

WALKER TRUST LECTURES ON LEADERSHIP

No. VIII

MILITARY LEADERSHIP

by

FIELD-MARSHAL

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN

G.C.B., D.S.O., D.C.L., LL.D.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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MILITARY LEADERSHIP

I HAVE come here to-day to talk to you about *Military Leadership*. A subject such as this must in normal times seem somewhat remote from this quiet grey-walled city by the sea; but I seem to remember that a great leader, Montrose himself, was once one of your scarlet-gowned scholars, and in his time won the gold medal for archery down at Butts Wynd. He, too, once sat in the house of Mary Queen of Scots, and daily passed the thorn tree she planted in the courtyard of St. Mary's College. Who knows if some of his spiritual leadership did not owe its faith and fervour to your ancient traditions? And there have been many others.

But to-day I have to try and equate the definition of military leadership, as I see it, to the lessons of the past and to the experience of the present. I propose to limit myself in this talk to Higher Leadership—the command of armies or a group of armies—and not to consider the quality of leadership at lower levels. What I say about higher leadership may well have certain application to leadership of a brigade, or a company, or a section of men; there are, however, certain differences in leadership at lower levels and I do not propose to take up your time by discussing these to-day.

Military leadership is a subject which has always interested me, and during this war I have had some opportunity to put my ideas to the test. I have found that, if you aspire to lead soldiers, you must make a close study of human nature, for that is the raw material with which a commander has to achieve his end. If you neglect the human factor, as a leader you will fail. The

personal relationship between a commander and his soldiers is, and has always been, one of the most potent single factors making for success in war. If a commander has the complete confidence and trust of his men, there is nothing he cannot do—nothing. If a commander loses the confidence of his men, he cannot succeed.

Now let us consider on what a man's power to lead others is based. It is necessary first to define what is meant by leadership.

I suggest to you as a definition of the word 'leadership': *The will to dominate, together with the character which inspires confidence.* The measure of a man's ability to lead is, I think, twofold.

First, it lies in his will to dominate the men and events which surround him, the will to drive himself and his men to the limit of their powers for a specific purpose, and the refusal to allow anything to divert him from his aim.

Second, it lies in the strength of his character, whether good or evil, to inspire others to place their complete trust and confidence in him and in his ability to lead them with success, and to enthuse his men for the task in hand. This ability of a man to inspire confidence in others, and to create enthusiasm, is a spiritual quality, but it is well to remember that this quality need not necessarily be for good. The evil leader has equally the ability to inspire confidence in others, and in history the evil leader has often, at any rate temporarily, prevailed.

There have been many, with differing types of character, who have inspired men to follow them. I propose to choose three great captains of the past, and to examine briefly why these men were leaders, how they led their men, and how as leaders they succeeded or failed.

I will first consider Moses. He was already old when he was called to lead the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. His task was an immense one. He had first to inspire his people to cast off the yoke of the Egyptians. This was no easy matter; Israel had been living for about 400 years as slaves of the Egyptians; they had lived in the Nile Delta, a bad and enervating climate and one which tends to sap energy and initiative. But they lived where food was plenteous, while all around were deserts which could barely support life. Moses must have had to overcome the most tremendous initial inertia to persuade Israel to launch out into those deserts with all the risks of famine, disease, and the necessity to fight. His power to inspire and to dominate his fellow men must have been of a very high order.

Without doubt Moses realized that, when he led Israel out of Egypt, they were useless as a fighting people; they had been slaves for some 400 years. He therefore set to work to train them for the task, and to forge the weapon which could conquer Canaan. I believe that Moses intentionally kept Israel for forty years in the desert—for two generations—in order to breed and train a fighting race capable of undertaking the task of conquest which lay ahead. And in that forty years he taught them gradually how to fight and to conquer. He took meticulous care over their training; and it is most interesting to note his refusal ever to risk any failures in action. We read of him soon after leaving Egypt asking if he might lead Israel through the country of another people; on being refused permission, he marches round by another way. But later when the same situation arises, when Israel is better trained to fight, he leads his people straight through the middle of that country

and destroys his enemy utterly. He was a good judge of what Israel was capable of doing and what Israel was not capable of doing, and as a result he had an unbroken record of military successes. He had the wisdom and the insight into human nature to realize that the best way for a leader to gain the confidence of his soldiers is to give them victories. If a commander gives his soldiers victories, they will follow him anywhere.

