


HALL GREEN HERALD



FIANCÉ KILLED IN TRENCHES

At the age of only twenty, Edna Snell's heart was broken when Billie Smith, the man she planned to marry, was killed in the trenches during the First World War.

She was left with a single photograph of Billie in his uniform.

Time never healed her wounds sufficiently for her to fall in love again and age did not fade her memories of her twenty-two year old fiancé. Born in

Suffolk, she moved to Dorset. There she worked in a grocery shop and then for many years as a housekeeper.

She died during January 2000 in a nursing home aged one hundred and five years. In her final days Edna lost the desire to eat but not to look at the photograph, thinking of what might have been. When staff at the nursing home in Dorset found Edna, she had in her hand the photograph. When they looked at it they found a hand-written message on the back. It read, 'With fondest love, Yours Billie, 14.10.15.' Such true stories were recounted by the million in national daily

newspapers of the times (1914-1918). A Second World War (1939-1945), and those conflicts still being waged in our own times has resulted in further loss of the lives of our 'brave boys and girls' in lands afar. The grief of families and individuals today is just as real and traumatic as that experienced long ago by Edna.

Grief is one of several human emotions. It does not recognise any boundaries. It touches all regardless of race, gender, culture, or religious belief. The presence of grief is evidence of the biblical teaching that we live in a 'fallen' world where,

despite its beauty, grandeur and apparent order, there is an underlying disorder that needs to be put right. Human nature is part of that problem and we call it, 'Man's inhumanity to Man'. At present none of us lives in a perfect world but the Bible teaches that God is still in control and that He will inaugurate a new world in a time to come. The inhabitants will exercise values that secure justice, peace, joy, a sense of total well-being and much more. Moreover, because such a new world will never come to an end the removal of conflict and all negative experiences will be permanent. The Bible teaches that through repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ we can become citizens of that kingdom. John's Gospel Chapter 3:16 tells us categorically,

'God so loved that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.'

In the light of this teaching the Christian response does not express itself in a quietest withdrawal from human responsibilities or from involvement in the problems facing our world and our immediate society. Rather the Christian who accepts these responsibilities has the immense reassurance that the just, pure and godly values which he pursues in the everyday world are reflections of the essence of God who rules and orders all things; and further, in spite of the vastness of the many problems which confront us, these values are destined to

endure in the new age of God's rule which is to appear.