things as they are, and to understand the men with whom they have to deal, and the movements which touch the life of the nation, cannot and must not be tolerated in a land which has been free. The ignorant and insolent braggarts at the head of the Government have forced us to face the loss of twenty thousand dead, have cost us more than a hundred millions of gold, have involved us in humiliation and shame, have shaken our credit and lowered our flag and imperilled the life of the Empire; and Alfred Milner and Joseph Chamberlain ought to be impeached for criminal incompetence in the discharge of their duty, and hurled from the high office which they disgrace.

There is a stale trick which can be exposed in a moment. When we talk in this way, some foolish person is sure to say that we are putting Party above Country, are making Party capital out of our country's need. Mark the next man who says it—mark him. And you will find that he is a Party man himself, either a Party writer or a Party politician. But when they say that men like me, ten thousand men like me, are trying to set Party above Country, they would do us a service if they told us which Party! For we certainly

do not know ourselves. If it is of any interest to you, and to my larger congregation outside, to know it, I belong to no political Party. It is some years since I sat on a Party platform. And if my single vote would turn Lord Salisbury out and put Lord Rosebery in, or turn Mr. Balfour out and put Mr. Asquith in, I assure you that I would not give it. When they accuse us of being Party men, the lie is so foolish that it does not hurt.

Amongst some observers, I am informed, there is a feeling that our views upon this war are of less value in that we are believed to be opposed to all war whatsoever, and are for Peace at any Price. It is a matter of history that the opposition of John Bright and Richard Cobden to the Crimean War was discounted by the belief that they were doctrinaires, committed to opposition to all war. It is likely that there are some few individuals amongst us who do hold a theory of non-resistance, and believe in Peace at any price just as they believe in Truth at any price, or Honesty at any price of suffering and loss. But of the vast majority of us the supposition is incorrect. Speaking again for myself, I have never been able to exclude from my view of international life the possibility of an appeal to force. I have always felt that a man might some day find himself in a position when all his soul flew into his fist, when not to strike would be a crime. A girl in the hands of a ruffian is sufficient illustration. And in the same way it is impossible for me to get away from the conviction that times may come in the lives of nations when they must strike for freedom or for righteousness. So, I wore the Greek colours when Crete rose against Turkey, and Greece helped. I was prepared to advocate armed intervention on behalf of Armenia. And I applauded the United States when they set themselves to end Spanish devilries in Cuba.

No; we are not against this war because it is a war, but because it is such a war! Our position is that this is a Capitalists' war, brought about by selfish men for selfish ends, by scoundrels who have used fools as their instruments. Great Britain is in the wrong, wholly in the wrong, and altogether in the wrong. It is a wicked war, worked up by deliberate trickery and treachery. Our path has led through lies to blood.

And this is our answer to men who deprecate all discussion of the origin of the war as "academic." They seem to us quite wonderfully silly. They keep on saying that these discussions are out of place now, and have no practical value. It is marvellous in our eyes that they cannot see that these discussions are fundamental, vital and essential. For if the advocates of war are in the right, if Great Britain is engaged in a noble enterprise, worthy of herself and her great traditions, if it was right to begin this war, and if good is bound to issue from our fidelity to imperious obligations of morality, then, obviously, there can be no turning back, no wavering, and no "terms," except the submission of a conquered people and the triumph of the principles for which we have fought. But if we who denounce the war are right, if Great Britain is perpetrating an abominable crime, then every step she takes forward plunges her into deeper guilt, and piles up against her heavier damnation. And our

only hope is that the Nation may repent and be baptised, and wash away her sins.

Looking back, how contemptible, how cowardly, seem the reasons originally given for the war, read in the light of all that has happened! Many of you have already forgotten what those reasons were! You have forgotten those Uitlanders and their shocking grievances. You have forgotten that free-born Englishmen with, incidentally, a few Jews and Poles and Germans and Chinamen, were reduced to the position of "helots"—*vide* Milner, and don't forget the helots. That they had to go about, these oppressed Englishmen, with their tails between their legs, cringing and fawning before the puissant Boer. We were bound to redress the grievances of our sorely-betrayed and oppressed fellow-countrymen—with the Jews and others as aforesaid. Well, if you have forgotten all that, your position is only slightly different from that of the "helots" themselves, for they never knew about the grievances at all—until they were told about them by the capitalists and their tools. There are hundreds, thousands, of these Uitlanders at home now; but the Government has never dared to create a Commission to take the evidence of these men on oath, and bring their shameful grievances to the light of day. I have talked with some of them here and in other places, and have met numbers of people who have talked with others, but they seem to know nothing of these oppressions and tyrannies under which they groaned. Listen to one of them, a certain Captain March Phillips.

