

When Tomorrow Comes

I suppose that with the steady progression of the war, there is one day yet ahead that all of us look to with a deep yearning in our hearts. It is that day when there shall be flashed across the vast regions of this world the news that an armistice has been reached. What do you suppose that our reaction here will be? Do you think that we shall shout and celebrate and swarm the streets in frenzied joy? Or will some of us fall to the earth wherever we are and in deep solemnity give thanks unto God? At any rate it is a day which all of us will receive with joy and thankfulness for we long for this struggle to cease and then to have the sight of our young men once again marching through our city streets, having come home to live again. There are many tomorrows yet ahead of us, but that is the one we wish for above all. And when that tomorrow does come, will we be ready?

Recently I came across this poem:

"Let tomorrow take care of tomorrow, -
Leave things of the future to fate;
What's the use to anticipate sorrow?-
Life's troubles come never too late!

(from "Imaginary Evils" by Charles Swain,
p. 418 in Bartlett's)

Now I must confess that I find myself in complete disagreement with the attitude expressed in that poem. Oh, you may say to me, "Did not Jesus say, 'Take no thought of tomorrow for the morrow will take thought of itself'?" And certainly he did. But what Jesus meant is most often misunderstood by people. His thought was something quite different from that expressed in this poem. I have no faith in the idea of this poem. I have no faith in it

because I know that it is necessary to take care of tomorrow today. It is important that we anticipate sorrow. Life's troubles do come too late. Each of us here knows that to be a fact. We have all had the experience of remorse in which we realized that had we planned for the future the future would have been much more fit to live in.

But when this momentous tomorrow of ours comes, will we be ready? When these boys come marching back into our streets, our work shops, our churches, and our homes, are we going to be ready for them? Is there anything for which we must get ready? Or will the same old plans, the same old life, the same city and home and church be all right? Personally, I think that all of these same old thing will NOT be all right!

Of course, when that eventful day does come everyone will be rushing around to receive the honored men by sweeping away the dust here and there. Everything will be put in place, The city will be brightly decorated in honor of the returning veterans. Bands will play, and people will be shouting and rejoicing. But what about deep within, deep underneath that veneer of welcome? Will there be any fundamental changes there that will prevent the hours of celebration fading into dullness and despair as the days pass?

When tomorrow comes and the mantle of this world's suffering is lifted - even for a moment, are we going to be ready?

One thing is positively certain. THE WORLD WILL BE DIFFERENT. I am sure that most of us will want it to be different. Out of the fiery crucible of this war there will undoubtedly come new thoughts, new attitudes, and newer and different patterns of living. And I am sure that all of us will want it to be different at least in the interest of preventing another world-wide debacle in twenty

five years hence. There are certain things in this world - all of them categorized in the horrors of war- which will need to be destroyed and ridden forever from our world.

Someone has said that when God wanted to rid the planet of the horrible monsters that existed in pre-historic times, he did not choose to do so by spilling poison^{gas} upon the face of the earth. Rather he ~~rid~~ the world of them by changing the atmosphere, the climate so that they could no longer live. You see that is what we might do. All of the poisons of our warfare will have failed. But if we change the climate of ~~the~~ the world from that of selfishness, greed, hatred, pride, fear and mistrust, to that of cooperation, helpfulness, and love for all peoples, perhaps THEN war will be destroyed because it simply cannot live in that kind of an atmosphere.

Once there was a politician skirting around the sides of a large, excited crowd. Nervously he asked someone, "Where are these people going?" I don't know," was the reply. Again, and again he asked the same question, of many different people, but no one knew. Finally he said in desperation, "But I must know where they are going. I am their leader!" And that is characteristic of our position today. Here we are Christian people in the most influential nation in the world. They say we are looked to as the leaders of the future world peace. Everyone is excited and clamoring to know where the world is going. But oftentimes even the leaders, those who ought to know, those who possess the ideals to know, are not aware of the direction. Friends, we here are Christian people in a Christian church. If there is any group of people in a city like this who ought to be leading in the right directions, it is we. But when tomorrow comes, will we the Christian people, know where to lead and what to believe in? In this very community we are the citizens and the parents who sent these boys

with our blessings and then hung service flags in the windows. Now shall we allow our own stupidity to keep us from making the proper provisions for them WHEN TOMORROW COMES.

