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## THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE

BY THE REV. DR. NEWELL DWIGHT HILLIS.

In Plymouth Church, the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, preached on "The Verdict of the People," the last sermon in the series on "The Nations War." The text was in the words: "From whence come wars? Come they not from your own lusts?" Dr. Hillis said: "Nearly five months have now passed by since the German army invaded Belgium and France. These 140 days have been packed with thrilling and momentous events. While from their safe vantage ground the American people have literally crumpled under our eyes. Europe is a loom on whose loom then framework demagogic forces like Frederick the Great, Bismarck and Napoleon once wove the texture of European civilization. Now the demon of war has, with hot knife shorn away the texture, and a modern czar and Kaiser, king and president, with generals and admirals, are weaving the warp and wool of a new world. One hundred years ago the forces that breakers were political forces; today, their collision between nations is born of economic interests. The Twentieth Century influences are chiefly of force of wealth and the force of public opinion. These are the giant steels in the hands of kings and Kaisers. In Napoleon's day antagonism grew out of the natural hate of autocracy, of democracy, of German imperialism for French radicalism. Today, Germany is not even interested in France's republican form of government, nor is France concerned with Germany's imperialism. But all Europe is intensely concerned with the question of economic supremacy or financial subordination.

#### England's Naval Supremacy

Ever since Oliver Cromwell's day England has been the mistress of the seas, and Germany is envious and jealous that she has not the equal of England in this naval leadership. France has long been the banker of Europe, and Germany covets financial leadership. From whence comes wars? Come they not from men's lusts? Now that long time has passed it is quit certain that neither Napoleon nor Bismarck nor William the Second understood the future. It is a proverb that yesterday is a seed, today it stalk and tomorrow is the full corn in the ear. Napoleon was a practice man, but he could not see the shoe in the seed. When Napoleon died One hundred years from now Europe will be all republican or all Cossack. Napoleon was quite wrong. Forty years ago Bismarck said that he had reduced France to the level of a fourth-class nation, and that henceforth France did not count; while a year later he said, "The whole Eastern question is not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier." Bismarck was quite wrong. The present Kaiser has no imagination; he has no vision of the future. He might have foreseen, that any attack upon England would settle the Irish question; that any treaty with Turkey would force Italy, as Turkey's enemy in the late Italian-Turkish war, to break with Germany; any man with the least instinct for diplomacy might have known that the twentieth century was increased by an enemy's overpass upon his property in Belgium would have resisted or crocheted, and so cost German the best three weeks of the entire war. If the history of great war tells us anything, it tells us that the first qualification of a statesman and diplomat is an intuitive knowledge of a future, the certain outcome of the present. There has been no foresight on the part of the makers and advisers of this war. Year ago, when the Austrian Emperor visited Innsbruck, the Burgomaster ordered foresters to go up on the mountain sides and cut certain swarths of brush. At the moment the man with his axe did not know what he was doing, but when the night fell, a torch was lighted on the boughs, the people in the city below read these words written in letters of fire, "Welcome to our Emperor." Today the demon of war has been writing with blazing letters certain lessons upon the hills and valleys of Europe, and fortunate is that youth who can read the writing and interpret aright the lessons of the times.

#### America Now Realizes the Real Meaning of Imperialism and Militarism

The people of the republic now realize for the first time what are the inevitable fruits of imperialism and militarism. One of the perils of America's distance from the scenes of autocracy is that our people have come to think that the forms of government are of little importance. We hear it said that climate determines Government, and that one nation likes autocracy and another limited monarchy that we like democracy self-government and that the people are about as happy under one form of control as another. This misconception is based upon a failure to understand foreign imperialism. Superficially, the fruits of autocracy are efficiency, industrial wealth and military power. But now after nearly five months of constant discussion, our people understand thoroughly the other side of imperialism. The 6,000,000 of German-Americans living in this country, with their high type of character millions who have left their native land to escape service in the army, the burdens of taxation involved in militarism, and the law of less majesty, should have opened our eyes long ago. During the past five years, I have lectured in more than one hundred cities on the New Germany, and the lessons derived from her industrial efficiency, with the application of science to the production of wealth, but I did not appreciate fully the far off harvest of militarism. And lest an American over-state the meaning of militarism let me condense Treitschke's view. He holds that the nation should be looked upon as a vast military engine; that its ruler should be the commander of the army; that his cabinet should be under general orders; that the whole nation should march with the force of an armed regiment; that the real "sin against the Holy Ghost" was the sin of military impotence; that such an army should take all it wants and the territory it needs and explain it afterward. Manufacturers are essentially inventors of cannons and guns and dreadnoughts incidentally self-supporting men. Bankers are here to finance the army and incidentally to make money. Physicians are here to heal the wounded soldiers. Gymnasts are founded to train soldiers. Women are here to breed soldiers, and militarism is the path that will bring Germany to her place in the sun. The youth is first of all to be a soldier, and incidentally to be a man. No one has indicted Germany's militarism in stronger language than has the distinguished German-American Karl Schurz. In words that burn the great statesman expressed his hatred of the imperialism and militarism against which he helped to organize a revolution, that led to his flight to his country. Of late, Americans have been asking themselves certain questions.

