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The Battle Hymn of America, 1917.

"THE BATTLE HYMN OF AMERICA"

(Sermon preached at The Temple on Sunday morning, Oct. 21, 1917.)

This poem, "America Marching to War" was written close on to six months ago, by an American poet, who knew the soul of America. America has now marched into war; America is at war, and yesterday we received the first tragic news of a great catastrophe, the first sacrifice brot upon the altar of American Nationhood and American Idealism. We are at war. Our land is now an armed camp. Our souls are centered upon the prosecution of this war. But the principles of this war, the motives which should actuate it, are the same today, as they were when this poet first shouted the warning cry to America.

Amidst the heat and confusion, the hue and cry of this war, we might forget the great principles involved in it. So much of irresponsibility, of passion, so much of blurred sentiment, so much of hate and rancour has been let loose in this great land of ours, that perhaps some of you might fail to seize upon the heart of this conflict, and in the confusion, lose sight of the gleam which guides and leads us.

There is no doubt in my mind, and I cannot think of any mind, not deficient, that can entertain a doubt as to the justice of our entrance into this universal struggle.

We are told that in the days gone by, our forefathers, when they returned from the Babylonian captivity and when they set about rebuilding the Temple, were compelled to lay its stones with one hand, and with the other to wield the sword against the enemy. Clearly, the choice was given unto us, the greatest democracy in the world, to rebuild the Temple that had been ruthlessly destroyed and desecrated, if we were prepared to build with one hand and to wield the sword with the other hand, and we did not shirk. We assumed this God-given task, and we are now building and fighting, building and fighting. But that the Temple of Humanity may be built upon the foundations of Truth and Justice, upon the permanence of brotherhood and not upon the quicksands of ~~hottent~~ hatred we must keep clearly before our eyes, our motives and our purposes, the guiding and determining ideals of this great struggle. And no one has better, no one has more truly defined the purpose of this great struggle, than he, who in this hour, guides the destinies of this nation.

In that immortal message to the Senate, sent on the 22nd day of January of this year, the President has given unto the world, a document which history will place alongside of the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation and all great epoch-making documents of the world. We are too near the mountain to determine its true height, to gain a proper perspective of it, but in the days to come, this immortal document will be valued for the great epic thing it is. It marks a revolutionizing movement in civilization. The aspirations of countless peoples and races, the loves and ideals of millions of human beings, are given vocal expression in this great document. This document is not the work of an irresponsible enthusiast, but it is an expression of a mind, calm, deliberate, thoughtful, voicing the sentiments of a great people

and backing it by the prestige and dignity of a hundred million souls. This message will shine, in the days to come, perhaps as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of humanity, and while the later messages of our president, may, in the days to come, become antiquated, this message will remain as an inspiration to your children and to all future generations.

And, I hold that the truths enunciated in this message, if they held good six months ago, still hold good today and that we have entered this struggle, merely to establish those principles which were then, in firmness of purpose, voiced by our President. You have read it, of course, but perhaps you have not clearly understood all its implications, and, I hold that if this great struggle is to be a holy war, - for there are two kinds of war recognized by the tradition of our people, a volitional war, a war for revenge or conquest and an obligatory, mandatory, holy war. We must keep constantly in mind, these principles and we must insist upon them at all times.

And what are these principles? First---pax inter pares--- a peace among equals. We cannot tolerate a peace that will be made by victor and victim, by conqueror and conquered; for such a victor holds within itself the seed of future hatred, and you cannot build a permanent Temple upon foundations of hate. We must build our peace upon the solid foundations of brotherhood, of friendship and amity.

Now I do not mean to say that our land should now, at this moment, make peace. I hold that as long as the people of Germany, harbor within their souls, imperial ambition, as long as within their hearts, there is still this dream of a German peace, so long must we continue our purpose, so long must we continue to fight and offer sacrifices, but, when the German people shall awake to a realization of what a cancerous growth on their body politic, the Hohenzollern despotism has been, what blind tools they have been in the hands of a brood of scoundrels, - when they shall realize what a mass of cumbersome weight they have been carrying, crushing down upon their shoulders, - when they hurl into the abyss, that brood of scheming rascals who have been utilizing the splendid potentialities of the great German people, for selfish purposes, then shall we come to the German people, not as conquerors, but as brothers, because we cannot know the German people, because we can and do distinguish between a group of arrogant, greed-maddened junkers who preach that "might is right" and "might above all" and the Germany of the poets, the Germany of the scientists, the Germany of the philosophers, the Germany that has brought light and glory into civilization. Do not begin to think of Germany as hosts of barbarians and outcasts. Your mind has been, to a great measure, influenced by German thought, philosophy and science. I say that as soon as the German people realize that, then we shall come to them, not as conquerors, but as brothers, and we shall extend to them the hand of brotherhood and friendship. We shall say "Come back into our fold, you have erred, you have sinned, you have been blind, you have done things of which we are ashamed, but you have washed yourselves clean of your pollution, - come back, and be one of us."

