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The Church in Ferment, 1918.

"The Church in Ferment"

(With special reference to Mr. Wells' "Soul of a Bishop" and
"God, The Invisible King".)

The great war is already impressing itself upon life and upon institutions. The great ~~pentecost~~ * of calamity has already brot revelations to humanity. In the sphere of politics, the ugly and selfish ~~motives~~ which caused this war have been purified into an irrepressible movement towards democracy. The Russian Revolution is the first sign vouchsafed to a suffering humanity that its holocaust was acceptable in the eyes of God. Humanity is sealing with blood the doom of petty tyrants, kings and all the satanic brood of ***** in the sphere of Economics. The war has paved the way for a greater socialization of industry and wealth and for the economic enfranchisement of the working classes. The war has exposed, not only the fallacy of the divine rights of kings, but also the fiction of the divine rights of property. In the social realm, the war ~~xxx~~ is gradually uprooting ancient traditions. Blood is slowly dissolving class structures in the community of the trenches, in the fellowship of suffering. All titles, ranks and ancient prestige are of no account. Brave men who are facing the brute realities of life, do not tolerate any aristocracy but the aristocracy of achievement. War is cementing in blood the brotherhood of men. Now in the realm of religion, the war, ~~xxx~~ which has been a leavening force of change and newness*****in the sphere of Religion, which is the most sensitive and intimate sphere of human life, shall we say the war has been productive of no change? That would be to confess that the church, which is after all, the physical embodiment of the religious aspirations of men - for the church is either dead or perfect, for only the ~~dead~~ perfect and the dead ^{are} ~~or~~ not subject to change. To acknowledge that the church is ~~xx~~ perfect is to acknowledge that the church is dead, for the perfect thing is a static thing and the static thing is the dead thing. "Very good perfection - why that is dead" said the rabbis.

Now, no one who has heard the prayers that have come up from the depths of human suffering during this war, no one who has seen the children of men turn instinctively, as a plant turns to the sun, to God, no one who has seen the countless men and women whose lips have never known prayer, mumble some old fragments of prayers learned at the knee of their mothers, - No one who has seen the Religious revival that has come into the hearts of men, will doubt that Religion is far from being dead and no one who has heard the mumbled expressions of dissatisfaction with the church, no one who has himself experienced its utter collapse, its futility, its irrelevancy to the vital problems of the day, will for a moment entertain the pleasant thought that the church is perfect. Israel Zangwill in the opening paragraph of his essay on the war and the churches says this. It is a thought-provoking, thought-stimulating paragraph - "If a man, etc." and Mr. Wells, in his book "The Soul of a Bishop" likewise expresses the dissatisfaction of the modern man with the church and its failure to be of any real significance in the world crisis. "Of course," he says, "The church in many instances has endeavored to save its face to retrieve itself. It has identified itself completely with the national ambitions, in many instances it has out- the ***** I read of a chaplain in the House of Commons saying that to kill a German is in very truth the will of God and a service to God and that is counteracted by the statement of a German pastor that to bayonet the enemy and crush in his skull is a service to God. In many instances the church has become a recruiting station. It has endeavored to show its importance, its significance in the great things that conspire, but unfortunately it has failed to convince men and women of its importance, it has not been a voice crying in the wilderness, it has had no voice at all. It has no message to the world today and yet Religion has not failed and yet men have gained faith in this struggle and yet the eyes that have seen tears have also learned to see God and yet men and women ~~had~~ at this very hour, amidst

the welter and confusion of the war, amidst the wreck and ruin of civilization are seeking earnestly, prayerfully, salvation and the tabernacle of God. We must then, distinguish between religion and the church apparently. We must say, that while the church has failed, Religion has triumphed, and, perhaps, also, religion has triumphed because the church has failed and it is to show why the church has failed and why Religion has triumphed and to show the new type of Religion that has come out of the crucible of this war, that thoughtful men and women have set themselves the task to prove*****and among these, ~~by~~ and by far not the least, is Mr. Wells, author of that splendid trilogy "Mr. Britling sees it thru", "God, the Invisible King" and "The Soul of a Bishop". Now we might disagree with Mr. Wells on quite a number of things. I shall point out as we go along, some of the things/which we differ upon but in all fairness we must say that the spirit in which Mr. Wells approaches these great realities or mysteries of life is a spirit of absolute sincerity and reverence. He does not approach these vast and great problems of life with the smirk of a cynic or with the irreverence and arrogance of the ignorant iconoclast. Mr. Wells, like many men and women today, is trying to find, amidst the confusion of the world, amidst the crumbling civilization, some strong conviction which will help him to re-build his world, to find himself, some one fixed purpose, a prop and mainstay in this world of shifting values. Mr. Wells tries to free himself from that hundred-handed monster of doubt and denial that seems to be stifling the soul of so many men and women. He is actually craving and yearning for God. The faiths of today do not answer his need. They are useless and antiquated. He asks for bread and he is given a stone; he asks for faith and he is given creeds, he asks for God and is given a formula. He senses deeply the irrelevancy of church doctrine, of church institutions to prop up the courage of the men today and he thinks that perhaps if he were but able to cut thru, deliberately, those ***** of dogmatic speculation that he may perhaps directly come face to face with God, the invisible King, and Mr. Wells finds his God. His God may not be the

