

(gentle music)

Speaker: "And when Jesus drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it. saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." What I am prompted to say this morning, may turn out to be neither a sermon nor the lecture. And if you arrive at that conclusion, I shall have no quarrel with it. Perhaps it may prove to be, to steal a phrase from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, simply an aid to reflection. I hope also, and they took Christian reflection. Surely it is the business of intelligence to reflect upon experience to the end of guiding it rather than being driven by it and let engulfed in it. Likewise, it is the business of Christian intelligence to do the same thing, with a view to illuminating the dark places of life, we must traverse, we are the light of the Christian faith. Recently, we have had quite an experience, for some, it was a challenge of faith and to faith. For some it took the form of an encounter with nothingness. Two weeks ago, this morning, we called the university to prayer, in a moment of grave human crisis. It was a crisis not only of our own nation, but some believe for the whole of mankind. That is if we are to accredit the experts regarding the potentials of Thermo nuclear warfare. And that same Sunday evening, the crisis had eased in the succeeding days that receded, but who even yet can say it has passed. Some fear it will not pass in our time. There are some who believe that during those few critical days, all of us stood as it were on a brink of doom, looking however, incredulously into an indescribable abes. Imagination, fortunately was incompetent for the task and therefore perhaps saved us from panic. Nevertheless, perhaps no previous moment in human history ever presented to so many, so playing a prospect of so great a loss. Whether we were men and women of faith, or of little faith, or of no faith, for some hours and days, we all looked intermittently, I believe into the face of the ultimate. To say so now with candor is part of what I mean by reflection upon experience. If we looked into the face of the ultimate, it is also a part of reflection to ask ourselves, what did we see there? This of course is everyone's own secrets. Some perhaps found themselves asking the question of our scripture of the morning, and the things which thou has prepared, whose shall they be? But this perhaps only gives us away, but I suspect that what we had clearest glimpse of in confronting the ultimate was ourselves. The kind of people we are, as gauged by the things we were in danger of losing. What came to focus were the things we have lived for and by, the things which we have allowed to confer our customary sense of identity and well-being and the loss of which threatened to annihilate boat. Who, for example, would we be without institutional and legal structures? Our businesses, the social arrangements in which we find our place, social security, family life, home, school, books, records, TV, automobile, scooters, boats, horses, dogs, bird, gun, stocks, yes, even in their present declined bonds, bank accounts and out on name clubs, who would we be without these and the prospect of a summer vacation? So thou has much good, but who and what would we be without them? Were we to have any being left in their absence? This was one of the questions. Now, on reflection, I suspect that the measure in which our identity and sense of wellbeing is in fact manifest to us in association with these things, the more the ultimate confronting us in those days took on the aspect of total loss. On further reflection, I suspect also that the more we find our identity through association with these things, the more we are prone as individuals or as a nation to understand our defense against total loss as a defense of these

