

(March 8, 1915.)

## The Gospel of Force

BY R. C. SMITH, K.C.\*

AT a regular luncheon of the Club, held on the 8th March, Mr. Smith said:

*Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.*—With so cordial an introduction, it is difficult for me to divine whether this applause is owing to your sitting down or my rising. (Laughter.) I am delighted to be here to-day, sitting near to "Boanerges" (laughter) and to my *brother-in-law*, Mr. Justice Riddell. (Laughter.) Toronto is proverbially a hospitable city, and if one has the reputation of being a half decent sort of general "mixer," as they say I am, his friends rally around him to help him out. And I assure you I have not been without suggestions as to what I should say to you to-day, and—I think you will allow me the Hibernianism—particularly as to what I should *not* say. An officer of the Montreal Home Guard met me last week; we had both been out at dinner—at any rate I was at a very quiet dinner (laughter),—he had dined not wisely but too well. I asked him how the Home Guard movement was getting along. He replied: "The Home Guard—hic—is getting along—hic—very well—hic; but the commanding officer—hic—has no sinecure; he has got about three thousand men—hic—and what the devil can he do—hic—with three thousand s'gestions every day?" (Laughter.)

One of the first and most imperative suggestions as to what I should not say, was: "I wouldn't say anything about the Home Guard, if I were you; you know you don't know anything about the Home Guard, you can't know anything about it, and you will botch the whole thing if you refer to the Home Guard." There is enough human nature in me that when anyone tells me I must not refer to any subject, there immediately arise intellectual and moral reasons why I should refer to that particular subject. (Laughter.) So if you, sir, will kindly before I sit down remind me, I will say one or two things about the Home Guard. (Laughter.)

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Now to come to the war. I think no one who thinks and reads has any difficulty in agreeing with the leading thinkers in neutral countries in fixing the responsibility for this most inexcusable and dastardly war the world has ever seen, upon the German ruler and his immediate military advisers. (Hear, hear.) When some seven or eight years ago he was "disciplined," may I say? by his Chancellor, and warned that he should not again speak in a manner to involve the public policy of Germany, his pride was wounded, and from that moment he rid himself of everything progressive and liberal among his advisers, and deliberately surrounded himself with Ministers amenable to his desire. So it is utterly useless to say that the policy of Germany is not his policy. The attempt of England and Russia together to secure forty-eight hours' delay, in order that the resources of civilization might prevent such a catastrophe as the trouble between Austria and Russia threatened to cause,—was defeated by German influence. All these things fix the primary and immediate responsibility for the war upon the Kaiser and his military advisers.

But to-day there is no doubt that the German nation is practically behind the Kaiser. It would be folly to close our eyes to it. Is that accounted for upon the naked principle of patriotism, or is there something else to account for it? History abounds in examples of peoples and nations rallying to the support of their Governments without very much reference to the moral merits of the war, or even to the manner in which it is carried on. But the Germans were a thinking people. Some people say that though they were a thinking people their thinking was rather abstract, rather dreamy, rendering them open to conviction even by error or by half truth. I am not going to discuss that, but we must admit that they are a thinking people, and we must admit that to-day this thinking people is practically a unit behind the ferocious military oligarchy that controls the nation.

It seems to me that two things are principally responsible for this strange, and I may say strangely terrible spectacle. Immediately after the war of 1870 a propaganda was begun in Germany to the effect that the war was a victory of German culture; that German culture was the only culture that was cosmopolitan, that was adapted to every race and every condition of men. The doctrine of Nietzsche, of the survival of the fittest among nations, I suppose, was in reality the origin of the later shocking development in that teaching. His theory was simply founded upon this, that the stronger nation will survive, that the weaker nation will not

only disappear and go to the wall, so to speak, but that this is in the working out of the development of the laws of nature itself. It was a long cry from that very doubtful doctrine to the doctrines of Treitschke, Bernhardt, and their apologist, Professor Münsterberg, and others who followed later on. Even Nietzsche, who is generally classed with these—what shall we call them? apostles of frightfulness,—even Nietzsche repudiated the idea that the victory of 1870 was a victory for culture. He said, "Germany will make a grand escape after that victory if it does not turn out a national defeat! if she does not sacrifice the German mind to the German empire." And he concluded a most learned article on the subject in the words I quote: Goethe said, "It may be centuries before it can truly be said of us that we are far removed from barbarians," and he added: "German culture will survive, because French culture will live, and German culture will depend upon French culture in the future, as it has in the past." (Applause.)