But first, as I shall have occasion to quote him several times to-night, who is Captain Phillips?

He was a miner at Johannesburg before the war. He enlisted in "Rimington's Guides." He became a captain. He fought at Belfort, Graspan, Modder River, Magersfontein, and took his share in the work that led up to Prinsloo's surrender. He is no traitorous Pro-Boer. He believes that Great Britain is in the right in this war; that her cause is just; and that the future of South Africa will justify the conflict. Now, what has he to say? He has issued a book called "With Rimington," and this is an extract from it:—

"As for the Uitlanders and their grievances, I would not ride a yard or fire a shot to right all the grievances that were ever invented. The mass of the Uitlanders (*i.e.*, the miners and working men of the Rand) had no grievances. I know what I am talking about, for I have lived and worked among them. I have seen English newspapers passed from one to another, and roars of laughter roused by the *Times* telegrams about these precious grievances. We used to read the London papers to find out what our grievances were; and very frequently they would be due to causes of which we had never even heard. I never met one miner or working man who would have walked a mile to pick the vote up off the road, and I have known and talked with scores and hundreds. And no man who knows the Rand will deny the truth of what I tell you."

The reference to the vote recalls the necessity of keeping the Franchise question clearly before our minds. We speak of it as a Franchise dispute, but it was really a dispute about the terms of

naturalisation. That is to say, it was a question as to how soon British subjects should be allowed to repudiate their nationality and become citizens of the South African Republic. Eighteen thousand British men have died to enable British men to cease to be Britons, and to become citizens of the Boer Republic a year or two sooner than the Boer Republic wanted to have them. And this in spite of the fact seen so clearly and stated so distinctly by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, in the House of Commons, on May 8, 1896:—"We do not claim, and never have claimed, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Transvaal. The rights of our action under the Convention are limited to the offering of friendly counsel, in the rejection of which, if it is not accepted, we must be quite willing to acquiesce."

This talk of grievances breaking down under the weight of its own absurdity, a South African conspiracy to drive us out of South Africa altogether has been invented. We know now that there never was any such conspiracy. We know it. In all the captures of State papers, letters, &c., in Pretoria and Bloemfontein there has been discovered no evidence of such a plot; while, had there been such a plot, two years ago, after the defeats and disasters which overwhelmed our arms, the Dutch had their chance. Then, indeed, if there had been a conspiracy, was the supreme chance of the conspirators. On this point hear Captain Phillips again:—"The conspiracy theory I profoundly disbelieve in. . . . How anyone who knows his South Africa, who knows the isolation of life among farmers, and the utter stagnation of all ideas that exist among the people, can credit the Boers with vaulting ambitions of this sort, is always a surprise to me. I fancy such theories are mostly manufactured for the English market. Naturally I form my opinion more or less from the men in our Corps who seem best worth attending to. The most of them have an intimate knowledge of the Colony, and one or both of the Republics, and I do not find that they take the 'Great Dutch Conspiracy' at all seriously. . . . If this scheme for a general rising existed, why is not the Colony in arms now (April, 1900). . . . If the plot existed, why didn't the plot work? It had every chance."

These things belong to the past. Let us come to things which touch the controversies of the moment.

More contemptible and more cowardly than these whining pleas of two years and a-half ago, is the campaign of calumny in which Great Britain is now engaged. The atrocity agitation is one of the most shameful, surely, to which men in responsible position have ever condescended. White flag treacheries, outrages upon the wounded, murder of prisoners, and fiendish barbarities practised upon the natives—these are the charges which we bring against our foemen now. Mr. Brodrick is making it his business, of set purpose, to inflame the passions of the British people against the Boers. Lord Kitchener, responding to orders from home, compiles his lists of atrocities and cables them to the Government, so that the Government may keep the hatred of the Boer alive in British breasts. Did ever a Commander-in-Chief of British armies abroad give himself up to such a low and dirty piece of work? Did ever a minister of the



Crown address himself with grave deliberation to such an undertaking, the systematic pandering to evil passions already existing, and the systematic encouragement of passions which had begun to droop?