#### The American Ideal Versus the German

What will be the result if Germany is allowed to seize any smaller state whose territory and property she covets? Is all Europe to become an armed camp? What is the meaning of this German professor's article in the North American Review, written two or three years ago, in which he says that once she is victorious here, the Monroe Doctrine will go and the United States will receive the "thrashing she richly deserves?" Must we then go over to the military ideal? If Germany supports 8,000,000 soldiers out of 65,000,000, must we withdraw from protective industry 12,000,000 men for at least two or three years? Must we start our young life of ten dreadnoughts a year instead of building ten colleges and universities for the same sum of money? Of late Americans who love their country have been searching their own hearts. Merchants hitherto allied with commerce are asking themselves whether this country is rising in Germany? Must we become a vast military machine? The military question is a subject of discussion on the street cars and in the stores, at the dining room table. No titles in paper and magazine are so eagerly read and analyzed. The American ideal is not a military machine, but a high quality of manhood, a man free, with the gift of self-expression, to make men use through the public school and the press; to make men self-sufficient and happy in their homes, through freedom of industrial contracts; to make men sound in their manhood through religious liberty for Jew and Gentile, and Catholic and Protestant; to see our national ideals, America stands at the other pole of the universe from imperialism and militarism. So from being willing to desert the old faith of the fathers, this war has confirmed our confidence in self-government. Liberty to grow, freedom to climb as high as industry and ability will permit, liberty to analyze and discuss the views of President, Congress, Government—these are our rights. A military autocracy there can be no liberty of the printing press. If a man criticizes the Kaiser, he goes to jail; a republican, if Horace Greeley criticizes Abraham Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln does not send the great editor to jail, but writes the latter, "My ardent object is to save the Union," and indicates himself at the bar of the nation. An American editor or citizen would choose to die in Germany. He could not breathe because of the mephitic gases of imperialism and militarism. For a long time some of us did not realize what was involved but now we do realize the difference between the fruits of democratic self-government and the fruits of military autocracy.

#### THE DEATH OF THE TRIBAL GOD IDEA.

III. This great war and one or two of the leaders thereof have killed the old tribal idea of God. In the Twentieth Century it seems almost ludicrous to find that the conception of the ancient Hebrews is still held by some rulers. Be the reasons what they may, of late there has been a strange recrudescence of the tribal God idea. This is the Twentieth Century, not the Tenth! Think of a man sending his soldiers into Belgium, saying: "Make yourselves as terrible as the Huns of Atilia, and the Lord our God will give you victory." Just as if God were not the God of the whole earth, a distinguished God, a God who makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon all His children, without regard to race or clime or color. Why, it is as artless as the way the old Hebrew peasant called on God to blast his enemy's field, and drown his children with floods, and smite his herds with the plague. The tribal idea of God belongs with the ox cart, the medicine man and cave dweller. This is an era of science. Whatever is true is universal, not racial. If the heart beats and the blood circulates in a German soldier's veins, the blood flows in the veins of the people of England and France. If the earth goes around the sun in Berlin, the earth goes around the sun in Petrograd and Edinburgh. If there are seven rays in the sunbeam, why, the discussion is closed, and it is a universal fact. And if Jesus was right when He said, "God is our Father, and all the races are our brothers, and the world has been fitted up by God as an Eden garden for His children," then no man or ruler should ever adopt the view of the peasant and the cave man, and try to make the Eternal God a tribal God. The unconscious humor to the statements of one or two men as to their tribal God idea has added to the gavity of nations. But when any view is laughed at, it is doomed. From the very moment that the doctrine of election, that made God love a few aristocrats and pass the non-elected as being a matter of joke in the comic papers, that theory was dead. Not otherwise is it with this idea of a tribal God. When Barry Painé begins to say,