But Moses was not permitted to see the fruits of his own work. He sinned: by claiming, as his own, powers which did not belong to him; and for this sin of presumption he was forced to hand over to Joshua the final conquest of Canaan for which he had so well trained the Children of Israel.

I next propose to consider Cromwell, another leader who learnt to wage war only when he was over middle age. He was over 40 when the civil war broke out. He started the civil war in command of a troop of sixty men, and in command of that troop he fought at Edgehill. There, in spite of the Parliamentary superiority in men and guns, and a fervently held cause, he saw the failure of his own side to seize the victory and he saw them escape defeat only because of the folly of their opponents. This gave him much cause for thought; superiority in men and equipment was clearly valueless unless something further was added; what was needed also was the leader who would forge the weapon out of the enthusiastic material available, and would then lead it with vigour and determination to achieve his military end.

He saw too the nature of the weapon required, and how it could be forged. And he set himself to the task of building a force after his own principles, based on a high fighting spirit, good discipline, and a sound know-

ledge of tactics; it was to be a force which would have complete confidence in him as their commander. He set about his task full, we are told, of a furious zeal, a 'fire in his belly' which compelled others to follow him. He had complete confidence in his ability to gain success in war. He saw the way in which he had to train his men to fight, and the few essentials which would ensure success provided his men had the right fighting spirit. Edgehill was fought in October 1642 with Cromwell as a captain of a troop of horse, sixty strong. By January 1644 he was a Lieutenant-General, second in command of Manchester's army of the Eastern Counties, the leading cavalry commander on the Parliamentary side, and the one outstanding commander in the Parliamentary army.

Cromwell was not a likeable man. He was quick-tempered; he believed in a rigid discipline and constant training; and he drove his men hard. But he believed with a blinding certainty in the righteousness of his cause, he enthused his soldiers with its righteousness, and he was convinced of his own ability to achieve success in battle. And he did achieve success; he had no failures. And if a commander has a righteous cause and gives his soldiers success, he will gain the complete confidence of his men: and then there is nothing he cannot do.

But the power which his prowess in the field had won for him led Cromwell to seize the reins of government for himself. He became impatient of the inefficiency and dilatory methods of the Parliamentary Government of those days, and he compared it unfavourably with his own ability as a soldier to give an immediate decision and to see it take shape at once in action. But, as in

battle he had been sure of the correct course of action, so in the political field he was on many occasions uncertain and perplexed.

During the period in which he ruled England, he tried out five different systems of government, and all failed. At the end he was governing alone and much more absolutely than ever Charles had attempted to rule. Internally, he taxed the people more highly and he disregarded Parliament more brazenly than Charles had ever done, and he interfered with personal liberty more tyrannously. In Ireland also, his harsh and cruel policy left a lasting hatred which the centuries have not quenched. But his rule was not wholly unproductive; he made the fighting services the finest in the world and he gained for England a voice in the affairs of Europe such as England had never had before. Many of his triumphs abroad were transient and unsubstantial, and much that he attempted at home disappeared when he died. But his work for the Navy, and his initial steps towards the creation of an empire, planted a foundation from which much has grown.