Yes, it has been known before. All these things, case for case, were said against the American colonists, when they revolted against the fools and oppressors called George, when they sought, and successfully sought, to throw off the yoke which had become a tyranny. Then, when the British people were sickening of the war, the same stories were invented; the same attempt was made to fire the waning hatred of the people. To-day we charge the Boers with using expanding bullets (which we sent to South Africa, and which they may have captured from us). Then we charged the Americans with using poisoned bullets! To-day we charge the Boers with cruelty to wounded men. We made the same charge against the Americans more than a hundred years ago. The Ministry then published in the *London Gazette* the statement that the Colonials had *scalped our wounded*. And General Gage's language of one hundred and twenty-five years ago would do just as well for our jingoes to-day. He said that the Americans were sly traitors and scoundrels and ruffians and cowards and the most immoral of men.

What is to be said of these stories of outrage? It is well for us to have an answer ready, for the stories are doing their work, and the minds of men, and of women, too, are being hardened against the Boers by their unending repetition.

These charges are common in war. Both sides make them. Each accuses the other of fiendish deeds. In the Franco-Prussian war the French made these accusations against the Prussians. The Prussians made them against the French. On my last cycle trip I insisted upon showing my companions the great monument erected in the village of Bazeilles, just outside Sedan. I had been there before, but I wanted my friends to see it. The monument bears the names of the soldiers who fell there and of the inhabitants who were killed when the Prussians stormed the place. It bears the names of women and of children who were killed by Prussian shot and shell. But if anybody now, in cold thought, says that the Prussians deliberately shot women and children down, I shall not trouble to argue with him. If a town or village is occupied by a portion of a defending army, if the attackers turn their cannon upon it and sweep its streets with their rifles, is it not a thousand chances to one that women and children may be struck down? That is what happened at Bazeilles.

But bear this in mind. There is not a charge of treachery, of White Flag abuse, of cruelty to wounded, of cold-blooded slaughter of prisoners, made by us against the Boers which are not made by the Boers and their friends on the Continent against us. It does not follow that they are true because the Boers prefer them against us. It does not follow that they are true because we make them against our enemy. But it is a rough and ready and very stupid method of dealing with contested evidence to say, "All our stories are true; all their stories are lies." That sort of talk is folly.

Sitting here at home, hearing and reading the charges made by

the British against the Boers, travelling on the Continent and hearing and reading the charges made by the Boers against the British, I do not pretend to be able to pick out what is true from what is false. I cannot tell you what the facts are. I can give you my idea about the facts. I tell you what I think. If it seems reasonable to you, you can accept my view. If it seems unreasonable, I have still done my best. But I do not dogmatise on this point as I do on some others.

My judgment is that there have been outrages on both sides. All the stories are not true. Some of the stories are. And some of the "outrages" have happened through misunderstanding, accident, and mistake. This accounts for some. Not for all.

Others are accounted for by what is absolutely inevitable in war—the firing of men's passions. In the terrible fierceness of battle, men seeing only through the blood-red haze of killing, when it is death on sight, death at a blow, when man lives for nothing, breathes for nothing, but to slaughter his fellow-man, there must be done deeds which the very man who does them would deplore when reason gains control again, which the colder or better man on either side would sternly condemn.

Again: there must be miscreants on both sides. The man who denies that is a singular observer of human life. You take three hundred thousand men of various nationalities—our own and others. You take them from all ranks and classes; from refined homes and from the festering, drink-cursed city slum. You take scholars and Hooligans, patriotic young fellows and pot-house louts. You take the educated Christian gentleman, British and Boer, and you take the wastrel, leprous with moral disease, the gambler, the debauchee, and the rake-hell. If you say that you can do this, then loosen the restraints of civil life with the obligations of law and order, and tell them to kill on sight, and yet be quite certain that there will not be, amongst three hundred thousand men, some bad men, some cruel men, some filthy men, some callous, beastly men—then all I can say is that your ignorance of human nature touches bottom.

My view, then, is that there have been lies told about the atrocities on both sides. That truth has been told about atrocities on both sides. That some things which have been alleged to be outrages have been the result of accident, not of purpose. That other things have come from the heat of passion aroused by such a strife. And that other foul deeds have been done by evil men on both sides.