When that momentous day in the future does come, the world and all of the individuals will be facing great decisions. The world will be deciding what course of human affairs it will be pursuing for the next decades. And each individual in that world must determine what his part is to be. I once heard of a tourist who came to a detour in the road. At that moment he faced a particularly uninviting and unimproved stretch of rutted roadway. He spotted a sign there which read:

"Choose well your rut, Because you will be in it for a long time".

That is precisely the kind of a sign that our world is facing, and it ~~will~~ should make us more careful and thoughtful concerning the choices we make now.

This morning, then, I want each of you to consider this matter not as being someone else's responsibility, but as being your own. It is an intensely personal matter. And therefore when we consider the question of our readiness WHEN TOMORROW COMES let us seach our lives together and seeetiftin three areas we are ready and prepared.

-I-

Will we be MORALLY read? Most of us have not been hurt to any consierable degree by the exigencies of this war. Rather we have gone on pretty much in the same routine. Business as usual!

If anything, we have taken advantage of the war. Many salaries and wages have been ~~expanded~~; there have been more steady wages and incomes in general; with more money we have been able

to buy more of the world's goods. We have even seen the despicable practice of large groups of people taking advantage of a wartime setup to strike on the job in the interest of gaining higher wages and more benefits. So you see, really, we have not suffered much.

On the contrary the war has done something to our morality. It may sound strange, but it is true. People who act like many of us have in wartime cannot possibly retain their high moral status. Many people have remarked that the government is making them dishonest. What has really happened is that we have allowed the government to make us dishonest, and it has. One would naturally think that in wartime when people are being murdered in mass; while other people are straving and sacrificing everything they are and have that we should tighten up the strength of our own morality and endeavor to live righteously. But such has not been the case.

When that tomorrow comes will we be able to boast of the immorality that stalks through our city. Think of the dreadful neglect of children, the expanding problems of delinquency that are reproted everywhere in this nation. Think of the drunkenness that one sees on the city streets where people have let down the last support of their morality. Think for a moment that in wartime the same corrupt political practices can continue in our city governments. Think, will you, just for a moment, that last summer when young men of our own country and city were dying life flies the world over that the citizens of our territory could go to a race track here and play over a million dollars in one day on horses! It is almost inconceivable, but you see that we do need to search our inner lives and ask ourselves honestly if our morality is fit for that day when tomorrow comes.

And then let us ask ourselves if we have the moral fibre within us to face our returning men when tomorrow comes and help them to build that "brave new world" of which we speak so glibly. We do have a moral responsibility to the present and to the future!

-II-

Will we be mentally prepared? When the men return from this war, they are going to be able to think in world terms. During the years in which they have dwelt on all of the nations beneath the skies their minds have been reshaped on the anvil of the world.

I once heard a speaker call upon his listeners in this manner: "Lengthen the radius of your mind!" It seems to me that that is what we must do if we are going to keep apace of the world developments in these days.

It is experience itself that causes the necessity for the widening and expanding of one's mind. For instance the ancient Hebrews believed at one time that God could be worshipped only in the Temple. But when they were carried away as captives into Babylonia, far from their beloved Temple, they had to decide whether they could still worship their God - apart from the Temple. They were forced, by experience, to lengthen the radius of their minds.

The ancient Greeks used to say that no city should become any larger than could be heard by one voice.

Under Alfred the Great, in the Ninth Century, it was said that the inhabitants of England for the first time learned to think of England as a whole. Formerly they had all been concerned about thinking of their individual states - Wessex, Sussex, and Northumberland. Again, these are the changes in our mental activity that we shall

find it necessary to make.