The third great captain I propose to consider is Napoleon, a leader driven by selfish and evil ambition: and not like the other two, in pursuit of a great ideal. Unlike the other two he was a soldier by profession, trained from his youth in the profession of arms; even as a very young boy in a military academy he was clearly a leader; he wished to dominate, and he did dominate, his fellow men. Again, unlike the other two, he rose at a very early age to high and independent command. At the age of 26 he took command of the army of Italy, an army inferior in numbers and equipment to its opponents, and semi-mutinous from lack of pay. Yet within

a year, with this inferior weapon which he reforged to his liking, he fought a brilliantly successful campaign in northern Italy and imposed peace on his enemies. From the moment of his arrival with his army, he dominated his troops, both generals and soldiers, and inspired them with confidence in his ability to give them success; of that ability he himself had never any doubt, and in his own self-confidence lay much of his power to inspire confidence in others.

Behind this dominating self-confidence, however, lay Napoleon's ability to see in any military problem the few essentials on which success would depend. He had the great power to simplify any problem, and to see what details were important and what were unimportant. Having grasped the essentials of the problem, and having inspired his soldiers with confidence in himself and with a high morale, he *knew* he could not fail.

Napoleon however was always as much a politician as a soldier. He had a great love of intrigue and of diplomatic bargaining, and his contempt for his fellow men and his passion to dominate them and events led him to aspire to greater things. From the time he became First Consul, political rather than military factors influenced his decisions, and his failure to reconcile his political aspirations with what was militarily possible finally led him to the disasters of Moscow and the Peninsula: from which no recovery was possible.

Now what did these three men, Moses, Cromwell, and Napoleon, have in common without which they would not have achieved success?

The most outstanding similarity was that they dominated their fellow men. They all were supremely confident that they could and would do what they set out to

do. It was to them quite simple, quite easy, and success was *absolutely* certain. This certainty gave them each the power to inspire others to follow blindly and to the limit of their strength, and this inspiration and power to enthuse others immeasurably increased the power of their forces to achieve whatever was asked of them.

From what did these men get their supreme confidence in their ability to achieve their purpose in battle? I think they got it from their ability to see their problem in its simplest form; to see the few essentials necessary to the successful solution of the problem, and to see how those few essentials could be achieved. Once they had grasped the essentials of the problem, they never lost sight of them, and they never allowed a mass of detail to submerge what was essential to success. For all military problems are in essence simple; but the ability to simplify, and to select out of the mass of detail those things and only those things that are important, is not always so easy.

Each of these men had the power to dominate other men's spirits, to inspire their enthusiasm, and to convince them of their own ability to achieve what was asked of them. This moving of men's spirits, this power to enthuse, could only be done, and was only done, by personal contact with their men. All my three examples were in close and frequent contact with their troops. They were well known, familiarly known, to them and took frequent opportunities of talking to their men. Napoleon and Cromwell certainly, and very possibly Moses too, were known to their men by nicknames and used this familiarity to help their purpose. At the same time each of these leaders knew well what the soldier was thinking and what he wanted most, and they made

always a careful study of the human factor. If a leader neglects the human factor he will fail. No man can lead others if he does not know what they are thinking and feeling.

No leader, however great, can long continue unless he wins victories. Without victories in battle all else is useless. To what then is success in battle due? In his great study of Marlborough Mr. Winston Churchill says very truly:

‘The success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models. It consists in an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work. Every great operation of war is unique. What is wanted is a profound appreciation of the actual event. There is no surer road to disaster than to imitate the plans of bygone heroes and to fit them to novel situations.’

This is indeed true. For in war no two situations are ever the same, and each situation must be tackled as a wholly new problem to which there will be a wholly new answer. You need only to look to the beginning of this war, and to the trust put in the Maginot Line; here indeed was there a failure to appreciate the new and changed technique which had arisen, and one which rendered such fortifications in themselves wholly useless.

To win victories certain qualities are necessary, and I will mention four which were possessed in greater or less measure by all the great captains of history.

These are:

- (a) The knowledge of the technique of making war.
- (b) The ability to see clearly the few essentials that are important to success.
- (c) Courage and mental robustness.
- (d) A well-balanced judgement.

