

THE CHURCH AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER

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IT must be nearly twenty-five years since I had the privilege and honor of speaking in the pulpit of Fort Massey; and I want to begin by thanking Mr. Sinclair, both for his all too kind words of introduction and for his invitation to address this congregation for the second time.

The old international order collapsed in the course of the First World War, and a new order was born at Versailles, when the League of Nations came into being. We then had a world organized to keep the peace, and to promote human welfare. I do not intend to discuss the details, but I shall mention briefly its four essential elements:

The *first* was the covenant of the League of Nations, out of which came the League; with a membership of 63 nations; the Assembly; the Council; the Secretariat; and, other related provisions, the International Labor Organization.

The *second* was the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice accepted by 53 nations, 45 of which assumed the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court by adopting the optional clause.

The *third* was the General Act of 1928, adopted by 28 countries, whereby they undertook a universal legal obligation to settle their disputes by peaceful means: conciliation, judicial settlement or arbitration.

The *fourth* was the General Treaty for the Renunciation of War (the Kellogg Pact) of 1928, adopted by 63 nations, which, thereby, renounced war as an instrument of international policy.

It is unnecessary for me to review the history of the years between the wars. You are familiar with the story of substantial achievements and advances made at Geneva; and you are even more conscious of the tragic failures, culminating in the Second World War.

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Long before the collapse of Germany, statesmen in the Allied Countries were planning the form of the New International Order; and these plans took shape, even before the conclusion of hostilities, in the constitutional documents that established the United Nations as an organization. I am going to refer to the new position as the New International Order, although it is, in reality, a second phase of a new order in which the League system constituted the first phase.

You are familiar with the details of the United Nations Organization, and I shall content myself with certain broad comparisons between the League system and the New International Order; between the Covenant, the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice, the General Act and the Kellogg Pact, on the one hand; and, in contrast, the constitutional documents of the United Nations.

When we turn to the New International Order, we find it embodied in two instruments; the Charter of the United Nations, and the Statute of the International Court of Justice. The new statute is so much like the old and the position and functions of the new Court are so much like those of the Permanent Court that it is possible for us to concentrate our attention upon the Charter. The first thing that we note is that principles, like those which were in the General Act and the Kellogg Pact, are embodied in the Charter and not contained in separate documents. Our second discovery is the remarkable resemblance between the new machinery and the old. Instead of the League Assembly, we find the General Assembly of the United Nations, with like constitution, but less power and authority. Replacing the council of the League is the Security Council—in continuous session, with enhanced power and responsibility. The Secretariats might well be Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Commissions of the League give place to Councils, with augmented powers and functions: Economic and Social, and Trusteeship. The third point is that the Court is related to the General Assembly and Security Council, but independent; and that other international organizations are brought into relationship with the United Nations under the Economic and Social Council.

Superficially, it might seem that we had merely changed names and shuffled functions. A closer study will show that the Charter represented a sincere desire to profit from the lessons of the past and to avoid the weaknesses which led to the collapse of the League system. The failure of the past had been ascribed to the reluctance of the great growers to give adequate leadership

and support. The general pattern of the Charter was designed to insure paramount influence to the most powerful nations, and thus to enlist their support. In matters of detail—in continuity in the Security Council, special security provisions, provisions for the Military Staff Committee and agreements for military support—all pointed to determination to make the Charter work and to avoid the cumbersome procedure that had failed to save Ethiopia in 1936.

Here we might be tempted to say—so much so good. Why have we not recaptured and even surpassed the confidence that inspired us in the twenties? Why has optimistic faith given way to pessimistic distrust?

Let us look at this problem. Many critics would be inclined to suggest that the lack of confidence is due to the shortcomings of the new peace system. Such suggestions are not helpful, because as a matter of fact the scheme was the only one that could be put through. If you analyze the more recent criticisms you will find that they are directed, in the main, at the way in which the system has been worked by the member nations, and not at the organizational structure.

We need to dig deeper to find the cause of the present anxiety. Many men, in many countries, studied the failure of the League system, and discovered many causes. There was one fundamental cause, which appeared in all the studies which I have examined. It was the failure to develop in the international community and in the nations composing that community the moral factors that are needed to make a peace system work. Some men called it lack of world opinion, or lack of leadership by the great powers, others referred to the unwillingness of small powers to accept responsibility, but it all comes back to the moral element in national policies, which, in turn, is a reflection of the moral qualities in the lives of the men and women who constitute the nations and shape the national policies. There is no doubt that a study of the conditions that have prevailed over the last four years would disclose the same causes, which have led to the prevalent anxiety and misgivings.