That, however, did not prevent the development of this idea that in German efficiency, German uniformity, there was the salvation of the human race. And it did not prevent the current idea that the State represented force, that as German culture was appropriate for the world at large, it was the duty of the State as representing power, to impose that culture upon the world. Therefore the doctrine progressed. The State is the "Be-all" and the "End-all," and the individual has no rights against the State. The State is the custodian of power. Now that power is for the purpose of supporting what is German throughout the world. And we find its culmination in the frequent declarations of the Kaiser himself, that to Germany there are but two alternatives, world power or absolute ruin."

Now this doctrine of force, which has eliminated morals from politics altogether, is what has taken possession of the German people, and it is that which is responsible for this strange spectacle of a one time introspective and reflective people standing behind so unpardonable a crime as this war now ravaging the world. (Applause.)

We talk a great deal in general terms about the gospel of force. I am going to take the liberty, with your permission, of reading just a few sentences, of the words of German thinkers, of their philosophers, who represent the prevailing, current, dominant thought of Germany to-day,—a few words illustrating what this doctrine means, and to what frightful lengths it has gone. Lest I should be accused of making a

selection in a partisan spirit, I shall quote selections made by two Americans. One is the Hon. J. M. Beck, formerly Assistant Attorney-General of the United States. I understand he is to address you shortly? If so, I am glad I got here first. (Laughter.)

He gives a preparatory outline of the doctrine of Machiavelli that was at one time repudiated by every thinker in the world; repudiated by Shakespeare in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Machiavelli had become a byword for all the world, and his teaching scouted in the politics of every civilized nation.

This synopsis of the doctrine of Machiavelli, was taken from Symonds, the historian of the Renaissance, in "The Age of the Despot": "Machiavelli was the first in modern times to formulate the theory of government in which the interests of the rulers are alone regarded; a separation between statecraft and morality, which recognizes force and fraud among the legitimate means of attaining high political ends, which makes success alone the test of conduct, and which presupposes the corruption, baseness and venality of mankind at large."

Mr. Beck then selects a few sentences from Treitschke, in his lectures on "Politik." "Indeed Treitschke," in his lectures on *Politik*, which have become the gospel of Junkerdom, avowedly based his gospel of force upon the teaching of Machiavelli, for he points out that it was Machiavelli who first clearly saw that the State is power (*der Staat ist Macht*). Therefore "to care for this power is the highest moral duty of the State," and "of all political weaknesses that of feebleness is the most abominable and despicable; it is the sin against the holy spirit of politics." He therefore holds that the State, as the ultimate good "cannot bind its will for the future over against other States," and that international treaties are therefore only obligatory "for such time as the State may find to be convenient."

Thus Treitschke actually gives credit for the origin of this theory openly and avowedly to Machiavelli. Then he goes on to speak of war as "an ordinance set by God"; quoting the words of Bernhardt, that it is "a biological necessity," and that "the living God will see to it that war shall always recur as a terrible medicine for humanity." Therefore, he argues, "might is at once the supreme right, and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war," and war must give a "biologically just decision." (Sensation.)

Could anything be more inhuman, more brutal, than these aptly, cleverly chosen words, a "biologically just" result? In

other words, the weaker nation shall be crushed and bled and slaughtered by the stronger nation, and it is to be said after a deliberately provoked war, before Almighty God, that this is a biologically just decision!

Treitschke says and the statement is quoted by Bernhardt with approval, that "the End-all and Be-all of a State is power, and he who has not mind enough to look this truth in the face should not meddle with politics." To this Bernhardt adds that the State's highest moral duty is to increase its power, and in so doing, "the State is the sole judge of the morality of its own action. It is in fact above morality, or, in other words, whatever is necessary is moral."

