

The Puritan Remnant.

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Isaiah X, 21. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

THE TWELFTH ANNUAL SERMON OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK, PREACHED AT THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE ON FOREFATHERS' SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th, 1911, BY THE VERY REVEREND WILLIAM M. GROSVENOR, D. D.

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No one can possibly think of the Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans of New England without entering immediately into the spirit of the Hebrew prophets. Puritanism was a renaissance of Judaism and the one distinguishing note of those ancient seers was their vision of the remnant. They saw evils coming in like a flood, but there was always the rainbow of hope, one bright sun beam flashing through the clouds; the nation will be utterly wasted, even destroyed, until only a tenth is left, that tenth will be devoured, chastisement after chastisement will sift the people, until the nation will be like a terebinth tree stripped of its leaves, its branches lopped off, and even the stump cut down close to the

ground; yet out of that seemingly dead stock a young shoot shall spring forth, the holy seed is alive within it, and is the substance thereof. There shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge according to the outward appearance nor as having respect unto the persons of men, nor for reward, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor and pass sentence with equity in defence of the rights of humble people. Isaiah has hope even though no one be left but his own son Shear-jashub so named because the words mean "The Remnant returns". A highway will be opened, Immanuel will lead the nation back.

The day has come for us here in America to think very seriously concerning the remnant. We are overwhelmed by an immense immigration and we must study once more the duties of the minority. If this sermon does nothing else, I trust it will lead you to read again Matthew Arnold's essay on Numbers. The Athens of

Eubulus was a most luxurious democracy. Plato confessed that Athens was doomed, its independence was soon to be taken away from it, its salvation depended upon the righteous minority. Plato however was hopeless, the minority was helpless. The only thing that Plato can suggest is for the righteous to stand aside under a wall and let the storm of dust and the hurricane of driving wind sweep past. Each righteous man might as well keep still, mind his own business and save his own soul out of the wreck. But the remnant of the Hebrew prophets are summoned to valiant service. Immanuel is the Saviour and they who follow him must restore the Nation. The seven thousand left in Israel must rally around Elijah and rescue the true worship. The remnant will not return as a poor band of ragged and starving refugees, but as a corps of brave soldiers ready for battle. In the righteous remnant lies all hope.

If the Pilgrim Fathers were a righteous remnant, we their sons are certainly a minority. We are scattered throughout the land. We have lost control of New England. Faneuil Hall is in an Irish city. Many beautiful colonial dwellings under the elms are crowded with Slavs and

Poles and Italians and French Canadians. The Roman Catholic spire overshadows the Meeting House. More than that, the *Anglo-Saxon* is now a minority; only a remnant is left of the sons of the Dutch and the Cavalier.

This organization of the New England Society is of immense value, not that it may boast of the past, but that by vivid remembrance of who and what we are, we may gain new courage to re-assert our place in the life of this growing democracy. All the Anglo-Saxons and all who wish to join them must unite in the preservation of those fundamental principles of life which are essential to the integrity of the Nation. If we will unite in any great cause, I believe nothing can resist us. Have we any one great cause to-day? Yes we have. And it is the same cause that drove our fathers across the sea; it is the right of every man to be himself, to live his own life as a freeman in the presence of Almighty God and the whole world.

But you say to me that individualism has done its work, its age is past. It stood for competition and selfishness. Its motto is each man for himself. To-day we are living in a higher atmosphere, and we possess a nobler spirit. We are thinking

of human brotherhood, of co-operation, of social responsibility, of the common good of the masses and the common rights of the whole people. The democratic spirit is spreading. Socialism is growing. Manhood suffrage is inevitable and Woman's suffrage is approaching. The final court of judgment is the majority of a free democracy, the consent of the governed. The one cure for the ills of freedom is more freedom. All we can do is to believe in the people, educate them, and trust them. Majorities must rule. The government of a self-righteous and superior remnant is a thing of the past.

We have had all sorts of government in the history of the past. We have had the patriarchal, the monarchy, the feudal system. We have had autocratic monarchy and constitutional monarchy. In ancient and modern times we have had aristocracies, and oligarchies, and every form of republic with and without constitutions, with plutocracies and committees and communes and parliaments. But the great movement of democracy has gone slowly forward. The problems of our modern life are too complex to be solved by individualism. Socialism is a new science dealing with new problems, or with old problems under

new conditions. The crowd, the mass, the people have always been a part of human society. Feudalism recognized them in a patriarchal fashion, the feudal lord caring for his retainers. At the Reformation the individual came forth from the crowd and stood alone in the presence of God claiming his right to the possession of his own soul. At the French Revolution the crowd itself emerged, became conscious of itself and of its solidarity and claimed in thunderous but incoherent voice the rights of the people to their corporate soul. The older word was spoken: Behold Lord I am here and the children whom thou hast given me. Then came the prophetic word, Lord here am I send me, and then in Jesus Christ all of us are brothers, "Now, therefore, we are all here present before God."

