

THE WORLD WITHIN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760571771

The world within by Rufus M. Jones

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BY

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1918

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, September, 1918

PREFACE

Some of the sections included in the chapters of this volume have already appeared as articles either in the *London Friend* or in the *Homiletic Review*. The editors of these two periodicals have kindly given permission for the publication of such articles in the present book.

INTRODUCTION

There is a fine passage in one of Keats's Letters in which the poet says that our world is created primarily as a place for making souls — in his phrase it is “a vale of soul-making.”

We are just now so absorbed with external tasks and so occupied with the solution of problems in our outside world that most of us hardly have time to consider whether we have any souls or not. We allow that question to await its turn for an answer. But there are some questions — and this is precisely one of them — which cannot be postponed while outer issues are being settled. In fact all outer issues are intricately tied up with just this inner one. It turns out to be forever true that the inner aspect which we call *morale* is the main factor even in contests which are supposed to be only external. Those impalpable things which we name *faith* and *vision* and *spirit* and *nerve* are greater elements in the determination even of outside victories than are miraculous long-distance guns. The conviction that our fun-

damental aims are righteous is an unspeakable asset. Moreover, it appears as clearly evident now as it was two thousand years ago in Syria that it is of no use or profit to win the whole world if the inner life and self-respect are lost in the process; that houses and lands, territory and spheres of influence, are a poor substitute for that intangible thing which we call the *soul*.

Some day, near or remote, this war will be over. These unparalleled armies will demobilize and these multitudes of young men who have been living under most unwonted human conditions and have been facing death every day in appalling shapes will return to the pursuits which they have intermitted for this vast business of Armageddon. The new tasks of reorganization, rehabilitation and reconstruction awaiting them and us will be fully as unparalleled as the modes and magnitude of the warfare have been. And beyond any question the most important preparation for this immense work of rebuilding the wrecked and shattered world will be the clarification and fortification of the soul. There will be, no doubt, enormous economic issues to be settled. We shall be confronted with a wholly novel group of political problems. It will be a world charged with unusual dynamic social aspirations which must be