The manner in which war is waged varies from age to age and with the advent of each new weapon. It is a constantly changing, constantly evolving, thing. He who aspires to high command in war must thoroughly understand the main principles which will dictate the manner in which the battle of his age will be fought; he must also be constantly on the watch for new ideas or new weapons which will affect those principles. The speed of change in military science during times of peace is often slow, and many have consequently allowed themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security; which has been rudely shattered on the outbreak of a war.

The knowledge of how to make war also implies the ability to train troops. Every great commander has himself had to forge his weapon for the task in front of him. Moses led the People of Israel for forty years in the desert teaching them how to fight, and he forged the weapon to conquer Canaan. So also Cromwell and Napoleon; they forged their own weapon for the specific task in hand, improvising and inventing as they went along so as to develop new tactics to deal with the new problems with which in their day they were faced.

No man can be a great military leader unless he has the ability to cut through overlying difficulties, and to see clearly the few essentials in any problem with which he is faced. In any problem there are never more than a few essentials which are vital *to that problem*. These must be grasped out of the mass of details and must never be lost sight of. If in battle a commander loses sight of the few essentials that matter, he will suffer defeat.

But to see the essentials clearly he must not himself get too immersed in detail. Every great commander

has had a chief of staff whose main task was the mastery of detail, thus leaving his master free to tackle the essentials of the problem together with those details, and only those details, which were vital to that problem. For though there is much detail with which a commander cannot and must not bother himself, it is interesting to note that every great commander has always concerned himself with certain of the details of his problems. Napoleon and Wellington are two good cases in point.

No man can rise to high command who has not the quality of courage. The highest form of personal courage is required rather in the leader at the lower level—he who has to plunge into the turmoil of the battle-field. The leader at the higher level has to develop his quality of courage into a mental robustness which can withstand the mental stress and strain with which he will be assailed. He must be able at all times to take a dispassionate view of the good and bad fortune which will assail him. He must not allow himself to be distracted by events, or to be led astray from his main purpose by some glittering but ephemeral prize. He must at all times maintain an unbiased view of the situation, and in battle he must be able to judge the true value of the mass of good and bad tidings which will flow in upon him. Every battle resolves itself into a tussle between the wills of the two opposing commanders. Unless he is mentally robust, a commander will not be able to force his will on his opponent. It is well for a commander to remember that no battle was ever lost until the commander thought it so.

A commander must have a well-balanced judgement: both on the battle situation and in his dealings with his subordinates. He must see the battle situation as a con-

stantly shifting interplay of forces, and he must instinctively know when to be rash and when to be cautious. He must weigh up the situation both at the moment and as it may develop in the future, and he must so fight his battle that the enemy's reactions cannot upset his plan. And although he is trying to force his will on his opponent, a commander must know when discretion is the better part of valour; his desire to dominate his opponent must not outweigh his judgement of the actual possibilities of the situation. His judgement must always be well balanced, and if it is so, and if he has good information on which to base it, he can so force the battle his way that the enemy will be forced to conform; he will in fact have wrested the initiative from the enemy.

In his dealings with his subordinates he will also require good judgement and a sound knowledge of human nature. He must choose his subordinates well; those with whom he is in frequent contact—his senior generals—he must know personally and well. He must be able to judge when to drive and when to persuade, when to be stern, and when to give praise. For all men are different and each requires handling in a different way.

The three leaders whom I have considered succeeded so long as they kept in mind their clear military purpose, and were not deflected from it by other considerations. But there is always the danger that other, and especially political, considerations will force the hand of the soldier and lead him to some action which is militarily unwise. Many battles have been fought for political and not for military reasons, and these have been the graveyard of many a soldier's reputation. The soldier is the servant of the statesman and is therefore bound to be subject

to political pressure. He must be strong enough to resist such pressure whenever it conflicts with his clear military purpose. Few statesmen will force the hand of the soldier, if the soldier very bluntly says: 'If I fight as you wish me to fight, I shall lose the battle; if I fight in my own way and in my own time, I shall win the battle.' But the soldier must be prepared to be very blunt, and he must be prepared to stake his whole reputation on success if given adequate resources and a free hand. And he must also be prepared to be very firm and to refuse to be forced to do something which he considers is not capable of being done.

