

## The Undercurrent of the Times.

In the early chapters of the prophet Zechariah there ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> a series of visions which are interpreted to the prophet as symbolizing the shattering of nations , the rebuilding of the Temple, and the coming of a Golden Age. The central theme of this ecstatic vision is in the phrase , "Not by might , nor by power , but by my spirit , saith the ~~Lo~~ lord." This is the theme of the prophetic utterances of all ages. Amos sounds it with absoluteness of a dictator ; Isaiah tells the tale of it with the insight of a seer, and micah's phrase, "let justice roll down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream has become a stock phrase. But not alone in Israel, but among all nations and all religions, in all times down to our very own, there has been this same note, now expressed in the form of pious exhortation, and yet again sounded in the word of the zealot, and not infrequently in the ~~vain~~ sayings of the statesman., the reformer and the philosopher.

This same contrast I wish to set before you in two very pungent passages from Prof. Foster's great book, "The Finality of the Christian Religion". He is contrasting the various orthodoxies, not merely the religious, but the political and social as well. In these orthodoxies in whatever form the characteristics are the same.

"Primacy of the intellect in man; the ascetic-contemplative life the highest life; knowledge the chief good; dogma or sound doctrine the essence of Christianity and the content of revelation, such content guaranteed by infallibility of pope or book, whose credentials are necessarily miraculous; saving faith, first of all holding things to be true because pope or book says so, the finality of the Christian Religion consisting in the miraculously authenticated divinity of its doctrines-- this is all of a piece and ~~fits~~ it all ~~fits~~ fits into the old Graeco-Roman ~~world~~ and ~~the~~ mediaeval world, with its static cosmology, and its static Empire, and hierarchy over the



spirit." Such to Prof Foster is the nature of all orthodoxies, ~~contrast~~ the product of and expressing the fundamental principle of authority characteristic of the Graeco-Roman, the mediaeval, and all authority institutions, not only ancient but their lenial descendents of the modern world.

Contrast with that world view his exposition of the modern world whose principles seek establishment in the present. " The primacy of the will in ~~religion~~ man ; the practical moral <sup>life</sup> ~~ness~~ the highest ~~good~~ life ; character the chief good ; ideals the essence of ~~revelation~~ the Christian Religion, and the content of revelation, which latter is the history of great souls and the soul of history ; ideals valued teleologically, and not causally ; faith not assent, but moral action ; the finality of the Christian religion in its ideals -- This, too, is all of a piece and fits into the modern dynamic and biological world." This is the nature of the modern world that has been strug-

gling for centuries, four at least to break its way through that old absolutist world of hierarchies and empires, that was ~~xxx~~ running fell swing in the Graeco Roman and the mediaeval world. It is the basis of the conflict that is going on in your soul and mine to-day, that is going on in Europe, and also in America, -- in church, in state, in politics and in industry.

Let me quote just one more passage from the same writer a passage in which he sets forth the same contrast in a little different language. " That I am inwardly bound only by my reason and my conscience , and not by any authority out of me, this is not only the magna charta of protestantism, but the form of that inner ethical disposition which it was the merit of Jesus to organize and consummate. The deliberate repudiation of self-dependence and self accountability

The voluntary surrender to an infallible external authority, blind obedience in matters of faith and conscience--- in a word, the fore-



going in principle , of the use of my reason and my conscience-- this is tantamount to the denial of the omnipresence of God, who is Living Love and Wisdom, in the life of humanity. And to say this is entirely consistent , which we should gratefully cherish, that all men begin their development with childlike adhesion to authorities and ~~no~~ models, and that these have great ~~and~~ humane and pedagogic importance. But the doctrine of static infallibility , on the one hand, with its correlate of permanent human nonage on the other , is immoral ; and the recognition of this doctrine is no better, since its recognition is the annihilation of one's spiritual self. Consequently, not the scientific interest simply, but the religious and moral most of all, have demolished the principle of absolutism of Catholic and Protestant ~~orthodoxy~~ orthodoxy, and a further development of religion is the order of the day. Demolished, did I say ? The tree seems full fruited. Zeitgeist is a mighty support. Force, not ideals is god, and force



tends to absolutism. Absolutism in business which is , ~~which is~~ mammonism ; in government, which is militarism--- this repression of individuality, this faith in force and unfaith in ideals, is an expression in another form of the orthodoxies which build on some sort of institutional infallibility ; and the former reinforce the latter. there is an attraction and fascination on the part of each for the other. Thus the outlook for absolutism seems favorable..... Nevertheless , I do not believe in the triumph of any of these absolutisms.

The victory is not with the strong, not with force, but with ideals."

Such then is the contrast. Absolutism, mammonism, militarism, authority, obedience, ~~self~~ surrender to force, force is master. All this on the one hand, and ideals, the power of will, purpose, freedom and life on the other. Such is Froeffor Foster's exposition. Such is the statement of the same principle in Zachariah, and Jesus made this distinction the basis of his break with the times in which he lived.



