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—their bravery, their charity, their high fortitude. 'A chaplain has reported that a story of treachery on the part of some man once went round a battalion, and the men spoke of it with bated breath, as of a horror too dire to be contemplated.'.

I saw a Saint.—How canst thou tell that he
  Thou sawest was a Saint?—
I saw one like to Christ so luminously
  By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint
Seemed made his groundwork for humility.
And when he marked me downcast utterly
  Where foul I sat and faint,
Then more than ever Christ-like kindled he;
  And welcomed me as I had been a saint,
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.

Christ bade him, 'Do thou likewise.' Wherefore he
  Waxed zealous to acquaint
His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be
  He might retrieve some latent saint:—
'Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me!'

Profane Nations.

By G. Buchanan Gray, M.A., D.Litt., D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in Mansfield College, Oxford.

'Ah! Assyria, the rod of my anger. Against a profane nation *I* send him, and against the people with whom I am wroth I command him. But *he* meaneth not so, nor thus doth his heart devise; but to destroy is in his heart, and to cut off nations not a few. . . . For he saith, By the strength of my own hand have I wrought, and by my wisdom, for I have discernment' (Is $10^{5.\ 6.\ 7.\ 13}$).

The prophets, it has been said with substantial correctness, concerned themselves primarily and mainly not with individuals, but with nations. And in this lay in part a limitation, in part the secret, of their power. If a nation consists, as it does, of individuals, to neglect or too greatly to subordinate the reformation or uplifting of the individuals must render any national ethic ineffective, and the achievement by the nation of any high moral ideal impossible. No state composed of morally low individuals can be itself an embodiment of a lofty moral ideal.

On the other hand, a nation is more than the sum of the individuals; and has, as such, functions that could not be performed by a mere congeries of units. But the two functions are not morally inconsistent; reasons of state must not in national affairs replace morality; and a nation composed of moral individuals cannot make non-moral or immoral state action its ideal. Much of the abiding value of Hebrew prophecy rests on the testimony of the prophets that, though the function of the nation may be other than that of the individual, it is not so different that the nation ought to be less religious or less moral. It is the conviction of the prophets that the nation no less than the individual was made by God for divine ends, and for the conscious and willing achievement of those ends; the profane nation, like a profane individual, is one that lives and works with a practical disregard of this fact. It was the aim of the prophets to turn, in the first instance, their own nation from its profanity by clothing in fresh and vivid imagery the disregarded idea that nations were made by God for divine ends, and by pointing out what seemed to them evidence of God's working in and through the wayward and unruly lives of nations in such a way that His ends should not be ultimately frustrated.

The narratives of Genesis, using and transforming the ancient stories of another race, leave an indelible impression of the idea that God made man; neither there nor elsewhere in the Bible is the truth of that idea demonstrated by argument after the manner of a modern treatise on apologetics; nevertheless the idea in and through the stories is clothed with power. The prophets are less easily read, and are in consequence liable to leave upon the modern reader—it was different with the ancient hearer—an impression far less

deep. It is worth while, however, to take some trouble to get as powerful an impression as may be of the prophetic idea embodied in these verses, and to see its relation to our own circumstances, and its incompatibility with certain other ideas that make loud claim to rule the thought and action of the present and immediate future—ideas the truth of which is just as little formally proved as the idea of the prophets.

Isaiah, when he wrote these words, had lived through years filled with experience of the bitter and brutal savagery of war, such as we have had these three years past and more. And he had seen, as we have seen, new and more imposing forms of brutality added to the ancient barbarities of war. It was already old custom to enslave captives, to sack and to burn, wantonly to dishonour in life and to desecrate in death; but Assyria in its last and most famous period of military power and conquest, which began as Isaiah was approaching manhood, had added fresh horrors to war by its wholesale and permanent deportations of conquered peoples from one extremity of its empire to the other.