In history the military leader has frequently been tempted, and has frequently succumbed to the temptation, to aspire to political leadership. The whole training and experience of the soldier makes him less rather than more fitted to be a politician. The soldier is trained to take direct action down certain well-defined lines, and has in his hand a military machine which responds immediately and with precision to his touch. The politician is trained in subtlety in debate, in weighing up the conflicting interests of his supporters, and usually has to compromise; the governmental machine is much less precise and exact than the military, and is not rapid in action even in highly skilled political hands. Now in war, if a commander compromises on essentials he fails. Furthermore the time factor forces the commander in the field to adopt the best expedient in the time available: which is usually short. The politician on the other hand is seldom forced to give an immediate decision; rather he delays in order to find the right and accurate answer, and he avoids any temporary expedient. One seizes *time* by the forelock and adopts the best expedient;

the other procrastinates in order to ensure that what he does is exactly right.

Therefore a leader, who is primarily a soldier, when he meddles with politics, loses his clear and simple military purpose; he no longer sees the essentials; he is at sea in the political world. We read that 'Cromwell in politics was muddled and perplexed, working slowly and deviously to a policy which he did not clearly see'; and again that he was 'confused and distracted'; so though he kept the political power in his own hands during his lifetime, much of what he built fell to pieces the moment he died. So also Napoleon; as long as his military purpose was uppermost in his mind he succeeded; but when political considerations dominated his policy, the desire to impose his will on Europe led him to undertake military operations which it was beyond his power to achieve.

The qualities required by a soldier and by a politician are in fact almost at opposite poles, and only a few men in history have possessed both kinds of qualities; there have not been many soldiers who have made good politicians, nor many politicians who have made great soldiers.

Before we leave the past, it is, I think, interesting to note that great military leaders have, on the whole, been few. There have been many generals of good average ability, but few who were really great. In the study of those who were great, it is interesting to note two things:

First: it required a war to produce them.

Second: that a number of them proved their greatness after a very short apprenticeship.

This suggests that the art of war, at any rate in the past, though less so now, is a relatively simple art, and

that the qualities which make a great commander are inherent rather than acquired. The character and, more especially, the will to dominate and lead his fellow men is given to few; but, given that power to lead, the ability to gain success in war can be acquired. A man may cultivate the qualities of a great leader provided that he has inherent in him in sufficient degree the character and the will to dominate; but, unless he has those inherent characteristics, he will never become a great leader however long he studies the art or the craft of war.

It is one of the phenomena of military history that events invariably produce the man. Age has little or nothing to do with it; the opportunity may come sooner to some, later to others. Napoleon was 27 when he conquered northern Italy, Wolfe was 34 when he captured Quebec; at the other end of the scale, Marlborough was 52 when he first rose to high and independent command, and Abercrombie conducted a short but brilliant campaign in Egypt at the age of 68, at the end of a long lifetime. In the careers of great generals there has always been this aspect of chance; opportunity comes at different ages and in different circumstances; some have been luckier than others, some perhaps never had the opportunity to prove their ability.

So much for the lessons of history. To-day the problems of military leadership are much the same as they have always been. I propose to tell you now some of the things that have guided me in leading the armies which have been entrusted to my command.

I would say first that a leader must know very clearly what he wants himself; he must see his objective clearly and must go all out for it; he must let everyone else

know what he wants, and what are the basic fundamentals of his policy. He must in fact give firm guidance and a clear lead; it will be necessary for him to create what I call 'atmosphere', and in that atmosphere his subordinate commanders and troops will live and work. To do this he will have to take a very firm grip on his military machine from the top; only in this way will his force acquire balance and cohesion, and so develop its full fighting potential. History has many examples of a lack of grip being taken by a commander: with the result that he failed to develop the power of which his force was capable, and so met disaster.