"Ye cannot serve two masters, Ye cannot worship God and Mammon.

Now I have not brought these academic quotations before you for simply an academic reason , but for the very practical reason that all this contrast that I have set forth is involved in the very heart of these most searching times. I want to set forth this fundamental principle and contrast, for in the proper appreciation of this , and in the unflinching application of this principle to the small and the big problems of to-day, is to be found your worth and my worth either in throwing back human socceity into the absolutism ~~of~~ from which we have been struggling to free ourselves for at least the four hundre years since the protestant~~ism~~ reformation and the first hard blow at feudalism, or in more firmly establishing the principles of freedom and loyalty to truth which we cherish.

Nor is this problem so easy as at first thought appears. No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself.



This nation was founded under those principles of modernism which I have set forth. The declaration of Independence was the expression of the will to establish a government here for the free development of human life. Even the keen remark made while the signers of the declaration of Independence were standing around committing an act that would have cost them their lives had they failed in their undertaking expresses the essence and character of the ideal of government that was in their minds?" If we do not hang together, we will hang separately!" is at once a bon mot and the statement of a very deep and far-reaching principle. They were committing themselves to a voluntary act, and they were to stand together in the purpose that they had willed. To-day those principles upon which that nation was founded, and the nation founded upon them are involved in a gigantic struggle, more terrible than the world has ever seen. But the issues are not clear. They never are clear cut. For the moment we are not concerned with



the origins of the war, more than to state that it grew out of the conflict of Empires, of rival survivals of the Graeco Roman, and mediaeval world. In both of these survivals there were elements of the new world at work, working with increasing strength and power. These surviving elements, relying upon force and authority, instead of purpose and truth, started the conflict. In the course of time we have been brought into it, ~~under the cover of the~~ and this is the great fact that we are trying to adjust ourselves to. It is no longer a question whether we ~~like to~~ believe in war or not. It is a fact that we have to face and will have to face with greater appreciation of its reality within a very short time. We may not believe in earthquakes, but we have to face them when they come. This is the tremendous ~~that~~ fact that is involved in the personal attitude towards the war. If we support it simply because the government, says that we must, and not because we can will to support it, we are committing



what seems to me to be a treasonable violation of the spirit, the purpose, the genius of the government. If we argue ourselves into support by a lot of sophistry, we accomplish the same results. On the other hand, merely to object to the war and refuse to support it on the ground of some dogma that we have enthroned in our minds is, is equally to deny the principles of freedom, and the best tradition of the government. We have to face the thing as it is, with all its complications and its implications,- its horrible possibilities. It is a momentous issue, fraught with more possibilities for good and for evil than we can dream of. In so far as ~~xxx~~<sup>we</sup> believe in those

~~I am not a pharisee enough to say that~~  
principles, of not by might, not by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord, in those principles of the modern world that I have spoken of, those principles upon which this government was founded, our only interest is in them, and in the institutions that ~~they~~ embody them. to some degree at least.



The war was begun as a commercial, imperialistic conflict. It is ~~an~~ is going to end in revolution. I am not deceived with the idea that the Brittish Imperialistic Government ~~x~~ with its tory personnel is fighting for revolution, but the trend of events is too strong for them. The undercurrent of liberalism is breaking thorough in spite of every effort of absoluteism to hold it in check. The Russian Revolution marks the turning point of the war. It is possible that on Tuesday, May Day, the break will come.,-- if not ~~then~~ at that time, then later. That is the one certain thing that is resulting from this war. It is the last collosal folly of absolutism, whether in state, on in industry. In part it was started to forestall the inevitable victory of democracy over its crumbling strength. But it willed more than it knew. Of this at any rate, I am convinced that nothing now can stop the swelling tide of the undercurrent of the modern spirit, as it sweeps through the ruins of the industrial feudalistic absolutis



ism. ~~It~~ The spirit, the idealism set free from the prisons of Siberia will not stop until it has swept Europe.

It has been said again and again that this is a war to make democracy safe, so far as this nation is concerned. Whether that was the purpose in the minds of those who first advocated involving this nation in the war, I am not only very doubtful, but very certain that it was not. But the turn of events in Europe, and the solemn conviction of many here that such is the motive of this country, has committed this country to that motive so completely that this conviction is slowly spreading through the country, and taking a deep root. That ~~is~~ slogan may prove a great asset to those in this country who are interested in the principles of democracy. It ~~will~~ will prove powerful in settling the terms of peace. It is creating a public opinion that cannot be resisted. So, as I see it, while the war lords started the armies in motion, the liberals, those of democratic tendencies,



not to say socialists, radicals and pacifists are to have a very great share in determining the issues, and settling the terms, and binding up the wounds of the nations. The undercurrent of the times, the history of the modern world so declares. The terror and the burden of the war has put every militarist in the world on the defensive. So far as European conditions are concerned I believe that the balance of the forces indicates that the entrance of this nation into the war is really to the advantage of international democracy.