In the field of international relations, as in our private lives, there is a hedonistic paradox. No nation can achieve its own true national interest by seeking it, either by monastic isolation or by piratical aggression. It is only in a condition of world well-being that an individual state can secure its own national welfare; and it is only by advancing world welfare that a particular nation can prosper. From a long term point of

view, true national self interest, can be stated in the language of the Sermon on the Mount. This brings us inevitably to the conclusion that international good will is not merely right; it is the indispensable foundation for the New International Order.

There is most urgent need for recognition by nations, and by the men and women who constitute nations, that good-will and justice are the only effective basis for international relations, and that international policy must be dominated by determination to promote the common welfare of the international community. With good-will, justice and determination to promote human welfare on a world-wide scale, an international community cannot fail; without them it cannot succeed.

We now come from the New International Order to the Church, and we must look, objectively, at the facts of life. We are now dealing with an aspect of my subject in which I hesitate to dogmatize and am reluctant to draw conclusions. I can, however, present to you a series of factual propositions, and leave it to you to think about them, and to draw your own inferences.

My first factual point or proposition is that up to the present phase of human history, no man had devised or discovered any effective substitute for religion as a source of the moral qualities in men and women that are essential to survival. In modern life, there are only three agencies concerned with the development of moral factors. They operate upon individuals; men and women, boys and girls. They are the church, the primary agency; and the two secondary agencies, the school and the family to the extent to which they are animated by principles derived from the church. If rightly directed, these agencies strengthen and nurture men and women of good will and high moral purpose, and multiply their numbers. If they fail, the disintegration of religious life, the decadence of culture, and the consequential eclipse of the home create a spiritual and moral vacuum into which new and vicious materialistic philosophies find easy entry. The story of the past two decades on Germany indicates that materialistic philosophy put to the test of being actually applied, is unlikely to promote peace on earth, good will toward men. Before leaving this first point I should like to cite a surprising admission by an old friend of mine, Dr. Ernest Hooton, Professor of Anthropology at Harvard. In *Apes Men and Morons* (p. 6) he says:

I am convinced that religion, wholly irrespective of the validity of its tenets, is a most efficacious and probably indispensable instrument for shaping a decent human society.

My second point is that, as a matter of historical fact, the Christian religion was the corner-stone of Western Civilization. Nearly nineteen hundred years ago, a missionary unprepossessing in appearance and halting in speech, but not lacking in spiritual, intellectual and literary gifts, brought to little groups in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, in Corinth, and, as a jail-bird in Imperial Rome, the good news of a new way of life, which, in the course of historical process, transformed the Roman world, and gave birth to Western Civilization. One cannot formulate a metaphor and use it as a premise, but it is more than a figure of speech to state that the foundation of Western Civilization is a moral substructure bedded in the Christian Religion. It is historic fact. Without the moral basis, I doubt whether our way of life can be maintained. No evidence has been produced by any iconoclast that suggests, let alone proves, that such a way of life can continue without moral foundation. If we want to keep our freedom and democratic way of life, we must look to their moral and religious source.

You may be inclined to suggest that this point is irrelevant. We are considering the New International Order, and not Western Civilization. It is and it isn't. We are not examining the question of Western Civilization, and, in the sense, my second point is irrelevant. On the other hand, I suggest that you look at the Charter. If you examine the Preamble and the Purposes set forth in Article I, you will see that they express, in lawyer's jargon, the moral principles that were expounded in the Sermon on the Mount and compressed into three words in the Lord's Prayer—"Thy kingdom come." If you analyze and study the Charter as a whole, including the Statute of the International Court of Justice, you will see that it presupposes the acceptance by the component nations of the ethical conceptions and precepts that are the common heritage of the Western World.

My third point is more complex. The United Church of Canada has at least one thing in common with my own church. No member of any congregation remains awake for a "fourthly". Reluctant as I am to cheat a Fort Massey congregation, it is necessary to wrap my "fourthly" up with my third point, with resultant complexity and logical confusion.

Roughly speaking, my third point touches the question whether the church is up to her job.