Following this out, we have one more quotation from Bernhardt: "The State is a law unto itself. Weak nations have not the same right to live as powerful and vigorous nations." Then he goes on: "As to war, the powerful nation must not watch for a legitimate *casus belli*, but justify a deliberately provoked war." Then follow these words: "The happiest results have followed deliberately provoked wars. The prospects of success are brightest when the moment for declaring war can be selected in the interests of the political and military situation." These are the words quoted, and used by Bernhardt, a representative writer, and one most frequently quoted with approval, not nominally, but in sentiment, by the Kaiser himself.

Now one more—I won't burden you with the numerous quotations I might give you. I take this from Prof. Powys' little book "The War and Culture." It also is from Bernhardt: "The Christian idea of sacrifice for something higher does not exist for the State—for there is nothing higher than it in the world's history; consequently it cannot sacrifice itself to something higher." I am no preacher, nor the son of a preacher, nor am I worthy to preach, sir; but I believe in my conscience that the words of the lowly Nazarene will govern this world when Kaiser and Krupp are forgotten in ages of contemptible oblivion! (Applause.)

So, following out this idea, that the stronger nation is justified in making war upon the weaker nation, and that it need not justify itself, nor wait for any cause, we find that the German party had been preparing for years and years; the time had come; the naval policy was completed; the Kiel Canal was opened on the 1st of July; the clock of time had struck! Russia did everything in her power to preserve the peace; she went as far as any self-respecting nation could. The French tried to avert the catastrophe, and could not believe it

possible—not until President Poincaré asked the German Ambassador who had demanded his passport, "Is this absolutely irrevocable? Can civilization find no solution?" The Ambassador answered, "I am sorry to say it is." "Then," Poincaré replied, "France will endeavor to meet the situation as becomes her honor!" In five minutes every bell in Paris was ringing.

Then we were told, "We have a treaty with you that we have bound ourselves to observe; we have guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium by a solemn treaty in 1839, and lest there should be any doubt about it we reaffirmed it in 1911, and 1913, and we even acknowledged it in this year of grace 1914; but we don't propose to stand by it! We undertook with you to guarantee the neutrality of Belgium, but that does not apply to a time of war!"

"Neutrality!" What does "neutrality" mean? "Neutrality" means that there are belligerents somewhere! That neutrality of Belgium can well take care of itself in times of peace. The treaty is made for a time of war. The impudence and insolence of the statement that the exigencies of war absolved them from observing that treaty constituted the most formal challenge to war that any nation ever received! A treaty makes law between nations. If that law be displaced nothing but resort to arms remains. And Germany could not have declared war in any more deliberate way than when she said, "There is your treaty! We shall trample upon it. Do whatever you can!"

I was told the other day that, "England is the last country in the world that would go to war for a principle. England's necessities did not require her to go to war. But being chivalrous for a weak nation, she entered into the war." Supposing she did. We might have had a worse cause. But what are called questions of principle,—if you analyze them, do they not involve the nation's most sacred, vital interests? (Hear, hear.) We were in effect told then, that there were two alternatives open to England. After a thousand years of glorious history, during which the British flag has been respected the world over." Either step down to the position of a third class Power, or say as Sir Edward Grey did, in words that shall be memorable in our history, in answer to Germany's insolence: "Since Germany must have war, she shall have it in full measure!" (Applause.)

And then, sir, we awoke to the consciousness that a friendly Power, that had been frequenting the Mother Land and all her great Dominions, making fortunes among us, receiving

kindness and courtesy everywhere, had actually been at war with us for years! That she had been building concrete bases in our sleeping cities, and had been employing a system of espionage so contemptible that it meant a conspiracy against friendly feeling, a conspiracy against civilization itself! (Hear, hear.)

How was this declaration of force, this translation of doctrine into deeds,—how was it met by our Empire? The first thing that it has brought out, is the great, magnificent unity of the Empire. (Hear, hear, and applause.) In the trying moments, when the Government was carrying that frightful weight of responsibility, most strenuous political contentions were being carried on. Several questions divided the different parties in England, and the Government, with these dissensions at home, and political contests carried on with acrimony more severe than ever characterized English politics,—in one moment, sir, a "change comes over the spirit of their dreams." I will read, so you may have the simple wording of it, a letter written on August 2nd by Mr. Bonar Law to the Premier Mr. Asquith:

"Dear Mr. Asquith: Lord Lansdowne and I feel it our duty to inform you that in our opinion, as well as in that of all the colleagues whom we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honor and security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in supporting France and Russia at the present juncture; and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government in any measures they may consider necessary for that object. Yours very truly, A. Bonar Law." (Hear, hear.)