Having laid down the basic fundamentals of his policy, a commander must place complete trust in his subordinates and must give them freedom to carry out that policy within the framework which he has laid down. He must be prepared to decentralize, and to trust his subordinates to use their own initiative on all matters of detail. The commander himself must stand back from *the detail*, so that he can see clearly *the essentials* of his problem, and make sure that correct action is being taken on those essentials. If ever a commander allows himself to become too greatly immersed in the unimportant details of any problem, then he will fail to see the essentials clearly. -It is obvious that he must be a good judge of men, and a good chooser of subordinates; he must also have the 'drive' to get things done.

No commander will long remain in the first rank unless he achieves success. The biggest single factor making for success in war is morale. A high morale is based on discipline, self-respect, and the confidence of the soldier in his commanders and in his weapons; it is a pearl of very great price and without it no success in

battle will be achieved. A high morale is in fact a measure of the confidence of troops in their commander.

There is no book of rules which will help a commander to gain the complete trust and confidence of his men. Each commander will adopt his own methods and the ones best suited to his own personality. Suffice it to say that he must be known personally to them, and that success in battle will produce quick results; all soldiers will follow a successful general. No commander, however, will gain the confidence of his troops unless he is known, and well known, to them; they must often see him, and if possible hear him speak; a commander should take every opportunity of talking to his officers and men; it will repay him according to his worth.

There are other factors also which have a big effect on morale. The home front and the battle front are nowadays, as never before, very closely linked. If the soldier thinks that things are not well at home, he gets worried and his morale drops. In modern war the whole nation is one big team which looks for inspiration and leadership to an individual. Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin, and Hitler, have each in their own fashion given this national inspiration and leadership.

Just as success is a great stimulus to morale, so nothing lowers morale so quickly as a failure; therefore there must be no failures. Great and lasting harm can be done to morale by undertaking operations for which the troops concerned are not ready or trained, and which are likely to end in failure. I have therefore made it a rule to limit the scope of any operation to what can be achieved successfully.

Another thing that to-day has a big effect on morale is the standard of medical care which the soldiers can

expect. In the campaign in Europe which has just ended, the standard of medical care rose to heights never previously achieved in the British or any other Army, and this had a natural and great effect on morale.

A commander must make a very close study of human nature. The raw material with which he has to deal are *men*, and it is important to remember that all men are different. What a commander makes of the human material at his disposal will depend entirely on himself. I have found that every division which has fought under my command has had different characteristics; each division was good at a different type of battle, and it is vital that a commander should gauge what type of battle each is best at, and make sure that each division is at the right point when required.

The difference between divisions is based partly on the individuality of the commander of the division, and partly on the type of men of whom the division is composed. I found for instance that some divisions were outstandingly good at the break-through attack but were not so good at the deliberate set-piece affair; some divisions were best at night, some by day; for a solid killing match certain types of men were better than others—and so on. Each division develops an individuality of its own, which I consider a high commander must study.

In the same way all generals differ, and must be selected for the job in hand. No two jobs, no two problems, are ever the same, and the character of the job must be matched to that of the commander selected to undertake it. One of the most important functions of a commander in war is to make sure that he has the right man at the right place to tackle the job in hand.

If a commander thinks that all men are the same, and

he treats the great mass of human material accordingly, he will fail.

The soldiers of to-day have different standards, and require more enlightened handling, than the soldiers of bygone days. They will no longer follow blindly and unquestioningly to an unknown end. To-day, therefore, a commander must ensure that his troops always know what they are being asked to do, and how that fits in with the larger plan. I have always insisted that before a battle the essentials of the plan are known right through the chain of command, and finally down to the rank and file. The troops must know how a commander is going to fight the battle and what part they are to play in it; this must be explained to them by word of mouth, for that counts far more than the written word.

