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THE VISION OF LEADERSHIP, THE GOAL IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LIFE

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OUR HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the early Jews was their disposition to trace the hand of God in their national life: They wrote their history as a record of God's dealings with them.

One of their early pioneers migrated from the region north of the Persian Gulf to that bordering the Mediterranean Sea, a distance about equal to that from St. Louis to western Kansas, and the Jewish historian said that Abraham was called of God to go out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance.

A vast body of slaves revolted from their Egyptian masters under the leadership of a man who had been living the life of a bedouin in Arabia, and the historian said that God delivered them by the hand of Moses.

The fleeing slaves found it possible to cross a narrow and shallow neck of the Red Sea, owing to a strong east-wind which blew the waters out to sea, but the returning waters engulfed their pursuers, and the historian said that God sent the east wind to give them passage and deliverance.

When they were ruled by judges, they said that God chose each judge and administered justice through him. When they set up a kingdom, they said that God selected their king. When they were free and prosperous, they said that God

was blessing them for their obedience, and when they were poor and enslaved, they said God was punishing them for their wickedness.

More remarkable still is the fact that there persisted throughout the whole of the national life of these people a steadfast belief that through them all the other nations of the world should be blessed—a belief that has had a strange and remarkable fulfillment. For while the manner of its fulfillment has been sadly disappointing, owing to their sins, the degree in which it has been fulfilled has gone far beyond their brightest expectations.

Today we pride ourselves that we have clearer and more ethical conceptions of God than the early Jews had, and no doubt we have, but it is a national misfortune that we do not have an equally controlling sense of the divine presence and operation in our individual and national life. It is to be deplored that we too have not found a religious significance in the great events of our history. It is not because the providence of God has not been as manifest in our affairs as it was in Israel's. It has been.

Why should not our religious historian write like this: When Columbus was steering his vessels westward from Spain and they were pointed straight for the shores of New England, God sent flock after flock of land-birds and mass after mass of floating seaweeds to lure him to the south, so that he might land upon one of the Bahama Islands and thus save our great continent from the evils of a decadent Spanish civilization, and preserve it for the sturdy, God-fearing Pilgrims.

In the seventeenth century, when England and France were struggling for the supremacy in the New World, and our continent was about to become a dependent territory of France, God nerved the arms and aimed the blows of a little band of English heroes in the forests of Canada, and saved us from the Bourbons and the rule of Richelieu and Loyola.

After the war of the Revolution George Washington did write that way in his letter to the governors of the various states. We find him saying:

When I contemplate the interposition of Providence, as it was visibly manifest in guiding us through the Revolution, I feel myself

oppressed and almost overwhelmed with a sense of divine munificence. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore an invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have been advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.

Why should not the religious historian write: A half century ago when the two great sections of our country went to war to settle the right of States to secede from the Union, the appeal to arms was made because seceding states wished to retain the institution of slavery, and the moral principle outweighed the constitutional guarantee. Again the God of righteousness and human brotherhood held the balance of battle in His almighty hand, and human slavery was swept forever from the American soil and the American Union saved from the wreck of war.

I do not wish to make the impression that there was no recognition of the providence of God on the part of those who were prominent in the early history of our nation. Quite the contrary. Our early chapters read like religious history. I am concerned here to show that it should *all* read so.

I wish it were possible for me to add that throughout all our past history there has been also a hope of service and a faith in our becoming a blessing to all the nations of the world as distinct, robust and persisting as that held by the early Jew. If I cannot write it honestly, I can at least say that I think such an idea has been developing in the womb of the nation, and that I hope the day has come for it to be born.

SOME OF OUR ASSETS.

Less than three centuries ago a few Pilgrims, Cavaliers and Huguenots were settled in widely isolated knots along the extreme eastern fringe of the continent. Today we occupy nearly four million square miles of territory, have a hundred million people, and count our wealth in hundreds of billions of dollars. We are the leading nation on the earth in wealth and in many products and manufactures.

While the Anglo-Saxon is still in a sense dominant, we have, as a matter of fact, a more composite nationality than ever existed on the earth before. The British have contrib-

uted their solidity, the Germans their thoroughness, the Scandinavians their hardiness, the French their science and idealism, the Italians their artistic temperament, and the Slovaks their superb physiques. The coming of these representatives of the different races and nations has served not only to increase our human assets and add variety, warmth and color to our life, but also to bind us by a myriad ties of love to the ends of the earth.

Our country is Christian in name, and far more truly so in fact than anything else. We have 220,000 churches with 45,000,000 members and communicants, served by 170,000 ministers; and these churches are more active in behalf of morality, civic justice, industrial fairness, social purity and business honor than the churches of any other nation on earth. Roman Catholicism is without state support and is seen here in its best form. During the last ten years our population has increased twenty per cent, while the membership in our eight leading churches: Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran and Disciples of Christ, has increased fifty-seven per cent.

