

# THE CHURCH LOOKS FORWARD

BY

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ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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## PREFACE

IT has been suggested that it might be useful to publish in book form some of the chief sermons and speeches which I delivered during the first eighteen months after entering on my present work. I have decided to follow this advice for two main reasons. One is the hope that they may thus help more effectively the formation of a public opinion ready for action when the opportunity comes; the other is a desire to set those which have already received a good deal of publicity in the context of others which attracted less attention. It is natural that any observations about politics and economics should get a good press; but what I have said on these topics is incidental to, and illustrative of, an exposition of principles which, as I think, should guide our thought in relation to all the great problems of our time.

The addresses here published were delivered on quite different occasions and were in no way planned as a series. In this volume they are so arranged as to exhibit some measure of continuity. They are the chief speeches or addresses which I made during those eighteen months, other than the sermons delivered in parish churches of the diocese.

If any one of these addresses may be said to strike the keynote, it is that on "The Crisis of Western Civilisation". Our need is a new integration of life: Religion, Art, Science, Politics, Education, Industry, Commerce, Finance—all these need to be brought into a unity as agents of a single purpose. That purpose can hardly be found in human aspirations; it must be the divine purpose. That divine purpose is presented

to us in the Bible under the name of the Kingdom (Sovereignty) of God, or as the summing-up of all things in Christ, or as the coming-down out of heaven of the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

In all those descriptions two thoughts are prominent: the priority of God and universality of scope. Nothing is to be omitted; "all things" are to be summed up in Christ, but it is in Christ that they are thus gathered into one. All nations are to walk in the light of the holy city, but it comes down out of heaven from God. The Kingdom of God is the goal of human history, but it is His Kingdom, not man's. It is always difficult to think about two or more things at once; but that is what we must learn to do, and these addresses are essays in that enterprise.

WILLIAM CANTUAR:

*January 25, 1944*

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# I

## *Enthronement*

THE SERMON PREACHED AT THE ENTHRONEMENT  
IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL ON ST. GEORGE'S DAY, 1942

The nations shall walk by the light thereof.

*Revelation xxi. 24*

AT such a moment as this it is inevitable that we should have in our minds the background against which our day of dedication is set. For, of course, the real meaning of this day is dedication—the dedication of the Church, of the nation, of ourselves, to the service of the Most High God. It is fitting that it should be held on St. George's Day and that with the martyr who is patron saint of our country we should here, in the mother Church of the Anglican Communion, reaffirm our loyalty to Jesus Christ as alone entitled to our absolute allegiance. My chief desire is to enter on my office as His bondman and His witness; and I ask of you all to hold me to this by your own steadfastness and by your prayers.

The world is learning its helplessness apart from God, though not yet is it on any great scale turning to Him for direction or for strength. The secular movement of the world is not towards peace or mutual understanding and appreciation; rather is it towards more intense and fiercer competition, conflict and war between larger and ever larger concentrations of power. That power may be economic or military or both;

but the movement towards greater concentrations of power and keener tension between them is the mark of our period of history.

If that were all that could be said, the Church could do little else but work below the surface, morally if not physically returning to the catacombs, preserving the Gospel in its purity and potential might, until it again confronts the world as the one coherent fellowship which can alone give stability and peace to a world relapsing into chaos. But there is another side to the picture. As though in preparation for such a time as this, God has been building up a Christian fellowship which now extends into almost every nation, and binds citizens of them all together in true unity and mutual love. No human agency has planned this. It is the result of the great missionary enterprise of the last hundred and fifty years. Neither the missionaries nor those who sent them out were aiming at the creation of a world-wide fellowship interpenetrating the nations, bridging the gulfs between them, and supplying the promise of a check to their rivalries. The aim for nearly the whole period was to preach the Gospel to as many individuals as could be reached so that those who were won to discipleship should be put in the way of eternal salvation. Almost incidentally the great world-fellowship has arisen; it is the great new fact of our era; it makes itself apparent from time to time in World Conferences such as in the last twenty years have been held in Stockholm, Lausanne, Jerusalem, Oxford, Edinburgh, Madras, Amsterdam.

