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EDITORIAL.

A DAY OF INTERCESSION.

It is fitting that, at the bidding of the King, the first Sunday of 1918 should have been observed as a day of intercession and thanksgiving throughout the kingdom, special services being held not only in the churches of the Establishment, but also at Roman and Nonconformist places of worship.

As usual Londoners flocked to Westminster Abbey—where the Archbishop of Canterbury preached to a crowded congregation in the afternoon—and to St. Paul's Cathedral, where the Lord Mayor attended the morning service in full state, and the Bishop of London, who read the Royal Proclamation from the pulpit was the preacher. The special intercessions included thanksgivings for the skill and patience of physicians, surgeons and nurses.

The Bishop, who took for his text, the words "And when they saw the Star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy," said that in a special sense the day was the greatest in all the long years of war, for our King himself had summoned us to prayer in noble words, had appraised at its true value the glory of our task, and had pointed out the special gifts we needed—insight, and courage to pursue the true path to the end.

If, said the Bishop, there was one thing that was absolutely certain it was that the nation was right in August, 1914, in leaving the peaceful security of its homes and plunging into the welter of blood we called the Great War.

If we had broken our pledges, betrayed our friends, tarnished for ever the honour of the nation, no words could describe the shame and sorrow with which every patriot would hang his head. We were right. The gleam we followed was a true gleam. The star of honour which led us was an authentic star.

If there was to be no punishment—not vindictive retaliation, but honest and well deserved punishment and retribution—for the desolation of Belgium, the agony of Serbia, the hapless men, women and children of Armenia, slowly done to death, then we might still ask, "Where is the God of the fatherless and widow?" But we could no longer answer, "It is God in His Holy habitation." If the dawn of the great day of freedom and brotherhood seemed to tarry, might it not be that we had really, after 2,000 years, not believed as a nation in the stupendous Epiphany?

But until that glad dawn came let us thank God for the star and follow its gleam. Let us thank God for the splendid valour of our youth, the unselfish service of our women, for the light of hope which has never failed us yet, for the coming into the war of the great power of the West; for the brightness and unselfishness which lights up the otherwise dreary watch in the trenches or on the sea; for the fortitude of our mourners and the courage of the desolate; and let us pray, as we have never prayed before, in the spirit of our fathers who once before (in the words of Pitt) saved their country by their exertions, and Europe by their example. Let us bow ourselves at last as a nation before the Governor, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; and full of His Divine Justice, Wisdom, Peace and Love, go forth to achieve the one thing for which the world is longing—a reign of lasting peace.

The same note was struck by Canon Burton who preached at the midday Mass at Westminster Cathedral.

The offertories in churches and chapels throughout the day were given to the funds of the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John.

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