God whom you and I worship and yet, it is beyond the shadow of a doubt, a God, a sustaining influence in his life, something real, something vital, something which has transformed an atheist such as Mr. Wells was, into a devout, worshipful, prayerful soul. He has found his God. Mr. Wells traces the various stages in his religious development in that book called "The Soul of a Bishop". A fine spirit is startled by the war into new reasoning and new speculation. The bishop, like Mr. Wells, finds that the church with its institutions and dogmas not alone is ineffective and useless in this war, but it is actually cluttering and retarding the human spirit and Mr. Wells or the bishop is bitter and perhaps a bit needlessly when he speaks of the dogmas of the church and when he endeavors to show why the church failed, and ~~xxx~~ I say a bit needlessly for in all these discussions the less we have of virulence, the less we have of animosity and hatred the better, the happier we shall be. There is so much error in all our faiths, there is so much weakness in all of us that it scarcely behooves any of us to be harsh and intolerant in our criticism of other people. Rivers of charity lead to the great rivers of happiness but apparently Mr. Wells has become a religious enthusiast and like all fanatics, all apostles of new religious faiths, he has become extremely intolerant of his own church. Why the church fails, Mr. Wells says this: "The world saw a light, the nations that were sitting in darkness saw a great light, Even as I saw God. And then the church began to forget and lose itself among secondary things. It tried to express the truth and lost itself in a maze of theology. It tried to bring order into the world and sold its faith to Constantine, etc. etc."

Mr. Wells has no use for church dogma, for theology because theology and dogma do not reveal God but hide God from the eyes of man. Mr. Wells has no use for church institutions for church ceremonies, because church institutions and church ceremonies do not make God more near to men but remove him more distantly. Mr. Wells thinks that all the bane of this life is due to the fact that the church has lost its vision, its calling, that the church has sold its soul to the temporal powers, that the church has refused to be a voice in the wilderness

calling men to repentance and calling men to the Kingdom of God but that the church has compromised because it desired to gain temporary influence in the political affairs of men and his solution is this - You cannot pour new wine in old bottles, the shell of the church is too small to contain ***** the renaissance religion, the church must go, and the ~~xx~~ bishop, who finds himself in disagreement with the teachings of the church does not remain in the church to reform it, but leaves it after a dramatic speech (?) to preach his new religion, his new faith, his new conception of God, not in a pulpit but without, among men and women directly and immediately. Of course, with much of Mr. Wells' opinions we may agree. The church lays too much stress on theology and dogma which is ancient and outlived, a theology which breathes of Armenia, of Palestine ***** of intellectual quibbles and we are happy to say that men and women are returning slowly but surely to the purer conception of ~~razzi~~ religion and of God such as was preached by the prophets of Israel to the world. It is, perhaps, a triumph for Judaism, this war perhaps is *return perhaps to* ***** the ancient teachings of our people, of one God and one mankind, but Mr. Wells' religion is not entirely Judaism. What is this modern religion that Mr. Wells seems to be the spokesman of? Let me have Mr. Wells define his religion for you. This is his conception of God, - "God comes, we know not whence, etc." in other words, Mr. Wells' God is a finite being. That seems to be ***** God is finite. God is not the God of Israel, the omnipotent, the all-knowing but he is finite. He is the God of man and not of the Universe. He is not the creator of the world. Mr. Wells speaks of two beings one he calls the being veiled/that transcendent being whom our minds cannot reach. With reference to that veiled being Mr. Wells is absolutely an agnostic, furthermore he says we need to know nothing about him. That veiled being has nothing to do with our life. The God we worship is the God who came into the world, whence, he knows not, but he came into the world with men but he is the embodiment of man's will and courage. He is the God that represents, not alone, the finest of you and me

but ~~he~~ is a God, who to my mind, if I do understand him and I am not sure that I do, he is the social soul, the soul conscience personified. He is the ideal of the human race. He is the captain, the invisible king of the world. He has had a beginning but he has no end. He is the king that asks of every man to surround himself,*****so that his kingdom might ultimately be established on earth. This in short is Mr. Wells' conception of God and with that, of course, the Jew cannot agree. The Jew believes that God is both transcendent and imminent and that it is the same God that is creator of the universe. He is the same God whom we reach with our minds*****reach out to understand him. It is the God who is in our souls, who gives us the strength to fight with the evil of the world. He is our captain and our invisible king. Of course there are difficulties involved in our conception of God just as in Mr. Wells' conception of God and Mr. Wells confesses that his God is not one whom*****