Simple but sublime! A "scrap of paper,"—but symbolizing the unity, and therefore the mighty power, of the Empire! (Applause.)

And so the Dominions over seas. Even South Africa—you remember, a few years ago, when it was questioned whether free government should be given to South Africa, many sincere people believed that to grant responsible government to the Boers in South Africa would be fraught with tremendous national danger. But free British institutions were granted; we trusted them, gave them free government; and the man who had been a leader of the forces against the Crown became Prime Minister. Will their loyalty stand the test? It was not long before that test was applied, and applied in a supreme manner. Will it stand the test of crushing out rebellion even among its own flesh and blood? But from the south there came back to the Mother Land, to the great Dominions throughout the world, to Germany above all, the inspiring

truth, that loyalty is even greater and higher than ties of flesh and blood! (Applause.) And the man who had been our enemy takes the field and leads the forces to crush out rebellion! He has planted the flag in Africa more firmly than ever before, and sent back word to England: "You have trusted us, and we have kept the faith!" (Applause.)

The Empire that can so co-ordinate the growth of the social and political life of these far remote dependencies, has not even begun to grow old! The dew of the morning is still upon her brow. She can look forward over the clouds of to-day to the brightness of to-morrow, beyond the sorrow and the sacrifice,—beyond the valor and the victory, to the centuries in which she shall be able to still maintain and prosecute her divinely appointed destiny of spreading throughout the world the principles of constitutional government and of civil and religious liberty. (Applause.)

I had intended to say something on the Monroe Doctrine. (Hear, hear.) But now I see my time has expired, and I know you are busy men, and have to go back—(Cries of "No, no!" and "Go on!"). I referred when speaking before a Canadian Club to the observations ex-President Taft made to the Outlook Club in New Jersey. His analysis of the Monroe Doctrine was simple, and was absolutely correct. Since then he has had the opportunity of speaking to you here. All that he then said was, that the Monroe Doctrine would not prevent an invasion of Canada, nor the exaction of an indemnity in case the Germans were victorious.

There is a great deal of misapprehension about the Monroe Doctrine. The words in which the Monroe Doctrine was promulgated by President Monroe in his Presidential address in 1823 are these:

"We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and other Powers, to declare, that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power, we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments which have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on careful consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling, in any other manner, their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

That is the Monroe Doctrine; there is nothing more in it. There is no writer on international law who supports the Monroe Doctrine upon any principles of law. I am sure my honorable friend to my right would bear me out in that. The Monroe Doctrine does not repose upon any principle of international law; it is not defended by any writer on international law. It is a declaration of American policy, that is effective, like a blockade, only so long as they make it effective. It is a declaration of the policy the Americans intend to pursue. You can't say anything more of it than that.

Speaking at Ottawa, I referred to the Monroe Doctrine. Last week I had the honor of meeting some prominent people in New York, who said to me, "You were a little snippy, in repudiating American help." "I was not aware," I replied, "that anything I said had been reported to you." "Oh, yes," they said, "it was reported. Of course it is right, but you might put it a little more gently." (Laughter.) "I think," I said, "I can recall the words I used, and I will repeat them for you now." I said this: "We would welcome the assistance of our great neighbor, but the Monroe Doctrine no thinking Canadian could for one instant rely upon." I said this further, gentlemen: "There is no protectorate over Canada. There is no suzerainty over Canada. When there is, and as soon as there is, the flag will have to be changed upon our public buildings. (Hear, hear.) Up to the present, we are satisfied with the flag that we have, and every Canadian, without any distinction, without reference to racial origin, creed or anything else, every Canadian is prepared to defend that same old flag." (Applause.)