You are probably thinking about your own limitations. You may well be murmuring to yourselves: "We are all holy in Halifax; but holiness in Halifax is not enough". The United

Church of Canada can insure that the men and women of Canada and its government accept good-will as the paramount factor in national and international policy; but good-will in Canada is not enough. Obviously not; but we are not alone. In every one of the United Nations there are forces of evil, highly organized at work; but, in every one, there are men and women, schools and churches, underground or in the open deeply concerned with the promotion of spiritual and moral value. The Roman Catholic Church and my own, the Baptists, are universal in character with direct links throughout the world. Your own church, the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, and other communions in this country are closely related to similar religious movements in other countries. You cannot strengthen the church in Canada without giving aid and comfort to those movements throughout the world, which are building up the moral forces which alone can save mankind.

I have not specially mentioned the missionary enterprises of the church, which are vital to the life of the church as well as to the general objective that we have been discussing. I do not want you to think I have overlooked their primary importance, but I can't cover everything in one talk.

I am thus brought squarely up against my inadequately disguised "fourthly." Is the church, in this day and generation, up to her job? Here, I am not thinking of Fort Massey or the United Church of Canada. I am thinking of the church in a wider sense of the term.

You and I are inclined to take a dim view of the church, and to underrate its potential power. We have seen the church on the run, in disastrous retreat: Russia, Roumania, Germany, France, Hungary, Bulgaria. I could multiply instances of countries in which materialism in one form or another is paramount; and in which the church is badly shattered or driven underground. Even on the homefront, there seems to be little to inspire confidence.

There is, however, another side of the picture, and I want to talk about it for a minute or two. There is a resiliency to this institution, proved by its history on innumerable occasions. I shall mention three.

At its inception, its founder convicted and crucified as a common criminal; its charter members a handful of uneducated Galilean fishermen; its leader a man whose past record had disclosed his apparent unsuitability for the task—there seemed to be even less to inspire confidence. The answer was Pentecost.

When Paul and Silas were singing hymns in the Philippian prison, engaged upon an outlandish mission, what odds would a professional Roman gambler have offered against its triumph over and survival of Imperial Rome?

In the eighteenth century, in England, who would have backed John Wesley as a prospective winner?

Coming to our own day, there are definite and positive signs that we are in the first phase of a religious movement that may well be comparable to Pentecost, or to the missions associated with the names of Paul of Tarsus, Martin Luther, John Wesley or William Carey.

The first sign is the fundamental change that has taken place in the relation between secular knowledge and the Christian religion. Forty years ago, in my own student days, it was possible, and even easy to accept a materialistic philosophy and way of life. Such a course was intellectually credible, and there was no apparent reason why it should not be spiritually satisfactory. It promised a better life and a better world. We have learned much in the intervening years. There is no time to amplify my argument, but I can crystallize the position in this way. In my student days, it was hard, and for most of us impossible, to reject the materialistic philosophy and to accept the religious philosophy, without doing violence to our intellectual integrity. Today, it is impossible to accept materialism in any of its forms, and to reject the Christian way of life, without swallowing a lot of cant and humbug and violating one's intellectual integrity.

This is the most significant revolution in the field of the human mind in our own age, and it cannot fail to have a profound effect on the world. The dominance of materialism in my own lifetime bred its own legitimate and natural offspring; fascism, nazism and other noxious *isms*. My suggestion is that the destruction of the rationale of materialism by the facts of the last four decades may well lead to the regeneration of Christendom.

The second sign is the recognition of the urgent need for a reawakening, by so many thinkers, and in such unexpected places. I need only point to the writings of Toynbee, Lecomte de Nouilly, Hugh MacLennan and Beverly Baxter, to Mr. Churchill's M.I.T. speech, and to the recent address of the Princess Elizabeth.

The third sign is one of immediate importance. In India, in China and in Japan, there is a surge of religious activity that bears all the hall-marks of an enduring movement. It is on the

student, which is the only important level when you are taking a long term point of view. It may well be that the regeneration of Christendom will have an Asiatic source.

This brings me past my "fourthly" and to my "finally, brethren". I have tried to put the facts before you, and to leave it to you to form your own conclusions.

I am, however, going to say one word about my own personal relationship to the church. I am persuaded that, apart from my own personal interest, I cannot refrain from doing what is in my power to maintain and promote the church, without placing in jeopardy our way of life, national and international.

My text is Acts 1, 8. Look it up.
