

BLACKFRIARS

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DISINTERESTEDNESS, based on objective truth, is the keynote of Christianity. The Cross is the symbol not only of sacrifice but of self-sacrifice; and the Cross must be shouldered not merely by the few on rare and heroic occasion, but daily; in other words, self-sacrifice is the primary and essential principle in the Christian's daily rule of life. Whether it be a question of personal well-being, therefore, of work or play, of social contact, of national life or international relations, men are not true Christians (and therefore not true men) who do not regard first and always the teaching and example of the Divine Prototype of all men. If the Christian civilization is to be saved from paganism, and even barbarism, it is high time that the Divine paradoxes of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount were accepted as something more than impossible ideals, rather as practical norms of conduct as between Christian people and peoples. Self-sacrifice is the principle underlying these apparent paradoxes, and this alone will ensure peace. It is self-seeking that is destructive of all peace, peace of soul, peace in the family, peace in society, peace national and international; it is this that caused the effective failure of the

Treaty of Versailles and of the League of Nations. The simple fact is that self-interest has so warped our vision of truth that we forget we are but members of one great family awaiting our homecoming outside the portals of eternity. As long as a materialist view is predominant there will be no peace, not even material peace.

In his address to the ex-soldiers during their recent pilgrimage to Rome, our Holy Father the Pope (as reported in *The Universe*, September 13) spoke to them and to the whole world of his earnest prayer for peace. He continued: "The Vicar of Our Divine Lord, the Common Father of all . . . desires also, with peace, that the hopes, the exigencies, the needs of a great and good people, which is his people . . . be recognized, satisfied, that rights should be assured and recognized, but with justice and with peace. . . . And may (God) give to the world His peace, a peace of justice, truth and charity, a peace made with honour and dignity, wrought by right and by respect for all rights." Such a peace cannot be achieved without self-sacrifice. In this connection we may be allowed to quote, from *The News Chronicle*, September 13, words spoken by Mr. Lloyd George at Plymouth on September 12. "If the peace of the world is to be put on firm foundations we must go to a conference of the nations prepared to make our sacrifices." And this is none the less significant and true, even though by a curious irony he spoke "as one of the authors of the Versailles Treaty and the Covenant," and even though our norm of sacrifice is probably different from his. In the same speech he says: "I am perfectly certain that as far as the bulk of the people of this country are concerned, if it is a condition of restoring the peace of the world to stability, they will be quite prepared to make sacrifices of a considerable character to attain that immense object for the benefit of humanity." We have no doubt at all that the "people" of this country are prepared to make sacrifices, in the interests either of peace or of justice (as they were in 1914); the question is rather whether the "rulers" of this and the other countries of the Christian world are prepared to make sacrifices, other than that of the lives of her fighting men from motives of self-interest; if not, the tremendous sacrifices of the people during the Great War, which was to have ended all war, will have served merely to pave the way to a still greater and more horrifying

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conflict. The truth is that the sacrifice demanded to ensure such a peace as the Holy Father prays for, a peace of justice, truth and charity, is one that can be inspired only by the Incarnation, by Calvary itself. Yet, even at such a moment as this, when the peace of the world is in the balance, we look in vain for any authoritative voice other than that of the Vicar of Christ to plead the cause of justice, truth and charity. Is it too much to hope that the *people*, at any rate, of whom sacrifice will be demanded and made in one cause or another, for peace or for war, will join themselves wholeheartedly and articulately with the one ruler in the world who is at least disinterested in his desire for peace?

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We record, with very deep regret, the death of another notable member of the English Province of Dominicans, Fr. Rupert Hoper-Dixon, O.P., till recently Prior at Hawkesyard, in Staffordshire. He was well known as a preacher and lecturer, and the Order has suffered a great blow in his early death. We print, in our present issue, the words written for his funeral (though not in fact spoken) by his former teacher and Prior, Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P. May he rest in peace.

EDITOR.