The difficulties involved in the Jewish conception of the infinite God are those involved***then are involved in the conception of any God. It is curious to see that the ethics which this God of Mr. Wells demands of his followers is in every detail and iota the ethics which the Jewish God demands of his followers. The

** *****of God, the invisible king, is nothing else than the God of Israel, but though Mr. Wells speaks of*many religions, somehow or other, strange to say,he never mentions Judaism and yet Mr. wells has repudiated in every way*****

a theocracy. A world whose King is God, a world in which every man is a servant or a priest of God, now surely anyone who has studied the beginning of the religion of Israel, knows that the ideal of*****when the people/came to ask for a King, it is reported that God said to ~~xxxx~~ him, "Give them a King for they have despised to have me rule over them" - in other words the appointment of a King was against the will of God, surely a kingdom of people is nothing less than the highest expression of theology. That God will be king over the world is nothing else but Mr. Wells' conception of theology. Mr. wells' religion also is a this-worldly religion, not an other-worldly religion. There too, he is

showing how ineffective the doctrine of other-world*****how quickly the world must return to the Jewish ideal, that Religion is essentially a matter of this world. The heavens belong to God but the earth was given to the children of men, that here on earth is our work to do, that the Kingdom of God must be established in this world and that the function of you and me in this world is to improve and perfect the world by the ideal of the kingdom of God and surely, when Mr. Wells speaks of the great obsession of the men who believe in the modern religion, as being that of service, surely he is merely reiterating so much less beautifully, so much less strongly, the faith of the prophets, that man is in this world to serve his maker, that man ~~xxx~~ as an individual is to be the servant of God, but that the people, the nation is also to devote themselves as a unit to the service of God, so Israel becomes the servant of God and not only that, but that everything a man has and owns is given to him as a trust, says Mr. Wells, but how Jewish that is too, for "Unto me belongs the earth, it is not yours it is God's, it is given to you that you may be the just steward of it, a just trustee, that you might use it to beautify life, that you might use it for the service of God. Men are my servants not servants unto servants." Why we might quote an infinite number of beautiful passages of Talmudic law, legend and story to show how clearly the Jew conceived man's purpose on earth to be God's servant. Mr. Wells says that the religion of the future will not be a ***** and he has reiterated a doctrine of Judaism. Judaism has never said "If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn the other." Judaism has never said "Resist not evil". Judaism, because it dared to acknowledge the presence of evil in this world of suffering and injustice, called upon men to fight these evils and injustices to become a warrior in the ranks of God the invisible king, and Mr. Wells says that the religion of the future cannot tolerate, cannot tolerate the idea that a man should ~~xxx~~ leave the world and go into some wilderness to gain individual salvation thru prayer, thru fasting, and what has Judaism to say: Judaism says too that a man obtains salvation~~xxxx~~ in this world, not by leaving the world of storm and stress and suffering, not by shirking responsibilities,

not by washing one's hands clean of the grime of ~~soil~~ but a man gains salvation by remaining ~~in~~ in the welter and confusion of life, by struggling and falling and sinning, and gaining salvation thru sin and suffering and sorrow. A man who turns his back upon life, ~~xxxx~~ ^{enters} its trials and tribulations and ~~xxxxx~~ a monastery where he may dwell in peace, reflecting upon the vast things of the world may lead a sinless life but also a useless life says Judaism. "To labor is to pray, prayer is labor and labor is the highest type of prayer" and the ethics of Mr. Wells is the ethics of Judaism. A religion of service, a religion of social justice, a religion which calls men to sacrifice, to give of one's self so as to make the world better and we hail ^{new} this/religion of Mr. Wells with joy and triumph, for it is a religion that preaches the ethics of Judaism to a world that ~~xx~~ has refused to listen to them when it came from the mouth of the Jew. It is not in a spirit of pride or gloating satisfaction that I have said what I have said, it is because I am sincerely convinced that out of this war will come to the world a clearer, a better, a more sympathetic understanding of Judaism, that the peoples of the world, will accept the teachings of Judaism. I do not say will accept Judaism, -we are not interested, we are not concerned in peoples accepting Judaism, but we are concerned very seriously in peoples accepting the teachings and the doctrines of Judaism because, to our way of thinking and belief, Judaism in its highest expression, represents the highest ideals of invisible humanity. God the/King, according to Mr. Wells' conception of him, may not be the God of Israel, but God, the invisible king, that calls men to service, to sacrifice, that is acceptable, that can be realized most intimately in one's life now at this moment. The personal God, God who is the captain, who is the driving impulse of your life, God who tears you from the routine, from the smallness of your life and drives you upward and onward to reach out for his greater gifts. God who calls you soldier and warrior, the God who is the warrior that fights the evils and the sin of the world, that God is the God of Israel *****would soon come to the acceptance of God, the Invisible King.