When we used to read these prophetic descriptions of war, they left us comparatively cold: war had not come very near to us, and these worst barbarities at least seemed to belong to uncivilized races that had passed away. War, we said, has become humanized; there, too, the Christian spirit has left its mark. And even in the midst of the present war, and after we had become familiar with most of its worst horrors, one of the most distinguished and sympathetic of German Biblical scholars has drawn the contrast between ancient and modern warfare. 'Ancient war,' he writes, 'was especially terrible because it was waged, not as by us between army and army, but between people and people. It was then a matter of course that all property of the vanquished fell to the victor; the captives, women and children, became subject to his violence and caprice; and such booty was a chief end of ancient warfare. The conquered country, also, if it could not be retained, was horribly devastated. So much the more fiercely flamed out the hatred of people against people.'[1] The tone and temper of Professor Gunkel throughout his book is admirable; and we can follow him once and again as he seeks his way after higher Christian principles, which the Old Testament in much of its attitude towards war but dimly anticipates. But we can only marvel at the remoteness from the realities of the present war which allows him, on the grounds which he alleges, to distinguish ancient from modern warfare as waged by his own nation. To us who have watched the desolation of Belgium and Serbia before advancing, the wanton destruction of the fruit trees of France, before retiring German armies, the sacking of cities, the treatment of civilian populations, culminating in deportations that are scarcely to be distinguished from organized slavery, the distinction has worn thin. We are happier than Isaiah in this that we have not witnessed so great a progress on the part of Germany towards universal conquest as Assyria had made; but we have seen enough to be unable to read the lines in which Isaiah depicts the temper and conduct of Assyria without feeling its applicability to the will, if not to the achievement, of Germany:

> My hand reached as to a nest
> To the wealth of the peoples;
> And as one gathereth eggs
> I have gathered the whole earth;
> And there was none (left) that fluttered wing,
> Or opened mouth or chirped (Is 10^{14}).

It is almost impossible to read this and other descriptions of the brutality and the haughty self-confidence of Assyria, denying the right of other nations to life and independence, without thinking of its modern analogue. But there is in this no great value or guidance for ourselves. If we would gain guidance we must look a little more closely at Isaiah's judgment of Assyria in relation to Israel, and then we may discern a double application of his thought to our own circumstances, and our duty in the midst of them.

Isaiah singles out three features of the political and social life of his time for interpretation. First, he turns to his own country. It was the state of *this*, seen in the light of a vision of God, that made him a prophet. Against the holiness of God his people seemed the very darkness of sin. God required justice in the state and social righteousness, and what he saw was injustice rampant, and man wronging man. It is quite improbable that there was actually more injustice and social wrong in Israel than in other states of the time. But that was not the point. Isaiah was judging his

[1] Hermann Gunkel, *Israelitisches Heldentum* and *Kriegsfrömmigkeit im A. T.* Göttingen, 1916.

people not by the standard of other peoples, but by the standard of God's revealed will. The wrong and injustice that prevailed, prevailed in spite of a higher conscience and, at least as it seemed to him, of a better past. Sion had once been a city full of justice; it was now the home of rulers who themselves broke the laws and consorted with those who plundered: those who should have executed even-handed justice received, and even went in search of bribes, as the price of allowing the strong to oppress with impunity the weak. And the corruption had extended to all classes. Israel, such was the standing prophetic doctrine, was the people of God's peculiar choice that they might be holy as He was holy: instead they had become foul as the storied cities of the plain; their rulers were as the rulers of Sodom, their people bad as the people of Gomorrah. In a word, the people had refused to fulfil the end for which they had been created and chosen, and that is what Isaiah means in the present passage by calling them profane.

But a nation made for God's end could not be allowed at will to pursue an opposite end. An unruly child must be whipped; and Israel must be chastised. And this correction of Israel Isaiah saw in the second feature of the political life of his time—the irresistible western advance of Assyria, the subjection of Israel and Judah. Assyria was the rod used by God in His righteous anger to correct his wayward child—Israel.

But twenty years' experience of Assyria, and Isaiah had had fully that when these words were written, had brought to the clear light of day another feature of political life—the nature of Assyrian conquest. It went far beyond correction, and it involved other nations as well as Judah. It was a ruthless, immoral force in action, entirely regardless of any rights or of the welfare of the conquered peoples. Assyria, even more than Israel, acted as if there were no moral end in history.

That, in brief, is how Isaiah read the history of his own time, and God's action in it. In particular he was faced with the problem of two profane nations—profane not in the sense that either disregarded what passed as religion, for Israel loaded God's altars with sacrifices, and Assyria showed no lack of recognition of Asshur and its other gods; but profane, because both alike disregarded the things that were nearest to the heart of God—justice, righteousness, humanity.

Thus we may see that it is not wise to read these words merely to discover an analogy between Assyria and Germany, and to reach the melancholy conclusion that there is less difference than we once thought between ancient and modern warfare.