I told them we could not rely upon the Monroe Doctrine; we must defend ourselves; we must defend this portion of the Empire. We value very highly the words and expressions and feelings of friendship and sympathy that we have received from all sides from our American friends. The honorable Judge to my right and I had the honor to be the guests of the State of New York on the occasion of the celebration of the hundred years of peace between the United States and the Empire, and the expression then of sympathy from representative people from all over that country, was certainly cheering and interesting to us. (Hear, hear.) We had their Secretary of State for the Navy, Mr. Daniels, who said, "I am here representing the Government of the United States, and I have to be extraordinarily careful in what I utter. I have my own opinion, and you have yours; and your opinion does not differ from my own, (laughter) and that opinion is

that we have no use for militarism!" (Applause.) I am quite sure Mr. Justice Riddell was not offended. I wasn't. (Laughter.) I didn't think that he referred to Kitchener's "contemptible army" (laughter); I didn't think he referred to the army from England and the volunteers from the various portions of the Empire. Kitchener's "contemptible army" has long since outlived that adjective, even in the mind of the unhappy monarch who so described it.

We value the expressions of sympathy from the United States, sincere on their part, but we have the duty of defending this portion of the Empire. Now this is the proper time to refer to the Home Guard. (Laughter and applause.) I am only going to say this, that those who originated it and those who joined it deserve credit; it is an honor to them. (Hear, hear.) And every man in the country should so regard it. (Applause.) And I am very pleased indeed to note that in a few days a Bill will be introduced at Ottawa recognizing the Home Guard and giving it a proper standing as a branch of His Majesty's forces. (Hear, hear.) It means something for men many of whom have passed their first youth (laughter)—I have almost passed it myself—it means something for them to join this movement, and the country should certainly regard them as patriotic sons of Canada; and we should wish them well in this movement, which should be given the unity and cohesion necessary to a military force. This Act, which will come before the House in a few days, will give this element. It is a patriotic movement, and it will go on conquering and to conquer. I think I have got over the Home Guard all right! (Laughter.)

Everyone asks, when will this thing be over? This is a war of liberty, if ever there was a war of liberty. But the English idea of liberty and the German idea of liberty are different. May I read you a few words from the great German poet, Heinrich Heine: "The Englishman loves liberty as his lawful wedded wife, the Frenchman as his loving mistress, the German loves her as an old grandmother, consigned to a remote place in the kitchen, never quite forgotten; but not brought forward very prominently into the light."

This is a war of liberty. We thought that the battles of liberty were over. When will this war be over? Not too soon, I hope! A patched-up peace would mean untold disaster for the future. (Hear, hear.) If you wish me to give my answer, I cannot do better than give you that answer in the words of the Prime Minister of England, uttered at the Guild Hall banquet, and repeated almost textually by him in

the House of Commons one week ago to-day—he has not changed his view.

"We shall not sheathe the sword which we have not lightly drawn until Belgium recovers in full measure more than all that she has sacrificed; until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression; until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed on an unassailable foundation; until the military domination of Prussia is fully and finally destroyed. That is the great task, worthy of a great nation. It means for its accomplishment that every man among us, old or young, rich or poor, busy or leisured, learned or simple, should give what he has and do what he can."

That is the task which we have undertaken, and it is the task which we must accomplish. (Hear, hear.) And what after all? We shall have the centuries of peace to develop our own ideals, our own thoughts, our own poetry, our own mode of life. And above all, our progress in all shall be consolidated and inspired by liberty. We shall not have imposed upon us the hideousness of cosmopolitan culture, drummed into us by the taskmasters of Germany. We shall live our lives, and the smaller nations shall live theirs. What is pure, good, idiomatic, what comes from the souls of the people, in invention, in poetry, and in art, the expression of the souls of the smaller as well as of the great nations,—we shall have free development, free growth of them all. And we shall above all, as I say, have this, the inspiration of freedom. The old principles for which this nation has fought through many bloody seas, and on many far-flung battle lines, are still to be the inspiration of mankind, the principles of truth, liberty, and justice! (Applause.)

In the words of the American poet, Whittier:

"But life shall on and upward go;  
The eternal step of progress beats  
To the grand anthem, calm and slow,  
That God repeats.

Take heart! The waster builds again  
A charmed life old goodness hath.  
The tares may perish, but the grain  
Is not for death

God works in all things; all obey  
His first propulsion from the night.  
Wake thou, and watch! The world is grey  
With morning light!" (Long applause.)