But this is a vastly different thing from saying that the Boers as a whole are cowardly, cruel and infamous. And we do but degrade ourselves when we resort to slander as a weapon to employ against our foes.

Come to the two charges which are oftenest heard at this moment, the Boer murder of natives and the Boer murder of "peace envoys."

We armed the natives, against advice, against remonstrance. We employ them as scouts and spies. They fall into the hands of the Boers; and they treat them as we should treat spies; as every "civilised" nation on earth would treat spies. And the responsibility is the responsibility of Great Britain, not of the Boer.

As to the "peace envoys." It is infinitely painful that Lord Rosebery, in his Chesterfield speech, should have lent himself to the perpetuation of this infamous calumny. Nobody, of course, would accuse Lord Rosebery of lying. It is clear that he had forgotten all about the circumstance which he amplified so recklessly. The peace envoy is, as all the world knows, sacrosanct. The person of an Ambassador is sacred. But these men were not Peace Envoys. They were not Ambassadors. They were renegades secretly trying to seduce the men from their allegiance, to persuade them to desert their leaders and their flag. Imagine some Irish regiment encamped; imagine the odds against them; conceive of some Irishman who hated England finding his way amongst the men by night, and seeking by every art which he could employ to get the men to desert! Conceive of him setting himself to corrupt the men. What mercy would be shown him by a British General if he was caught red-handed? Precisely the mercy which was shown these spies and traitors by the Boer General De Wet.

But against all these charges and calumnies I desire to set one or two testimonies to the large humanity of the Boers. It is not easy to make selections from the mass of evidence which I possess. Let us take a Reuter fabrication first and its contradiction. The statement was that a certain Dr. Walker, serving as a medical man, who was killed "had received *three bullet wounds*, but was finally despatched by a Boer, *who battered in his skull with a stone.*" But the officer in charge, when he received his English newspaper, the *Times*, as a matter of fact, Capt. H. G. Casson, South Wales Borderers, promptly sent this contradiction:

"As I was in command of the post captured at Modderfontein, I trust that in fairness to the enemy, and with a view to minimising as far as possible the pain that must already have been caused, you will allow me to offer an unqualified denial to the above statement. Dr. Walker was hit once only, and by a stray bullet, on the early morning of January 31st while it was still dark; he died the same afternoon from the natural effects of the wound.

"Every possible kindness was shown to the wounded by the Boers, who posted a sentry to see that no one came near or otherwise interfered with them. The Boer commandant present at the time expressed to Dr. Walker his sorrow that he should have been wounded, and later in the day the Boer General himself personally expressed to me his deep regret for the sad occurrence, while many of the burghers, when conversing with my men, also spoke to the same effect."

Mr. Erskine Childers, who fought in the ranks of the City Imperial Volunteers, has placed his convictions on record. The quotation is a long one, but the spirit and capacity of Mr. Childers may be gauged, in part, by the style of his writing. He says:—

"It is time that a word was spoken in opposition to the idea that General Christian De Wet is a man of brutal and dishonourable character. Those who, like myself, have served in South Africa, fought against him, and frequently met men who have been prisoners under him, look, I believe, with shame and indignation on the attempts made to advertise and magnify such incidents as the alleged

flogging and shooting of peace envoys, so as to blacken the character of a man who throughout the war held a reputation with our troops in the field of being not only a gallant soldier, but a humane and honourable gentleman. We may deplore the desperate tenacity of his resistance. Our duty and effort is to overcome it by 'smashing' him in the field. We gain nothing and only lose in self-respect by slandering him.

"But the stories may be true, and in their worst complexion. My point is that the character he has won is such that nothing but the clearest proof, after full inquiry, of his complicity in or responsibility for barbarous and dishonourable acts should be for a moment listened to by fair-minded persons.

"His whole career gives the lie to such aspersions. It was in May of last year, ten months ago, that he first gained prominence. Since then he has fought scores of engagements with us, some successful, some unsuccessful, never with a suspicion of dishonourable conduct. He has had at one time or another some thousands of our men in his hands as prisoners of war. Many of them I have myself met. At second or third hand I have heard of the experiences of many others.

"I never heard a word against De Wet. When men suffered hardships they always agreed that they could not have been helped. But on the other hand I have heard many stories showing exceptional personal kindness in him over and above the reasonable degree of humanity which is expected in the treatment of prisoners of war.