and death, and a poor man who had one pet lamb. It came to pass that a stranger claimed the right of hospitality at the rich man's palace, and the king sent out and took the poor man's one lamb and gave it for food to the stranger. And, soon or late, the time will come when history will tell the story of Germany taking little Belgium, and conscience, like a prophet, will indict the militarism that seized the one lamb that belonged to the poor man. This episode is not closed. The German representative who says that Belgium is a part of Germany may be right in terms of future government and war, but the incident has just begun in the memory of the soldiers who never can forget that they first broke their sacred treaty, and then, when the Belgian defended his home as his castle, butchered the man, who died with a sacred treaty in his hand. Why, all over the land, teachers, fathers, editors, authors have found it necessary to say to the young men and women of the Republic: "Do not sign your name to an obligation unless you intend to keep it." Keep your faith. Remember that your word given should be as good as your bond. "Swear to your own hurt, and change not." All this is inevitable, as the result of Germany's trespass upon the property of the Republic, the State is every thing and the individual nothing. In this Republic the individual is first and the State is here to safeguard his rights, and to see to it that no one trespasses upon his property. The time will come when the nation that breaks its treaties and sows to the wind, shall of that wind reap the whirlwind. It is an awful thing for a nation to make it inevitable that hereafter when other people sign a treaty with that country that our representatives shall say: "Before we sign this treaty with you, we wish to ask one question. Later, if it is to your interest to break this treaty is this document to be sneered at as a scrap of paper? Or does this treaty mean the faith of a nation that will rather than break its word, given before the tribunal of civilized States?"

#### THE RIGHTS OF SMALL STATES AND THE SIN OF TRESPASS.

II. The last five months have brought a new realization to American citizens as to the rights and liberties of small States. In the Republic, the sin of trespass is one of the heaviest of sins. A man's home is his castle, a citadel that cannot be invaded even by the power of the State, so deep is the American hatred of trespass against property rights that imperialism finds it impossible to understand this. Here the individual is king of kings in his native right, and the United States. We have one hundred millions of people, and Canada has millions. We need many things that Canada has, but it is intellectually unthinkable that "we should take what we want and explain afterward," or that we should violate our treaty guaranteeing neutrality to Canada. Our frontier line is three thousand miles long. There is not a fort from Maine to Victoria. If we adopted Germany's position we would have to build one thousand forts, withdraw two million young men from the farm, factory, store and bank, and load the working people with taxes to support them. In a free land, and in God's world, there should be a place for the poor man and for the small nation. In the olden time there was a king who had herds

man race with their peculiar ideas ought not to try to govern the French race. It is an expensive experiment. It is an impossible experiment. The plan is doomed to failure in advance. And when the day of payment comes, it is quite certain that the question at issue will not have been settled by arguments of soldiers. They must finally be settled by an appeal to some court of arbitration that will do justice and love mercy; that will insist upon the rights of the smaller States, and make it impossible for the great ones of the earth to trespass upon the property and liberties of brave little peoples.

#### IMPERIALISM AND AUTOCRACY SEEM TO CONFUSE MEN'S JUDGMENTS.

V. Out of the smoke of battle another lesson is written for all who have eyes to read. In view of the mistakes made by men who have absolute power, it is now certain that exemption from criticism is a bad thing for any man and that endless adoration destroys the ruler's power to think in straight lines. There never lived a man who was not injured by perpetual compliments. Strong men are willing to pay cash for criticism. Flattery will conceal the weakness, and they know that pitiless criticism will expose the danger and perhaps save them. No man is so unfortunate as the man who is put on a throne lifted up beyond the reach of plain truth telling. It is doubtful if so many blunders were ever made by statesmen and diplomats as were made at the beginning of this war. Just think of one government being wrong in all these particulars at the same time! Lincoln said, "You can't fool all of the people all of the time." Yes, that may be true in a republic, but you certainly can fool all the diplomats and generals and do it all the time—during July and August, at any event. Call the roll of the diplomatic blunders, and the list is long. First, England will be neutral and Ireland will keep her from going to war. Second, Italy will be our ally. Third, Belgium will be neutral. (Continued on page twelve)

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