

Caesar or Christ

Christ is the Supreme Exemplar of the serving life. Christ alone dared the adventure of the complete integrity of the social order.

Autocracy cannot live with Christianity and democracy cannot live without it. Autocracy is built upon the control of the many by the selfish force of the few. Democracy is built upon the consent of the many and the common service of all. There are just two master ideals of nations and of men: the one, dominion over others by force for the selfish gain of a few—the ideal of Caesar; the other, service to others for the common good of all—the ideal of Christ. Between these two ideals there is an irreconcilable conflict, for the one issues in the dominion of a despotic class and the other in the dominion of a free people. The same conflict goes on in the life of every nation

and of every soul—selfishness versus service. Caesar versus Christ. This nation cannot be saved by sectarian or class-minded leadership, however sincere, able, or personally worthy. The leadership that will save America must be as large as the community, the state, the nation, the world, the leadership that regards every soul as of priceless worth, that respects the dignity of personality in rich and poor and old and young of every class and creed and tongue.

Let us interpret to the brain and heart of Christendom the meaning of this mighty war for the future of the human race. Let us declare its central significance as the triumph of democracy, the vindication of the worth of all productive labor for the integrity of the national life, and the essential unity of the free peoples of the earth. Let us proclaim Christ as the Founder of this democracy, the Exemplar of this integrity, the Incarnation of this unity. Let the

spirit of the risen Christ lift us above the bigotry of sect, the arrogance of class, the curse of self, and the prejudice of race and tongue.

Let us be consecrated to the whole program of the Master, individual and social. O friends, how this hour vindicates the necessity of His gospel if civilization is to survive! How it brings into judgment half-way living by the gospel, half-way teaching of the gospel, and half-way faith in the gospel! The only one who needs to look upon this hour with sorrow is that man or woman who has never been willing to see the whole gospel lived out in the world. They may well say: "Caesar has triumphed, Christ is dead." But those who know that Christ has never yet been accepted in any city, or state, or nation, and that the reason the world suffers as it does today is because of this denial of Him, may well proclaim that at last after nineteen hundred years it is made manifest that noth-

ing can save individuals, homes, communities, nations, and the world except Christ—Christ, a living reality in the whole life of the people throughout the world!

Let the churches of Christ enlist for this great adventure of the soul. Then shall we see the fulfilment of the promise of the fathers, a great, free people, with the opportunity for a decent human life guaranteed to every child born under the starry flag. And then shall abide with us efficiency, honesty, and discipline, the products of the deliberate will of free citizens in a Christian democracy. And at last through the blood and suffering of the peoples of the earth shall be won for individuals and nations freedom and peace throughout the world.

From "The Churches of Christ
in Time of War."

WITNESS COMMITTEE

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