"I believe this view of him is universal among our troops in South Africa. It makes one's blood boil to hear such a man called a brigand and a brute by civilian writers at home, who take as a text the reports of these solitary incidents, incomplete and one-sided as they are, and ignore—if, indeed, they know of it—the testimony in his favour."

One more quotation from Captain March Phillips' book, "With Rimington," again:—

"The Boers have now to watch a slow, implacable, methodical devastation of their country, tract by tract. Day by day they fight, and one by one they fall. Comrades and friends drop at each other's side; sons drop by fathers, and brothers by brothers. The smoke rises in the valley, and the home is blotted out. All that makes life worth living goes, then life itself. What sterner test can a nation be put to than this? It is a torture long and slow; the agony and bloody sweat. I know well that if my own country were invaded I should, or hope I should, behave exactly as these men are doing; and as I should call it patriotism in my own case I cannot refuse to call it the same in theirs."

And in another part of the book he says:—

"I don't know since when it has become a British fashion to slander a brave adversary, but I must say it seems to me a singularly disgusting one, the more when it is coupled with a gross and indiscriminating praise of our own valour and performances."

And, I must add, that men who are readiest with these charges against the Boers are cleverest in forgetting that we have been

hanging and shooting prisoners whom we call rebels. And the English newspapers have simply clamoured for the murder of all prisoners—not merely Cape Colony “rebels.” On October 17, 1900, the *Daily Telegraph* urged that, after a short time, any Boers taken with arms in their hands should be shot without mercy. The *Standard* has urged, on October 16, that every prisoner taken should be put to death. On January 2, 1901, the *Standard* renewed the proposal. A few days later the *Telegraph* slightly modified its original suggestion, and proposed that after the surrender of General Louis Botha, which of course is expected at once, the killing of prisoners should begin. Three days before these appeared in the *Telegraph*, the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* proposed that if the Boers did not at once lay down their arms they should be “exterminated” whenever they fell into our power.

Who can say what effect in producing Boer “atrocities” these newspaper atrocities have had?

There is one charge which has to be made; alas, that an Englishman should make it! And that against Great Britain. For this cowardly war has been conducted by “methods of barbarism,” deny it who will. This is not a charge against the men. I have abundant evidence that they have hated and loathed the work which they have been set to do. I bring no railing accusation against them in the matter of farm-burning, the destruction of homes, the desolation of a country. My charge is against the men in high places who sat at home, and commanded a resort to barbarism. The Concentration Camps have been Murder Camps—Cemetery Camps we are taught to call them now. Try to think, with a realising earnestness, what the death figures mean, supplied in Government Blue-book, Cd. 853:—

**Three Months' Deaths in the  
Murder Camps.**

	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.
Sept. ....	119 ...	328 ...	1964 ...	2411
Oct. ....	151 ...	372 ...	2633 ...	3156
Nov. ....	147 ...	389 ...	2271 ...	2807
	417	1089	6868	8374

During the last seven months there have been Fourteen Thousand Deaths, and of these more than Eleven Thousand have been little children. This does not reveal all the horror. For the worst recorded fortnight in Orange River Camp, the second fortnight in October, showed that out of 24,929 children there, 771 died. This works out at the rate of 742 per thousand per annum. And that, I should think, is the heaviest mortality amongst children since the time of Herod.

The camps are now to be broken up into smaller ones; the situation of some of them is to be changed; certain “reforms” are to be introduced; efforts are at last to be made to modify the monstrous system which has shocked the whole civilised world, and

stained the name of Britain with indelible disgrace. But this modification comes from the agitation of us Pro-Boers. And we may well take pride in the fact that this was the first Church to open its doors, and to offer Miss Emily Hobhouse a platform from which to plead against the deep damnation of this slaughter of the children.

Words cannot deepen the impression of horror which the facts and figures make upon any great and gracious soul. But, in view of this frightful outrage against humanity, I repeat the statement which I made a year ago, and which was said to be so "needlessly" provoking:

Great Britain cannot win her battles without resorting to the last despicable cowardice of the most loathsome cur on earth—the act of striking at a brave man's heart through his wife's honour and his child's life.

Cannot win her battles without that—and cannot then! For we shall lose South Africa. We have kindled a race hatred. In its heat the last links that bind the old Colony to us will be melted. By the slow working out of economic causes, or more rapidly by the exhaustion of our resources, or by both these processes and by others, South Africa will be lost to the British Crown. God grant that this may be the worst loss which befalls us! The ancestors of these men broke the power of Spain. Their children may yet break us. And I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just.