A peace among equals - we must keep that in mind! And the second great principle of that immortal document is this, - "Equality of nations" - "Equality of rights of all nations." Not all nations are equal. Not all individuals are equal. Some have been endowed by divine Providence with greater gifts than others, but all

are equal before the law of right and justice. All nations are not equal, but all are equal before the law of right, and no small nation should be made a stepping stone for the imperial ambitions of another. Every little people that has its own soul, its own civilization, is entitled justly, to its own life, its own culture, to develop its own soul, its own self. A community of peoples, - that is essential for the growth of civilization. And as a corollary to this, is the principle of the rights of oppressed nationalities. No people must be suffered to impose its political control or its ~~pal~~ cultural domination upon another. ~~That is the second great principle~~

"Equality of nations" - the rights of the oppressed peoples, that is the second great principle, and the third is "The Freedom of the sea" - the right of great nations to have access to the sea. That has been a stumbling block in the way of Universal peace. It has caused many a bloody war and that principle must forever be established in this war. And, lastly, the principle which Mr. Wilson calls the "most pressing problem of humanity today" - "Mutual disarmament" - A nation armed is a volcano threatening to erupt at any time. A nation armed is a threat. There can be no friendly intercourse among peoples, when across their borders, gap the mouths of cannons. Armaments which have sapped the vitality of peoples must cease with this war.

These principles, my friends, a peace without victory, equality of nations, rights of the oppressed nations, freedom of the sea, disarmament, are the principles involved in this struggle. The principle involved in this struggle, is not the crushing of Germany, the principle involved in this struggle is not conquest of territory. The principle involved is not one of vindictiveness, - the principles involved in this war, are these basic principles of civilization, without which, nothing, - no life, no progress, no civilization is possible.

And, I regret to say that men have been deliberately going about, trying to dim our vision, to ~~soothe~~ arouse our passions, to appeal to the beastly in us. It was the President who said, "Just because we fight without rancor and without selfish objects, seeking nothing for ourselves but what we wish to share with all free peoples, we shall, I feel confident, conduct our operations as belligerents, without passion, and ourselves observe with proud panetilio, the principles of right and fair play we profess to be fighting for. And yet, I read of a minister making an appeal to our basest emotions, to the vindictive passions, the ferocious hates. And what is this all good for? - Does our cause need propping up? Is our cause so weak that it needs to be propped up by the imps and devils of hate and wrath? Cannot our cause, so noble, stand on its own feet? Or do you and I need to be goaded on by these appeals to our hates and our beastly instincts? Once the flood-gates of passion are opened and the muddy waters of hate, let loose, they will leave after them slimy deposits of mud, which generations will fail to wash clean.

Let us go into this struggle as men who see their duty, who have determined to see this ghastly business thru because the interests of humanity demand it. Let us go in as pure-souled, high-minded men and women, not crying "Hooray! let loose the dogs of passion" - but singing hymns, as men tell of those brave soldiers of Cromwell - singing hymns as they went into the war, for this is a holy war!

A war without Passion - we are fighting for a purpose which is spiritual, and how we fight must give evidence of our true sp-

preciation of why we fight.

And, at this hour when our nation is facing a great crisis, I, as a minister, cannot but help make this appeal to my people. This is a day that has been dedicated to patriotic expressions in the churches, synagogues and Temples of the land. My friends - at this great hour, let us not be found wanting, at this great hour, when the souls of men are tried, let us not be found wanting as Americans. We have enjoyed the infinite opportunities, material, moral and intellectual, which this land has offered unto us; and now that our nation calls for help, let us respond freely, without such ado, without such coaxing or urging. Let us give evidence of the fact that we are aware of our obligation. As Jews, we ought to be doubly anxious to demonstrate our devotion to this land. Think what this land has meant for us, and then act. I would not be so intensely Jewish, or so intensely American, did I not feel that the two are synonymous, that the principles for which my people have suffered, are those very principles which are now being established in this country. I am conscious of the shortcomings of America but nothing that you and I love is perfect. Nothing that you have seen and admired is perfect. We have the weaknesses but also the great strengths. We have the glory, the aspirations. We must have the impulse and conscience that will ultimately destroy these weaknesses.

I say - America is slowly realizing the ideals of my people and your people, - "Proclaim liberty unto all inhabitants thereof". Because I am intensely Jewish, I feel intensely in this struggle, for, if the idea behind Germany succeeds, the Jew has no place in this world. The Jew will be crushed. If success is the only determining force in society, then the Jew is an outcast, for he has been the sublimest failure of history. Democracy must triumph, for the Jew lives and grows in and by the spirit of democracy.

I have been asked to make an appeal for Liberty Bonds. I need not make an appeal to you. You have but one choice "Prussian Slavery Bonds" or "American Liberty Bonds" - now act.

"Shall the trumpet be sounded in the land and shall the people not be stirred?" Stir yourselves, look about you, try and realize the tremendous import of this struggle, and then act, as brave, as high-minded, high-purposed American citizens-----Amen.

I. Read Poem. — we are ~~at~~ war - we have made the first sacrifice -

II. A clear exposition of what we are fighting for is in place ^{no class}
Wilson's famous message to the Senate. Jan 22, 1917. ^{was here}
a - 5 points - ^{Temple was}
^{H. W. Strick}

III. Then being the sublime purpose - show that we fight.

1. Read Wilson p. 55.

2. Hillis.

3. Fight with out hate. - Our cause need no prop.

4. New type of patriotism - not human - sharp speakers. Rev. Lewis,
lect - the world - harder.

IV. This our cause, this our method. let us not fail in the
work - a - let us not be found ^{we cannot}
b. kindly. Capital & Labor - class - profits. ^{a Jew. live}
c. liberty bonds - Prussian Slave Market. ^{in 1900}
^{would}
^{with}
^{him}

Oct. 21, 1917

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WRHS
The Battle Hymn of America.