I. The Great War has already impressed its ~~great~~ message upon human life and institutions. The Pentecost of Calamity has already best new revelations to humanity.

1. In politics, the ugly selfish motives which caused this war have crystallized into an irresistible impulse toward democracy. The Russian Revolution was the first sign ^{vouchsafed} ~~given~~ to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~humanity~~ that its Holocaust was acceptable in the eyes of God. The war will seal in blood the doom of tyrants, rulers and all the Satanic lord of oligarchies.

2. In economics, the war has undermined the revered ~~position of private property~~ ^{rights}. Along with the exposure of the doctrines of the divine rights of kings comes the exposure of the doctrine of the divine rights of property. The war is paving the way for a greater socialization of industry and ~~the~~ wealth, and for the economic enfranchisement of the working classes of the world.

3. In Social life, the war is levelling social distinction. Blood is dissolving class structures. In the community of the trenches and the fellowship of suffering the prestige of the ^{rank} wealth is an accidental pane is of no account. The only

II. Zangwill. (Read p. 265). Wells. (p. 78)

a. This confession & its importance has been within and without the Church. Life ~~has~~ is not influenced by it.

b. Some Churches have tried hard to save their faces. They have identified ~~evs~~ completely with the ~~main~~ ^{main} ~~mediat~~ ^{mediat} national aim or ambition, they have in some instances, out-judged the judges. ~~They~~ The Chaplain in the House of Commons is reported to have said: "The killing of the Germans is a blinding service in the fullest sense of the term". A German chaplain counters this by declaring: "to betray the enemy and ~~smash~~ in his skull is God's service". Some churches have become recruiting stations. They have engaged in all forms (of what Wells calls) turpitude. But somehow men refused to see in this evidence of real effectiveness. The Church was not a voice crying in the wilderness. It actually possessed no voice!

c. And yet the Church had not lost its influence because men have lost faith. Men have ~~passed~~ ^{lost} faith in this war. Men whose eyes have seen God. Lips that have known prayer. Have prayed in old broken fragments of vaguely remembered

prayers as they ~~stand~~ ^{stand} awaiting their great adventure as they lay bleeding & mutilated in the mud red mud of Flanders.

III. Clearly the Church has failed, but Religion has not. And perhaps, rel. has triumphed because the Church has failed -

A. It is to lay bare the failure of the Church, ~~to~~ to show the reasons for it, and ^{on the other} hand to point to the renaissance faith that is coming out of this war that men have attempted, and as the least among them is H. G. Wells in his trilogy, Mr. Bunting, God, the Miss. King, & The Soul.

IV. Why has the Church Failed? W's answer!

1. lost its vision, lost itself in secondary things
2. became a creed instead of a faith. Read 200
3. well is very intolerant of Church dogmas.

Read p. 230. 9a -

3. ~~for~~ The Church has not stood for the simple, easily accessible food -

B. So that it now can munch but obsolete formulae, stones and bread for the soul.

V. Cure - The Church must go! No Reform possible from within! The Bishop resigns. Old bottle cannot hold new wine. Let men & little out for food, directly,

Not the god of ancient, nor Alexandria, nor Rome, but the god, the Immortal King.

VI With much, that we may be in full accord. The less & humbler. That holds good of synag. & Temple too. We too sometimes lose our vision, tho we never placed our feet for faith & our heart in pure temple. The War will reveal church tho. It will be the triumph of god.

VII Wells god. When W. Wells to define his modern self, in a renascent Rel. his turning to god is very close tho he nowhere acknow. It.

1. One great dissimilarity - God is finite. Two neither. Veiled Being & Manifest. Manifest god is finite. In relat. to Veiled Being He is infinite. He is Love, He is warrior, He is the social soul personified. - He is man but greater. He is captain & humble king. Reid p. 18. and 61
2. Jewish Conception - God is both Immanent & Transcendent. - I

VIII. This Ethos is thereby Jewish, Repudiate
all essentially ch. doctrines ^{2016 10/10/17}
1 - ^{theocracy} Resistance to Evil -

B. Ind. liberation. Further escape from
life -

2. Kingd. of God on earth 1/10/21
13/10/21, This worldly.

3. Not yet 1/10/21 4. 10/1 - 21/10/21
5. Opposition to Eternal Domain ^{10/10/21}
6. Man's function is to serve. ^{10/10/21} 326

Ind. + people.

a. Man to use his powers in trust.
properly ^{10/10/21}
- p 3, 1, 226

IX. Well cannot say - we may
differ within our field concept -
① as to need of Church + ceremony but
we see in him a soul stirring for
the Church is in ferment: How will it
react to this war -