The Call Of A World Task In War Time

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THE CALL

of

A WORLD TASK

IN WAR TIME

BY

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Educational Secretary

Student Volunteer Movement

REVISED EDITION

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FORWARD MOVEMENT

F. C. STEPHENSON, SECRETARY

METHODIST MISSION ROOMS

TORONTO
PREFACE

These studies have been prepared as part of the advance missionary program which emanated from the Student Volunteer Conference held at Northfield, Mass., January 3-6, 1918. It was felt by leaders of the Student Christian Movements in the United States and Canada that accompanying a call to the students of these nations for intensified missionary undertakings in this college year there should be the promise of a new course of study interpreting the present world situation in terms of missionary responsibility. It was with much reluctance that the writer consented to prepare a book within the brief compass of a month on so immense and important a subject. The haste with which it has been written will account in part for its obvious limitations of material and style. For those who will use this book as a textbook for group study there have been added Questions for Thought and Discussion and Suggestions for Auxiliary Reading.

J. L. M.

New York, February 9, 1918.
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INTRODUCTION

TO THE THIRD (REVISED) EDITION

In the months that have intervened since the first edition of this book was printed there has been developing in Allied countries a clearer discernment of the issues at stake in the War. This has been due partly to processes of education and partly to historical developments. The selfishness, brutality and perfidy of the German military command have startlingly been made manifest and their secret purposes have been unmasked. This has been true most notably in their shameless treatment of Russia and Roumania. Among the nations linked with Germany there has come as a result a lack of confidence and unity. On the other hand, among the Allies has come a new unity based on a new recognition of the utter necessity of winning the War if the world is to be saved from militarism and the rule of force and saved to righteousness and democracy and peace. The altruistic and noble aims of the Allied cause have become clarified and have gained in fervid acceptance by the individual citizen. In the last hamlet of our lands it is being realized that every man and woman of us must stand up and be counted as a zealous, unsparing champion of the rights of humanity.
INTRODUCTION

In other words, gradually it is being recognized that merely winning battles, even the last battle, and rendering Prussianism impotent may not spell real victory for our cause. The extinction of Prussian militarism is only incidental to the supreme end for which we are fighting, namely, the development of a new international spirit, a spirit of respect, cooperation and good will that will fully observe the Golden Rule among nations.

We must fortify ourselves with this great conviction, for ahead of us lie stress and strain and increasing losses. The toll of death will grow longer and the sacrifices we must all bear will be heavier as the weeks pass by. We must know that the price is none too great to pay. We must be convinced in our souls that only by going on to the end, the most bitter end, can we make all the past progress of humanity a success, ensure that the utmost sacrifices of these present desperate years are not in vain and guarantee that the generations unborn will be immensely benefited.

We are seeing more clearly than ever that at its root this world conflict is the clash of two opposite principles, the principles of materialism and spirituality, of brute force and good-will. And back of that it is the clash of two opposite conceptions of God—on the one hand as Thor, on the other hand as God, the loving Father. That is it. There lie our satisfaction and our hope amid all the pain and darkness of these evil hours. We are fighting for God, for the Fatherly God, for the God of Jesus Christ.

From this point of view, the impression is ever deep-
ening that ultimately this is not a war between this group of nations and that group of nations but between good and evil. Whatever may be said about war in general, the conviction is steadily taking hold that this War, so far as we are concerned, is not a condemnation but a vindication of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is the expression of a vital, victorious Christianity.

So we are seeing that Christ is the only solution of the world’s problem and the only hope of world democracy. He must be proclaimed to the nations. Democracy can be firmly established only where His spirit and teachings have been accepted. Therefore the spreading of His doctrine in the world is not one thing and the struggle against autocracy and militarism another. They are two aspects of one great undertaking and they are both urgently necessary. One is the planting of fruitful seeds, the other the uprooting of noxious weeds. We must fight to destroy these abominable growths. Equally and quite as urgently must we scatter broadcast the life-giving principles of liberty, of the infinite worth and inalienable rights of every individual child of God.

More than ever therefore we are led to recognize now the international obligations of Christianity in order that we may faithfully fulfil them in the days that will follow the War. It is with these obligations as revealed and intensified by the War that this book is concerned. It makes no attempt to analyze the immediate causes of the conflict which with savage premeditation the Prussian military machine thrust upon the world. Nor does it argue the justice of the Allies’
position. It takes this position for granted as being essentially righteous and Christian. It does attempt an inquiry into certain great constructive processes whereby Christianity not only can vindicate itself in international life but also can make good the winning of the War by preparing even in the least favored nations a safe dwelling place for Christian world democracy. The discussion of a thorough internationalizing of our Christianity begins with the second chapter.

The first chapter treats of a question of primary and fundamental importance to the rest of the book. The great nations of Asia and Africa are now vivid on our maps as never before. Nearly all of the citizens of those nations are our allies. Their populations comprise the majority of the people in the world. Their possibilities are beyond our imagining. Not only are they in the field of our war purposes as nations entitled to free democratic development, but some of the greatest of them are today facing acute problems of democracy. They are giving us their help. We have before us the amazing spectacle of non-Christian nations fighting for distinctively Christian principles. And they need our help. Most of all they need in their national life the ferment of the ideals of Jesus Christ.

If it is granted that the only condition in which a true democracy can flourish is a condition of essential Christianity, the first lesson of all which the War brings to Christian men and women is the necessity of making sure that the Christianity which we spread