For push the first and perhaps more obvious analogy a little further, and, though it very quickly breaks down, as we shall see, it has something to suggest. If Germany is Assyria, are we Israel? And if we are Israel, are we free from the profanity which Isaiah found in Israel? Or is God correcting us? Had we before the war no social wrongs in our midst? Was there in us no failure to reach a worthy standard of social justice, no declining towards the standard of Gomorrah? On this point, some facts speak loudly, and it will be well if we let them speak home. How exactly Isaiah, even before he was disillusioned, expected Assyria not merely to chastise but to correct Israel we cannot say; but we can in certain directions see how war is correcting or might correct us. Before the war we were familiar with lurid pictures of the way in which the country was moving to ruin because the national budget was rising to £200,000,000 to meet the expenses of new social legislation. Now we find the budget passing beyond tenfold that figure, and we refuse to admit that we are ruined. Whether the much discussed and much criticised social legislation was on the right or wisest lines, this is not the place to inquire. But if, after the war, we fail to seek the best path of social reform, or if the path becomes clear, and we make the plea that we are saddled with debt an excuse for refusing to follow it, we shall be refusing our correction and returning to our profanity. Again, wealth during the war has flowed into fresh channels; unhappily it has flowed unequally: it has produced a class, or numerous individuals, who can find no better use for it, in these days of national stress and strain, than to squander it on amusements, unnecessary acquisitions and costly dinners. But it has also flowed, modestly now, into innumerable homes where before the war intermittent and ill-paid labour provided but a bare and inadequate existence. Complaint is sometimes made of the extravagant waste of the larger and unwonted wealth in these humbler homes; and there doubtless has been some such waste, and it is to be desired that in every class and home the utmost

sobriety and care should be exercised in the national interest. But that is not the most important fact to seize with a view to future national action. What *this* fresh distribution of wealth has shown is how great is the value not so much of larger earnings, but of what exists for the time being, of greater regularity and security of income. Once again, if we show ourselves indifferent after the war to the value and need of regularity of employment and security of livelihood, we shall be returning to our profanity.

And now I turn to the other application of Isaiah's judgment to our own time. I said just now that any analogy between Israel and England quickly breaks down, and it does so for this reason: Judah in relation to Assyria was an entirely negligible power, entirely incapable of standing up to it, and much more incapable of overcoming it. England in relation to Germany is not in such a position; if God so will, with the co-operation of our Allies, we hope to emerge superior. But in that case we shall do well to consider Isaiah's judgment on Assyria in relation to ourselves. If Germany is comparable in might to Assyria, so too are we. In Isaiah's eyes Israel's profanity was displayed in its internal life, Assyria's profanity in its external exercise of power.

Assyria—I am still simply attempting to interpret Isaiah's thought—Assyria up to a point was fulfilling God's end, was the instrument for realizing the divine purpose of correcting Israel. The profanity of Assyria lay in this that it used the occasion of fulfilling a divine purpose to pursue its own most undivine ends of wanton conquest and brutal spoliation. Now it surely ought to give us room for thought that in the first respect we are even as Assyria. We believe that we are the instruments of God in defence of justice as between nation and nation, and in the promotion of a state of things in which the nations of Europe, or rather we may now say of the world, great and small may each fulfil the divine purpose for themselves. And here again there is the possibility of our becoming profane, not now like Israel within, but like Assyria in our external policy, in our international ideals. And the risk is none the less because it is subtle. We may hope we should not yield to the temptation, if we had the power, of enslaving civil populations. But there are other ways of outrunning the particular divine purpose which we believe we are fulfilling in this war, and so opposing yet higher purposes of God more lasting in their effect. It is exceedingly difficult to descend here to particulars, for they belong as yet so largely to the future, and I will merely refer to one by way of illustration. How far will any particular commercial policy after the war be compatible with the purpose which not only justified us in entering but made it our imperative duty to enter on this war? Will an exclusive commercial policy be justifiable? I put the question, but not to argue it. This only may be said now. Such a policy, if necessary, would merely be one form, and a miserable form, of inconclusive peace. It might under certain conditions be necessary for a time, but it is certain that to exalt it and make of it a permanent ideal, would be a form of profanity, a using of the occasion for fulfilling a particular divine purpose for frustrating the permanent divine purpose that nations should serve and enrich one another.