I mean by this phrase not only political democracy, but industrial democracy, For whatever else has been the result of this war it has been a burning into the people <sup>of</sup> ~~and~~ the nations, and the nations in their international arrangements, that the principle of co-operation so long the symbol of heresy, has become the great achievement in all the nations. Prof. Steinmetz spoke wisely when he said that whatever may be the military outcome of the war, the principle of co-operation



has become established, and the old fetish of competition has been over thrown. We shall see in the next few months great strides made in that same direction in this country. Even the voluntary attempts at co-operation that have been started here now are meeting with a response that is fairly astonishing. It is constructive and instructive, and based , not upon sentiment and doctrine upon upon a real economic necessity. The ~~probable~~ possible result of facing a real situation with our eyes open to its dangers, and our minds alert, and our heads clear, will be welding together of a real democratic nation , democratic in industry as in social relations.

So that is the situation as I see it. We are in this war, a war begun as a conflict between surviving empires of mediaevalism, but destined to end in a revolution that will bespeak the assertion of the great undercurrent of democracy that has been struggling for establishment in the modern world.



So it is our task to see to it that so far as this nation is represented in the conflicts of Europe, it shall have the backing, as we are able, of that purpose of a war to make democracy safe. Not one inch of conquest, either in territory or in profits, What this nation puts in shall be a contribution to the principles of democracy. ~~Stand back of that~~ No revenge, no conquest, no wiping out of nations. ~~Just~~ That such an attitude is carried out, and democracy is made safe in part as a result of our efforts, will depend upon the public opinion that obtains at home.

But that public opinion at home is a serious matter. There are elements in this country that have been working and are working against these very principles of democracy that the country stands ~~for~~ for, and that are at stake in this war. They will take every advantage possible of the stress of this time to fasten upon us ~~absolute~~ principles of absolutism, and strengthen those principles of author-

itative compulsion that are already too strongly established.

Already the attempt has been made under the cover of military necessity of suppressing free speech and making free thought a thing of reproach. All this is directly antagonistic to <sup>that</sup> democracy whose interests are at stake. There is a small militaristic clique in this country that for various reasons are pressing their propaganda.

Industrialism will seek to strengthen itself, and there will be the almost inevitable gang of ~~party thieves who will seek to~~ profiteers who will seek to make blood money out of foreign and domestic necessities. Then there is the ~~strik~~ momentous possibility that we shall become so absorbed in small things that we shall have permitted absolutism to have gained a greater control at home than is safe. All this means that we must be continually on the alert to protect the interests of democracy at home, and to prepare for the greater assertion of them, in a stronger and democratic nation after peace



shall have come. In this task, as great as any task that is before us we must keep our heads clear so that we may not mistake mole-hills for mountains, and our personal and passing opinions for big principles and fundamental issues. ~~If~~ We must take every advantage to further the practical adoption of real co-operative effort, and real democratic principle. The enemies to democracy are mammonism in business; militarism in politics ; blind faith in religion , subservience to dogma in all things. The friends to democracy are co-operation in business, co-operation in politics, fellowship in religion. These are the great issues before us. The truth shall make us free.

One thing more. The prayer of Jesus of Nazareth contains this phrase that is a real prayer to-day. Give us this day our daily bread. Around this prayer by every effort that we can make, let us ~~unite~~ weld ourselves into a great democracy. War is destructive, but even here in this question of daily bread we may find the holy grail

and the broken crust that shall bring a new light into this world now so sore distressed by its leprous disease of war. Here is a real , pressing situation where we may work for production only, and send forth the slogan of "No profits in a war for democracy". Finally when the war is over it would be a great thing to be able to pour food and nourishment ~~xxx~~ as evidences of good will into the homes of those people of the central powers, who now in the language of international law are our enemies, not to sell to them but to give to ~~xhm~~ them for the joy of the giving, for the hope that it will bring to ~~them~~, and for the new world that it will help to create.

I know that this is a sad theme. I am not going to bring it before you again, but I had to do it this morning ~~xxixix~~ that I might find my way through to a stronger a clearer light than I have seen for a long time. Is it too much to hope that out of this horrible tragedy of lust for power and wealth , there may not rise from the



ruin of crumbling empires, and falling monarchies, a new world,  
better, more just, cleaner, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my  
spirit, saith the Lord. Y? May it not be that in the trial and the  
strain that is before ~~us~~ in this nation there shall be born in us a  
~~higher~~ purified democracy, based upon ~~for~~ a real freedom, and a  
real co-operation.? In part, the answer to that wish rests with us.  
The great undercurrent of the times moves in that direction. Shall  
we give as we are able to the end that together men may live, and  
that nations shall know war no more, neither servitude, nor misery.