And through all these movements the individual with his personal rights, his passion to be himself, his conscience and will, has persisted. All through the past the righteous have been forever needed, and I do not for a single moment believe that any form of government, be it pure democracy or socialism will ever be strong enough to suppress or destroy the strong man. The democracy of the future will demand more and more equality

before law, with equality of opportunity. The whole brotherhood will live and let live, making juster laws. But nothing under Heaven can destroy personality. Socialism cannot do it, and socialism rightly understood does not seek to do it. Labor unions, corporations, trade conditions cannot do it, and if any scheme of government tries to do it, it will split upon that rock.

Have you ever read Prof. William James' description of Chautauqua? That ideal place where everything is perfect, and how he enjoyed it for a while, and then rushed out of it in revolt, when it became as vapid and suffocating and uninteresting as being imprisoned in a perfume laden hothouse. Human nature wants risks and dangers, and wild adventures. It hates perpetual similarity and stupid routine. A perfect state, an ideal city, a Utopia, the condition that democracy or socialism is supposed to bring, will last about as long as everything else that is human. It will last until people get bored with it or until they use it up. A building covered with statues of sentimental star-gazing angels appeals to no one, but it is another thing altogether to be surrounded with statues of the Saints who were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned,

stoned, torn asunder, men who never lived either in Chautauqua or Utopia, but who wandered in deserts and mountains and dens and caves of the earth, men who took a little ship across a wild sea and faced savages upon a rocky coast; followers not of a garlanded God, but of the crucified Master of the World.

A thousand years from now when the race has been educated, and Christ so merciful and so valiant really rules the world, the voice of the people will be the voice of God, but meanwhile the majority is sometimes right and sometimes wrong. Human nature is full of passion, uncontrolled emotions, hot-headed. Out of French Revolutions, that seek freedom, come Napoleons and Empires. Why is it that we have so little respect for politicians? To serve the state is the noblest thing a man can do and yet we sneer at it and despise it. It is caused by our truckling for votes, by the fear of the majority, by listening to the sound that comes along the ground and out of the ground and never rises above the ground. It is caused by our subserviency to party. Coke of Norfolk once said of the Parliament of his day that if "Ministers were to hold up a hat in the house and declare it to be a green bag, up would

come a procession of placemen and vote that it *was* a bag and not a hat". How the very name politician signifies to us trickery and evasion and cajolery and lying and slandering and utter untrustworthiness. In the long history of politics I have sometimes thought that Macchiavelli was as honest as any of them, for he proclaimed himself a rascal and reduced his rascality to a science. How can we really respect a body of men who will vote for such preposterous pensions, and reverently hide their plunder under the blood-stained flags of a war of forty years ago? How can we respect the judgment of the majority, when we remember how a great party flung itself at the feet of an untried and unknown man who made an eloquent speech about a cross of gold.

But the serious thing is this, whether the Sons of New England really care about the independence and the personal freedom in which their forefathers gloried. Some of us are smothered with luxury. All we want is to get behind the wall and escape the hurricane of flying dust. Thank God then that there are some of us who do care for a few things, for which we will fight. We will still fight for the right to conduct our own personal affairs and our honest and legiti-

mate business according to our conscience and not according to the dictation of trusts and labor unions. We must fight for our right to work for whom we please and for as much as we can get, without being murdered. We must fight for the Constitution with its checks and balances, the bulwark of our freedom. We must fight to keep Church and State forever separated. We must fight for our public schools against the machinations of an Italian hierarchy that is today endeavoring to undermine and destroy them. We must fight for Christian marriage and the sanctities and unities of our homes. We must fight for toleration, for the weak against the strong, for simple honesty, for the Ten Commandments. We must fight for straight Anglo-Saxon thinking and bold bluff honest action. We must fight to be ourselves in the midst of the false standards and the confusing moralities of our social and business life. We must learn to hold our own in the teeth of fierce passions, and to rouse ourselves from the enervating atmosphere of weak complaisance. We must get higher standards for our conscience, with a will of iron and a heart alert and strong and free. We must meet our crisis in life as Luther met his, "Here stand I, I can none

other." We can fight alone or together. A single man alone who cannot be cajoled, a splendid remnant that cannot be dismayed.

O Sons of New England, I pray you forget your money-making for a while. The love of money is a deadly drug, a vapor that poisons and kills the finer impulses of the soul. The glory of New England is its idealism. Before it is too late and the hordes of Europe and Asia have engulfed us, let us arise and fight, not with dreadnoughts, but for Puritan ideals and Puritan morals, for Anglo-Saxon freedom and Anglo-Saxon discipline, for Almighty God who is still for us, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, for Christ who sat alone upon the hill and wept over Jerusalem which killest the prophets, the Emanuel who was crucified rather than deny the truth, the Messiah whose word is righteousness, whose law is love and whose service is perfect freedom.

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