If we cannot as yet determine what judgment Christian principles must pass on particular future lines of external policy, we can and must even now cherish the principles, and cultivate the temper, by and in which alone those future judgments can be rightly made. We must constantly remember that the morality of the state rests on the temper and action of the individuals composing it; and that the followers of Christ must each individually do his utmost to cultivate the right temper in himself and to welcome and encourage it in others, and not least in those who belong to nations now opposed to us.

There is one profound difference between ancient and modern warfare. Ancient nations fought, owing no allegiance to a common God and Ruler of all nations. Assyria, though seeming to Isaiah to overstep the commission of God, recognized no God to whom the rights of other nations were as sacred as its own. But modern nations profess at least to recognize such a common Ruler of them all. One of the effects of this, the solemn Te Deums of opposing nations for victories over one another, has often been made the subject of satire. And yet the hope of the future rests in giving to this belief vital power, and in approaching all national settlements and inter-relations in the spirit and temper which it ought to bring. The duty lies on each of us, to the utmost of our power, of extending and deepening this belief, this spirit and temper, and

it may encourage us in our hope for the future to realize that this duty is not even now entirely unrecognized or unperformed in Germany. I will close, therefore, with the expression given to the belief to which I have just referred in the closing words of Professor Gunkel's recent book. He cites that noble prophecy in which by substituting the names of modern nations we obtain an ideal such as we do well to cherish. The prophet's words are these:

> In that day Israel will be a third,
> Along with Egypt and Assyria,
> A blessing in the midst of the earth
> Which Yahweh of Hosts hath blessed, saying:
> Blessed is my people, Egypt,
> And Assyria, the work of my hands,
> And Israel my inheritance.

Thus, says Professor Gunkel, 'recognition of the equal rights of nations, and, therefore, peace on earth, is the last thought of the Old Testament religion. The hope that to Israel the empire of the world will one day fall, that fervent hope of the Jewish heart, here finds a place no more. And yet the prophet has not abandoned the thought of a kingdom of God. . . . But the ideal of a military world power yields place to the thought of a peaceful dominion of the Spirit. So, then, may the Christian nations of Europe, too, when, please God, the present world war is ended, once again reflect that there is a higher aim than violent subjection. And may our people even in victory not forget that there are many nations on earth, all of them a thought of God, each possessing its own individual right and reason for being. For, as in the social, so also in the political sphere, the end of strife is righteousness.'

Literature.

HAZELL.

HAZELL'S ANNUAL is now issued jointly at the Oxford University Press and by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, and it goes by the title of *The New Hazell and Almanack* (5s. net). The editor (T. A. Ingram, M.A., LL.D.) is giving himself body and soul to make it indispensable. And now this year's issue, divided as it is into the two great sections of Peace and War, contains so much information—well-digested, well-arranged, well-presented information—on everything connected with the welfare of the Empire, and on everything connected with the War, whether in the Empire or out of it, that we should like to see the man who can do without it.

The interest of some sections is immense—the section on 'Aviation in 1917,' for example, ending, as the other sections do, with a first-rate bibliography.

The price has been slightly raised, but it is amazing value for the money.

STOPFORD BROOKE.

The *Life and Letters of Stopford Brooke* have been edited by his son-in-law, Lawrence Pearsall Jacks, M.A., LL.D., D.D., Principal of Manchester College, Oxford (Murray; 2 vols., 15s. net).

Stopford Brooke was an artist. That one word explains every act of his life; it explains himself. It is true that he did not begin to paint till he was nearly sixty, but then he painted straightaway and had his pictures hung immediately. The art he practised all his life was preaching. He was an artist in the pulpit. Speaking of his home in London (No. 1 Manchester Square) Dr. Jacks says: 'Had a stranger been suddenly introduced and asked to guess the calling of the master he would have said "artist" immediately. On learning that he was a clergyman the stranger might have experienced a momentary surprise. But there would have been no ultimate incredulity. With a little patience he would have found the true perspective, and perhaps read much of the story which these pages have endeavoured to tell. I think he would have concluded with some such reflexion as this: "If a clergyman is to be also an artist it is well that he should be the kind of artist which the contents of this house reveal. For there is nothing here that is not excellent."'

He was not a theologian. His volumes of sermons are many, but there is no theology in them. Let no one say that they will perish while