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THE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER AND THE WAR.

PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS DIOCESE.

The Lord Bishop of Chichester has addressed a letter to the people of Sussex, couched in eloquent but practical terms concerning the war and the call of God, and it has been read in all the churches of his diocese, which is coterminous with the county. We take the following extracts from this interesting document:—

“God is speaking to us as a nation, and therefore as individuals, in this terrible war such as this world of ours has never seen before. He is always speaking to us, but we do not always hear what He is saying. We are so busy with our work or our play, our money getting or our money spending, that we have no time to stop and listen to Him.

“This Godlessness shows itself in our inner life, known only to God and ourselves, by no serious thinking about God, by little or no praying to God, by no Bible reading about God.

“This Godlessness shows itself in our home life. There is no room for God in the family, no family prayer, no grace at meals, no mention of God from the beginning of the day to its close, while the children are often left to grow up without any thought or knowledge of God or of their duty towards God, except what they may learn at school.

“And now this great war has come, come not by God's ordering, for nothing bad can come from God, but by the deliberate act of sinful men. And it has waked us up as a nation out of our easy-going way of treating God's wonderful gift of life and is making us try and do our duty for others in many healthy and helpful ways—for King and country, for home and dear ones. So far it is well with us.

“But what of our higher duty—the duty we owe to God? What of God's call to us as above the noise of the war? We hear Him saying to us, each and all, ‘Be still and know that I am God!’

“May it not be that this is the reason why God has allowed this war, with all its sorrow and suffering, and misery and cruelty, that we may hear His voice, to which we have been so long growing more and more deaf?

“Remember the grave responsibility now laid upon you, each one. What you are and how you act, concerns the well-being of the nation. For just as a river is clear or muddy as the drops which make up the stream are clear or muddy, so each and all of us make the nation. What we are, what we do, what our character is—such will the nation be, and such will the national character be.

“It is the call of God. Do not, any of you for whatever reason, turn away and refuse to listen. It is a solemn opportunity. Do not let it slip.”