The New Testament bids us hope for a City of God whose gates are ever open to the four points of the compass so that all may enter, and that the nations shall walk by the light of it. That City in its perfection is of eternity and not of time; but, as the central doctrine of our faith assures us, it is God's



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nor education, nor economic status, nor even sex, can make division there; "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Greek nor barbarian, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female; but one man in Christ Jesus". No doubt the members of the Church have in the course of history failed signally to manifest to the world this unity which always marks the living Church itself. And the reason is not chiefly lack of good feeling among themselves, for this is the symptom, not the disease. The reason is the incompleteness of our self-surrender to the one Lord.

But now, out of the great missionary movement with its proclamation of the Gospel of the love of God and its call for self-surrender as our response to that Gospel, is arising, on a scale never before seen in the world, the Christian fellowship which corresponds to St. Paul's description. It is of urgent importance that we become aware of it, that we further it in every way open to us, and that through it we take our part in providing for the Spirit of Christ the agency by which He may transform the world.

But we, who are assembled here, are not only individuals offering our service to the world-wide fellowship of Christian disciples, we are—with some honoured guests representing that wider fellowship—members of the Anglican Communion, met in the mother Church of that Communion, to set in St. Augustine's seat one more in the long line of his successors. We shall impoverish our service of the wider fellowship if we let our membership of our own Communion become hesitant or indefinite. Rather we have to make strong the bonds of our own unity, with gratitude for our splendid inheritance, so that we may bring to the universal Church a life strong in faith, in order, in corporate devotion—maintaining all that we have received but recognising also God's

gifts to His people through traditions other than our own.

So let us set ourselves to gain a deepening loyalty to our Anglican tradition of Catholic order, Evangelical immediacy in our approach to God, and liberal acceptance of new truth made known to us; and let us at the same time join with all our fellow Christians who will join with us in bearing witness to the claim of Christ to rule in every department of human life, and to the principles of His Kingdom.

Thus we come back to our starting point. We are representatives and trustees of that light which more than anything else the world is needing, and which can guide our feet into the way of peace. But we can be effective representatives and faithful trustees only in proportion as our hearts and minds and wills are given to Him who is Himself the day-spring from on high. To dedicate ourselves afresh to Him and to His service in our own time is the real purpose of our presence here.

At almost any other moment in the history of the world I should have wished my words at such a service to be concerned with this alone—God's call to us and our answering dedication. At this moment it seemed right to recall the state of the world in which our service must be given. Yet let not this obscure the primary need—hearts open to the love of God, minds nurtured by the truth of God, wills devoted to the purpose of God.

As I try with you so to open my heart, to nurture my mind and to devote my will, in face of the task entrusted to me, you will forgive a few personal words expressing my sense of complete inadequacy to perform that task or worthily to follow those whom I have known as the occupants of this see. This first was Edward White Benson, deep and subtle scholar, wise statesman and true priest. Then came my own father,

of whom I say nothing except that he was and is, among men, the chief inspiration of my life; and I like here to recall two sayings at his own enthronement, one a quotation from his predecessor and former college tutor, Archibald Campbell Tait—*Nobis Apostolorum vindicamus non honores, sed labores*—We claim for ourselves the Apostles' labours, not their honours; the other his own words: "I would rather that my intimate friends knew me as one who thought nothing of himself in comparison of the work that he had to do than that they should know me as a great scholar or a great saint". He was followed by Randall Thomas Davidson, a man of comprehensive wisdom illuminated by direct and simple faith, who became almost at once a second father to me, and whose vast influence upon the whole Anglican Communion is a priceless treasure in our inheritance. Lastly, Cosmo Gordon Lang, who, since I first knew him forty-one years ago, has been to me a most wise elder counsellor and ever more intimate friend. His high sense of duty has led him to lay down an office in which he was still giving great service to Church and nation, but we rejoice that his store of wisdom is still available for our guidance.

To follow such men is daunting. If even what is obvious of the task in prospect did not fill one with a sense of helplessness, the memory of those in whose place I stand would abolish all self-confidence. Yet that is gain and not loss. Our chief need is an ever revitalised apprehension of the completeness of our dependence upon God. I have spoken of the meaning of this service as being our dedication of the Church, the nation, ourselves to the purpose of God. But that, though true in its measure, does not go far enough. For dedication is an activity of our wills, necessary but not ultimate. The chief need of all is that we here and now let our dependence upon

God become so living a fact of actual experience that we may be from henceforth channels of His living energy.