And then when the battle has been won, and the troops see that the battle has gone as the commander said it would, their confidence in the high command will be very great. This confidence is beyond price.

A commander must watch carefully his own morale. A battle is a contest between the will of the two opposing commanders; the one whose heart fails when the issue hangs in the balance will lose the battle. A commander, in fact, must throughout radiate confidence in his plan and operations, even though inwardly he may not be too sure of the outcome.

In order that he may keep clear of unimportant details, and thus have time for quiet thought and reflection, a higher commander must work through a chief of staff and thus avoid having to deal separately with the heads of all the branches. So far as I am aware the British Army is the only army which does not adopt

the 'chief of staff' system; my own experience is that it is quite impossible to exercise high command successfully in war without it. I have adopted the chief of staff system myself throughout this war, and could not have succeeded otherwise.

No officer whose daily life is spent in the consideration of details, or who has not time for quiet thought and reflection, can make a sound plan of battle or conduct large-scale operations.

The wise commander is one who uses a chief of staff, who sees very few papers or letters himself, and who sees that the majority of reports that are made to him are verbal: and short. Only in this way, giving himself plenty of time for quiet thought and reflection, will he keep himself mentally fresh, and capable of producing the sound plan of operations which will defeat his enemy. For the plan of operations must always be made by the commander, and must not be forced on him by his staff, or by circumstances, or by the enemy.

A commander must decide how he will fight the battle *before it begins*. He must decide how he will use the military effort at his disposal to force the battle to swing the way he wishes it to go. To be able to do this, his dispositions must be so balanced that he can ignore enemy reactions and continue with his own plan until he is certain of success. He has got to strive to read the mind of his opponent, to anticipate enemy reactions to his own moves, and to take quick steps to prevent any enemy interference with his own plan. He has got to be a very clear thinker, and must aim to be always one move ahead of his opponent. To do this he must simplify the problem. Whenever a problem arises, he must think out the few points which will form the

framework of the solution—the few things that will really matter. So long as the solution to the problem is based on those few things that really matter, the solution will be on the right lines.

A commander must at all times exercise personal command; that is to say he must see and give full verbal orders or instructions to his subordinate generals on how the battle is to be fought. Operational command in the field must be direct and personal. No written order can ever be the equivalent of a direct verbal command.

A commander must therefore understand how to give verbal orders to his subordinates. No two generals are the same; each will require different treatment; each will react differently. By exercising personal command, a commander can exert a far greater and more exact influence on the battle, and the confidence which will grow up between the commander and his generals will be of great value. The whole chain of command can thus and only thus be built into a united team, whose strength is based on mutual confidence and understanding. When the whole army is built into one great team, united in working 'all out' for a common purpose, the result is terrific.

Success in war is due to good team-work by all members of the fighting forces, and to the correct use which is made of all members of the team by the commander and his staff. But failure in war is always due to one of two causes: to faulty command or to bad staff work, and sometimes to both. I can think of no instance where failure has been due to a failure of the fighting man. The British fighting man will always do what is asked of him; but you must make sure that he understands

what he is asked to do, and also that it is within his capacity to do it.

Finally, I do not believe that to-day a commander can inspire great armies, or single units, or even individual men, and lead them to achieve great victories, unless he has a proper sense of religious truth; and he must be prepared to acknowledge it, and to lead his troops in the light of that truth. He must always keep his finger on the spiritual pulse of his armies, and he must be very sure that the spiritual purpose which inspires them is right and true, and is clearly expounded to one and all. Unless he does this he can expect no lasting success.

For all leadership, I believe, is based on the spiritual quality, the power to inspire others to follow; and this spiritual quality may be for good or may be for evil. In many cases this quality has been devoted towards personal ends and was partly or wholly evil; and, whenever this was so, in the end it failed. For leadership which is evil, while it may temporarily succeed, always carries within it the seeds of its own destruction.