We have 18,000,000 million pupils in our public schools. We have 602 colleges, universities and technological schools with \$273,000,000 endowment, an annual expense account of \$80,000,000, and 303,000 pupils in attendance. Of these higher educational institutions 387 are fostered by the Church, with an enrollment of 137,000.

A nation's strength depends upon its form of will, and its greatness is to be measured by its ideals. America's ideals have always been high, though they have not always remained the same. They have grown and evolved. Like the ideals of individuals, the effort to actualize them has served at once to enhance them and clarify them. The ideal of the typical American today may be larger and more clearly conceived than that of his grandfather, but it has in it the same essential elements. The American of tomorrow will be able to think more clearly and purpose more highly than is possible for us today.

THE AMERICAN IDEAL.

At least five elements enter into the American ideal. *First:* America believes in democracy. There is a growing

spirit of democracy in many countries, notably in England, but America believes in a more complete and thorough-going democracy than is possible where there is even the conventional recognition of an aristocracy of blood.

Second: America believes in equality of opportunity. Our Declaration of Independence asserts that "all men are born free and equal." Of course everyone knows that all men are not born with equal constitutions or equal talents. The meaning is that in a democracy all men shall have equal opportunity, that there are no hard and fast social barriers, no crystalized caste strata.

America believes in the equality of opportunity for all, as illustrated in Abraham Lincoln rising from a log-hut childhood in Kentucky where he was looked on by the negro slaves as "po' white trash," and from a rail-splitting young manhood to the same office, and to equal place in the hearts of his countrymen as that of the blue-blooded Father of his Country.

Third: America believes in an aristocracy of character. At different periods in the world's history there have been aristocracies of brawn, where the strongest and most valiant made himself king (in those days when the word king meant one who can); aristocracy of blood, where worth and merit were supposed to be transmitted by heredity; and, last and worst, the modern vulgar aristocracy of "boodle."

Fourth: America believes that while Church and State should be separate, politics should be founded on morality and religion. She still believes that Washington was right when he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest proofs of the duties of men and of citizens." She believes in the spirit which moved William Penn when he said of the founding of the City of Brotherly Love, "It is a holy experiment which we undertake, and it depends upon the citizens to accomplish it or ruin it." The intensity of the scandalized feelings at the disclosure of corruption in Philadelphia in the last few years is evidence of a public conscience that is still quick and a civic ideal that is still high.

Fifth: America believes in the greatness of service. Our Fourth of July orators have reminded us of our greatness as measured by surveyor's chains and weighed with steel-yards, till we have been tempted to adopt their gauge of greatness. We may take a pardonable pride in the extent of our territory, our climate, national wealth, farms, crops, mines, quarries, oil wells, water-power, coal fields, forests, cattle, railroads and factories, but in our sober moments we know that these things do not constitute greatness. We know that at last a nation is made up of men, and that the same qualities that make a man great make a nation great also. We know that "even in a man's abundance his life is not from the things which he possesseth."

The foundations upon which the American Republic was established: liberty of conscience, democracy, equality of opportunity, aristocracy of character, politics based on religion, and the greatness of service, are broader, more ideal and more enduring than any other nation in the world has ever tried. If we add to this the fact that the American people have the cleanest-cut determination of any people on earth, and that they are remarkably quick to respond to ideals, we feel justified in prophesying a career of large usefulness.

When we consider our national ideals and the institutions we have established in working them out, we are impressed with the resemblance to the ideal of a divine republic which was in the mind of Jesus. He undertook a work which meant to bring about a perfect democracy, a brotherhood which derived its relationships from the common relationship of all to the Divine Father. He laid stress upon the individual character, saying that happiness and greatness depended upon teachableness, purity of heart, ambition to bless, and willingness to suffer for righteousness' sake. America also lays stress upon individual character. That is the meaning of all our vast system of schools, from the kindergartens and the public schools, to the universities supported by the various states and churches. We want what is in our children to have a chance to effloresce. That is the meaning of the separation of Church and State. We had rather take the risk of multiplying sects and encouraging religious cranks

than to dwarf individuality by running all our people into the common mold of an established church.

Jesus said that the highest ambition of the citizens of the Divine Republic should be the desire to serve, and that those who were to be accounted greatest would be the greatest servants. We have been approaching more and more nearly to his mind, till today, when we look at the names, in our national Hall of Fame, of those selected as the greatest men and women America ever produced, we find that nearly all of them have been chosen because of their helpfulness to their fellows. It is coming to be the honor-roll of servants.