Perhaps the most difficult thing for a person to do in all of his experience is to lengthen the radius of his mind. It is mental pain. But because we live in a vastly reshaped world in which all peoples must live closer together, we shall have to make that adjustment. Certainly the young men of this world will be coming back to our community with their minds greatly reshaped. Shall we continue to think only in terms of our own precincts?

I am going to be mighty careful for wisdom & votes in the election.

You see the whole idea of this Bishops Crusade is an attempt to get people to envision the world in its new proportions. It is an attempt to get people to lengthen the radius of their minds. It is all being planned and prayed for because of the fearful wave of isolationism that is sweeping this country. It is more alarming than most people think. Isolationism is the product of that mind which has a small radius. The isolationists are those who think that America can protect itself best by withdrawing to itself and refusing to cooperate with other nations. It is against the growing power of this idea that you will be asked to voice your opinion to your senators and representatives in Washington.

When tomorrow comes will we be mentally fit for the new world?

-III-

Will we be spiritually alive? When that tomorrow comes I am sure that much of the so-called fox-hole religion will need buttressing in the new world. Much of that kind of religion is of the last ditch variety, pervaded by magic. It will need to be rooted more deeply in the true soil of a vital relationship with God. Now will we have maintained the spiritual glow in our lives so that we will become the spiritual benefactors of our returning men?

This brings us closely in touch with the responsibility of our church. I have heard it said that "the church must be the bridge over which the world must pass from war to true democracy". Maybe you do not believe so. Maybe you believe that the state should perform that function. But it is my firm conviction that without the church there will be no bridge at all.

The Chief of Chaplains for the United States Army, William R. Arnold, has released the results of a survey taken by overseas chaplains. It endeavored to find out from a number of chaplains what they thought that local congregations could do for the man on foreign soil. The eight suggestions are these:

1. Pray for those absent at war.
2. Write to them.
3. Write to their chaplains.
4. Send devotional helps - church bulletins, Bible lessons, etc.
5. Keep in touch with their families. Strengthen them.
6. Honor them in stated services.
7. Show interest in the return of those on furlough or sick leave.
8. Keep the churches worth returning to.

It is this last suggestion that arrests our attention and challenges us to be ready when tomorrow comes.

It was the considered opinion, I think, of the 1600 people gathered at Worcester two weeks ago that in Jesus Christ - in whom there is no East nor West - we have a Champion, a Prince of Peace to offer to the world. It was believed there that this Christ, and his plan for a world of the brotherhood of men, was not some far off dream - some unreal fantasy, but an actual, real, living hope and possibility for the world. If we believe that, you and I, then we shall assume our spiritual responsibility for the day in the future.

At the peace conference in the ~~place~~ palace of Versailles in 1919, there was a man who pled insistently and fervently for a kind of a peace settlement that best represented Christianity. His name

was Woodrow Wilson. He fought a losing, but a spirited battle. One day as~~t~~ this man Wilson was describing the kind of a peaceful world in which men could live together in harmony and happiness--the kind of a world for which he was pleading, an old cynic of a leader across the table, taunted him ~~in/this~~ with this remark:

"Oh, he talks like Jesus Christ!"

My friends, it is my hope and prayer that more of our leaders will talk like Jesus Christ. Now, you and I have the opportunity of encouraging them in that end.

In New York City there is an office composed of 1000 young men whose job it is to compose the messages of propaganda and counter-propaganda which are broadcast to occupied Europe every day. This is a most difficult task for they must be composed in many languages, and there is a great risk taken that the people who receive them in occupied Europe will be apprehended and punished for listening. On the wall~~x~~ in the room where these young men work, where they may always see it, is this sign:

"Would a man risk his life for what I am writing?"

Let us ask ourselves simply, would anybody risk his life for the way we are living now, the message that we are proposing in our hearts and on our lips?