This, then, is my call to you to-day, and, beyond you who are gathered here, to all whom my words may reach: Just because our hope is set on that City in whose light the nations shall walk, let us abide in Christ that Christ may abide in us.

Let us kneel in prayer. And as we kneel let us try to hear the familiar words of the Lord as though hearing them now for the first time: "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing. . . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. AMEN.

## II

### *Christian Unity and Church Reunion*

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED IN FULL SYNOD  
TO THE CONVOCATION OF CANTERBURY  
ON TUESDAY, MAY 25TH, 1943

RIGHT Reverend, Very Reverend, Venerable and Reverend Brethren,—It is recommended by the Committee on our procedure that it would be advantageous if the Presidential Address were delivered in Full Synod. I have decided to act on this without waiting for our consideration of that Committee's report, because if the Presidential Address is delivered only in the Upper House a very long delay is inevitable before the members of the Lower House can become aware of the full text of it. Moreover I value highly the opportunity of even this limited meeting in one place as a means by which our sense of fellowship in the service of Christ and His Church may be deepened.

We meet at a moment of tense interest and keen anticipation. We share with all our countrymen profound gratitude for the triumphs won by our fleets and armies and air force, and by those of our Allies. And with renewed devotion we commend our cause to God, praying that we may be worthy to serve it and carry it to victory, and so guided by the Holy Spirit as to meet worthily the great responsibilities which victory must bring.

As I turn to our own immediate business as a Synod of the Church I find myself obliged to take this opportunity of speaking about Christian Unity and Church Reunion. I have rather shrunk from doing this, because it may fall to me later to speak on behalf of this Synod as representing the Province of Canterbury in the Universal Church; and I sincerely wish to keep my mind open to the arguments that may be presented to us in discussions which are likely to take place in the near future. But I also feel responsibility for offering to the Church such guidance as I can from my experience—very brief as yet—in the office which I now hold, from fourteen years' service as Chairman of the Faith and Order Movement, and from thirty-one years' service of that Movement as one chosen by the Archbishops of our Church to represent it in conference with members of other communions.

First I would say something about Christian unity and co-operation of such a kind as is possible while our ecclesiastical divisions remain. Of this the Religion and Life Weeks are an illustration. Experience shews beyond any possibility of dispute that there is a readiness in the public to pay attention to the Christian message when Christians of all communions are united in proclaiming it entirely beyond any that can be commanded when we deliver it in separation from one another. The first striking manifestation of this was provided by the two great meetings in the Stoll Picture House presided over, the one by Cardinal Hinsley and the other by my predecessor, Archbishop Lord Lang. We now have a joint-committee to facilitate co-operation in witness between the British Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Sword of the Spirit.

That there is need for the most effective witness to Christian moral and social principles is very plain. The Christian

tradition is challenged from without more powerfully than in any period since the end of the Dark Ages, and is in danger of being undermined by a secular humanism which hopes to retain Christian values without Christian faith. If then there is special need for effective Christian witness, and if one condition of maximum effectiveness is that we give that witness unitedly, a refusal or failure to unite for this purpose would be a betrayal of trust; it would be a refusal or failure to serve not only the people of our generation but our Lord Himself.

No doubt there are principles to be observed and safeguarded, and we must so plan our united witness as not to break or compromise them. At this point there may be some disagreement among us; in my view the proper place at which to draw the line while the relations between the various communions remain as they are, is where it is drawn in the resolutions of the Upper House now to be considered in the Lower House. Until we have reached that consummation of union which will consist in full sacramental communion, it would seem to me wrong and false to admit as a preacher during the service of Holy Communion one who belongs to another communion than our own. On the other hand, to admit such a one to preach the sermon appended to Morning or Evening Prayer on the occasion of any enterprise of united witness seems to me appropriate and most desirable. If the occasions for interchange of preachers are limited to special services, the impression of truly united witness is greatly impaired; and this should be avoided unless it is held that some really vital principle is at stake. I find it hard to see how this could be.

So far I have been speaking of united witness to Christian faith and principles in such fields as Christian Evidence, Apologetics or the subjects commonly included in a Religion and Life Week; these are Religion in the Home, Religion in



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