Jesus taught that one should not fight for his own rights, but should not hesitate to champion the cause of his oppressed brethren. We have settled any number of difficulties and have submitted to what was regarded by many of our people as personal affronts, but our only war of recent times was that one in which we chastised Spain for her cruelty and inhumanity to the little Island of Cuba, and our sons went into that war with the true spirit of crusaders.

With our Monroe Doctrine we have for a hundred years thrown our protecting arms around our twin continent and have saved the countries in South America from the exploitation and pillage that Africa and Persia are now suffering at the hands of the European powers.

THE ALTERNATIVES.

It is for us to recognize the fact that no nation ever rose so high that it could not fall. We should read again the melancholy story of those nations that once ruled, but that abandoned their worthy ideals and went down to ruin, and should recall that we have like forces of destruction at work in our own.

We must remember that no nation has long prospered, or can long prosper, whose industry rests on injustice, whose commerce is dishonest, whose society is frivolous, luxurious and heartless, whose marriage bonds are easily dissolved, or whose traffic is in the bodies of men and women.

We must remember that while we have no king or czar we may have a more heartless and ruthless tyrant in the licensed mob,—the majority—that parades under the banner of liberty. We must not confuse liberty with license; with

the "violent silencing of the wise and reasonable" by the shouts of the dupes of socialists and anarchists.

We should remember that great law of Jesus, that the selfish effort to save oneself results in losing oneself, but the unselfish effort to save others results in saving others and oneself with them; and that other law, that the use of one's equipment, talent, capacity, increases the talent and multiplies the opportunity, but the failure to use it results in the loss of the gift and the everlasting dishonor of its possessor. These truths apply to nations as well as to individuals; indeed the latter truth was spoken primarily to the Jewish nation. Wealth and science had been given to Egypt; the commerce of the seas to Phoenicia; philosophy, literature and art to Greece; justice and dominion to Rome; and morality and religion to the Jews. All the other nations had traded with their gifts. Egypt had given her science to the world; Phoenicia had taught the other nations to build ships and navigate the seas; Greece had given her philosophy and language to all the other nations; Rome had sent her laws to the ends of the earth. But the Jews had wrapped their precious gift in the napkin of national exclusiveness, had failed to pass their gift on to others, had refused to see either opportunity or responsibility, and the time was at hand when the talent should be taken from them and given to those nations that would use it. And so it has come about that those nations who were looked upon as Gentile dogs, have taken what the Jew would not use and are employing it in the regeneration of all mankind, while the Jewish nation—the napkin in which the gift was wrapped—was torn to tatters by Titus.

AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY.

Will America take the lesson to heart? Will we see that we are here for service? Will we regard all our advantages of wealth, institutions, churches, colleges, universities, world-wide friendships, freedom from enemies, commerce reaching to the ends of the earth, as so much equipment from the Eternal God for service? Will we find in the millions of the poor and oppressed who come to our shores an unparalleled opportunity for the manifestation of brotherly-kindness and Christian love? Will we conduct our industries so fairly and justly, put our conscience and honor so thoroughly

into the products of our hands and mills, and transact our business on such terms of honesty and courtesy that every merchant ship will be a missionary ship, and every manufactured article shall speak to its user of the gospel of work?

We are being singled out among the nations of the world today as the most conspicuous friend of peace and as the "pioneer of that view that peace is the normal condition of mankind." In one year alone we concluded arbitration treaties with twenty-four governments, and during the period from 1903 to 1910 we made one hundred and three. The eyes of all men turn to us to lead them in banishing war. Will we appreciate our opportunity to "remove unreasoning anger from the councils of the nations?" As a nation will we say, as an honorable man would say: "If I have wronged anyone I will hasten to apologize and repair the injury; if anyone has wronged me I will follow the law of Christ in seeking to set him right, and, as far as in me lies, I will merit the blessing in store for the peacemakers?"

No other nation has ever had such an opportunity for service as the United States of America. No other nation ever had such a splendid chance to give the world a demonstration of a Republic of God. Shall we fail? Shall we go the way of those nations that, having seen the gleam, refused to follow, and, turning, walked the way of gathering gloom to darkness and the grave? Shall all the plans and purposes, and hopes and prayers, and services and sacrifices of all the statesmen, saints and heroes be in vain? Shall the God of the nations sift the dust of all the races to get material fine enough to make our people; set us in the forefront of the files of time; lead us to the mount of vision and opportunity and point the way to righteousness and service, honor and leadership, and then shall we not go?

Shall we not rather say: "If America is God's last effort in behalf of the human race," by His help it shall not fail? In her place among the nations of the earth she shall stand in righteousness, freedom, fraternity and peace as one who serveth; and wherever in all the world her flag is unfurled it shall speak to eager eyes like a beacon of hope?