Some of the visible punishments of God can be seen to-day. The approach of others I see, or think I see. And I fear. But these, amongst others, we all discern to-day.

There has come the postponement of social reforms. How noble it would have been to spend our hundred millions and more in some great and splendid scheme for housing the masses of our people who have no room to live! How great and splendid to set our educational system upon a higher platform than any of which the peddling priests and Bumbles have dared to dream—to make the man a better mechanic and make the mechanic a better man—to give to every man a means of living, and open to every man a mightier life! How great and greatly to be praised would that Statesman have been who boldly dreamed and boldly dared, and persuaded our old England to pour out her treasure in saving the battered wrecks of our social system, of our fierce industry and raging competition, from the blasted old age of the workhouse ward and the pauper taint! How supremely great, for ever and for ever to be held in reverence and gratitude by a regenerated humanity, would have seemed to us, and to our children's children, that divinely gifted man who had directed all the mighty energies of Empire, now devoted to the conquest of a handful of farmers and their boys, to the task of lifting up the manhood of the poor and realising Milton's dream of the "politics for Englishmen, to teach the nations how to live!"

But the hopes of Social reform and reconstruction have gone down in the wild welter of blood and chaos which we call war.

There has come a brutalising of the people. I do not care to dwell upon this obvious and painful fact. Men have supped full of blood and horror, and hearts are growing callous. And what will ye do in the end thereof?

There has come a weakening of the national grasp of liberty. We do not hold, as men of our race in a more strenuous age have held, doctrines of human freedom. The passion for liberty which has made us what we are is drooping and dying in our midst.

There has come a repudiation of Christianity. Pagans in the pulpit and pagans in the pew have made the name of Christianity a scoffing and a byword in the land. Not within the life of one generation will be undone the immeasurable harm which has been done to the cause of Christ by the repudiation of Christianity witnessed in this country within the last two years and a half. Time may serve as repairer of the breach and restorer of paths to dwell in; but for a long, long time to come there must needs be bitterness where brotherly love should reign. "You are Traitors to your Country, and you ought to be shot," say they; and we are scarce held back from answering, "And you are Traitors to Christ, and you will be damned"!

The device which is to-day most commonly employed to silence our protests and our pleas for righteousness is the confident assertion that we are "Encouraging the Boers." About that I have a serious word to say.

Great Britain is engaged in an infamous crime. The war is a crime. The blotting out of two nationalities is a crime. Annexation is a crime. And must we cease from our protest against high-handed wickedness, lest we should encourage men to resist the wrong? Protest we must—and shall—let the consequences be what they will. Each one amongst us may be but one forty-millioneth of Great Britain; but to the extent of my forty-millioneth of influence and power I protest against this colossal wrong.

But that is not all. "We are encouraging the Boers," are we? Theirs is a terrible responsibility. They put their lives to hazard, they die daily. They give their homes, their wives, their little ones. They risk the rigours of the field, the chances of battle. They risk wounds, fevers, mutilation, death. They lay down their lives for Fatherland and Freedom. Theirs is the awful risk; theirs the awful price. And if to these men, rightly struggling to be free, it is any comfort to know that I admire them and that my sympathies are with them, then I take the moral responsibility of "Encouraging the Boers" and all the consequences of my acts.

And if it seems to you that there is nothing left to do but weep or pray, believe that you can render a service very real and true in keeping your own conscience clear and in seeking to spread the light of justice and knowledge and peace amongst your fellows. Let no man persuade you that it was wrong to begin but that it is right to go on! Let no man make you believe that what is morally wrong is politically right. Let no man inveigle you into consenting to evil

that imagined good may come. You Englishmen, there is something that you can do.

Ye can arise, reclaim your manliness,  
 And flee the things that are unmaking you.  
 Still in your midst there dwells a remnant, who  
 Love not an unclean Art, a Stage no less  
 Unclean, a gibing and reviling Press,  
 A febrile Muse, and Fiction febrile too.  
 And they it is would pluck you from this slime  
 Whereof the rank miasma clouds your brain.

Christian men and women, you will do this; for the Spirit of the Lord is upon us, also; because He has anointed us to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent us to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

*Copies of this Sermon may be obtained from—*

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BY

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