

were you a Christian, were you Christ-like?

Those, I can hardly doubt, are the sort of questions we are more likely to be asked—the very searching sort of questions we might well begin to ask ourselves now. There can hardly be more challenging questions. What could be more challenging than to have war—modern, mechanised, democratic, atomic, total, mass war—for our destiny?—to be free in the mechanised mass?—to be a person in the midst of impersonality?—to be creative in the midst of destruction?—to keep a mind of one's own in the midst of propaganda?—to keep true in the midst of lies?—to keep one's heart warm in the midst of cold steel and cold calculation?—to keep cool in the heat of passion?—to keep confident in the midst of cynicism?—to be peace-loving in the midst of conflict?—to be Christ-like in the midst of devilry?

We must all know that we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily. Modern war calls for far more than human strength. Therein precisely lies the opportunity which our age possesses in an unprecedented degree. God's strength is made manifest in our weakness. Only in the might and grace of the Almighty Trinity can we get anywhere near becoming what we are called to be. That might and grace are available in prayer, and the sacraments, through the all-powerful prayers of the Queen of Peace. Atomic war is not, as we may be inclined to think, 'the end': 'the end', we are told, 'is not yet'. But the might of the atom can be countered by little less than the almightiness of God, of which it is itself a feeble expression. Wars and rumours of wars mean this at least: Christians must be Christians, or they will be very much less than human. Mediocrity is impossible; escape is impossible. Yet if only a few were to keep and develop their Christian integrity under the challenge of wars and rumours of wars—what could they not do for the world? At all events they have the certain assurance—'He that shall persevere to the end, shall be saved'. Perhaps it is not only they themselves who will be saved.

FROM ST AUGUSTINE

'Misericordia Dei est quia nescit homo quando moriatur. Latet ultimus dies ut observentur omnes dies.' *Sermo XXXIX—1.*

Death, close companion walks with man unseen,
 Never a moment's life but Death is near,
 Never a moment when we need not fear
 The following steps, no pause no space between:
 Such is God's mercy, such His Wisdom's way
 Lest we relax our watch and cease to pray.—JOHN SEARLE.