things. For it is in terms of these visible and tangible structures and their continuing availability that we tend to apprehend our identity and measure our wellbeing and to retain our assurance of both. But in the extremity of those days, the material structures that give assurance of our identity were seemingly quite defenseless. Unto that extend in this plain that we in those days were also quite defenseless. And so I could not help recalling again and again in those days and since the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem. "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." And what shall we say to these things? Shall we say, I will say to my soul, so they'll hast much goods. Yes. But in the hour of defenselessness, there is no assurance in it. And hence we are ones to concede. And so as he, lay it up treasure for himself, and this is not rich toward God. Jesus laments over Jerusalem, was the compassion of infinite regret for the blindness of his own people. If his history was to show, it was too late for Jerusalem. then further in reflection, urge the question, was it also too late for us? If after two millennia, we did not yet know the things that belong on to peace. Was there now to be no more reprieve, no chance for further learning. And the crisis was ample proof of our little learning, ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth, in the words of the collect, this dispute. This despite the generality of our education, the multiplication of our many knowledges, the vast resources of our libraries and our monumental universities. We're not even these, especially the universities, the servants of governments in the business of something called national defense. If these two, along with everything else, slithered towards the brink of ruin with no sure grasp upon the things that belong on the peace then was visible elsewhere. Let's admit it. In some, reflection strongly suggests that the crisis through which mankind recently passed, proclaimed rather conspicuously the bankruptcy of human resourcefulness. And this, we better understand if we are to learn anything from civilizations, recent brush with death on a scaffold, the trapdoor of which was somehow, somehow not sprung. And the bankruptcy was this, that there was no way less to peace except by incurring the jeopardy of total war. The fearful ordeal was premised upon the supposition that no way remain to preserve the material and institutional structures, upon which our identity and well-being as a people depend, save at the calculated risk of their extermination. Reflection suggests in retrospect, that Bertrand Russell, the Mad Hatter of modern philosophy, was not all together wrong, in this course was madness because in the interest of civilizations defense, it took it as its means what must become if you used, man's final self reputation. Employing the ultimate threat, it risked the total destruction of a good it aim to conserve. And pursuing the preservation of some good, it the risked, I think, the annihilation of the general good. Russell calls this madness. As a logician, he does rightly, it is in principle, self reputation or a kind of existential self contradiction. Now, despite the Bravos of all the party liners at that time seeking election, reflection suggests that human affairs has reached the point of ultimate absurdity. When sincere but helpless governmental leaders, are endorsed to the genocidal expedient of defending their people's existence by means which it's actually employed, seem to assure the destruction of that existence and that wellbeing. But this friends is where we are. It is helpless self computation. It is bankruptcy of human resourcefulness and a governmental order. All further discussion, it seems to me begins here. Now political orders, commonly called governments are legitimate, as every political theorist might know, only if the order they enforce is not imperiled by the means through which they enforce it. Or again, a government can justify its right of rule only if the good it secures by the exercise of its lawful power is greater than the limitations it imposes in restraint of disorder. Or once more, a government is legitimized, if the sacrifices it exacts of its citizen ray for the common good do not exceed the benefits, it'd be stolen. But in our recent brush with that, you know, our recent crisis there is disclosed, what for a long time has been

evident in an atomic age, this, that in atomic power, a world power can now guarantee the material structures of the nation only at the risk of destroying all of them. The part from some mysterious divine overruling, it cannot venture the risk without accepting the eventuality. This does not take courage, I think, but something more nearly like the resolution of desperation and bankruptcy. Reflection suggests that the new political fact of our time is that sovereign nations with the power of total destruction have outlived both their utility and their justification. They point beyond themselves to an imperative necessity, no longer Tennyson's dream but a desperate need of a parliament of nations in the Federation of the world. Now, there is such a thing as Christian reflection in addition to just playing reflection. So then we asked, what can we say about these annihilating absurdities of modern man's predicament from the standpoint of the Christian faith? What can we say? Perhaps this in the first place, when sovereign states, in the interest of human good. Yes, in the interest of human good, calculating the risk the annihilation of human good. They have not only attained to bankruptcy of their powers for good and to absurdity of self contradiction, they do something worse in the Christian view of the matter. They've adventure to become as God knowing good and evil. For no government can risk the wellbeing of its people at the jeopardy of the existence of its people, without pretending to know what it is not given to man to know, namely that non-existence is preferable to limitation of existence. But as this is the presumption of the suicide, it is also the presumption of the genocide. Russell May call it madness. The Greeks called it hebras, more presumption to deity, For Christians, I am obliged to say, most call it the sin of blasphemy. It is no excuse to say that some governments find themselves in this horrible dilemma, they do indeed. And this because of an utterly new fact in human history, that wasn't the fact, the decade ago. That is the fact of national sovereignty, and it's in compatibility with another fact, man's new technological capacity for total destruction. Our recent encounter with nothing is powerfully illumines, the defenselessness of mankind against these two facts in combination. However, well intentioned the governmental power that combines them, regardingly. The time is now overdue, for the Christian conscience to inform itself on three questions. First, what are the exercise of such dual power as I have described and the decision to do so, is really courage or the hopeless resolution of governmental desperation. Two: whether this exercise of power is the just rule of the governed or something that approximates tyranny? Three: whether it is defense of the right, or from the Christian standpoint, something approaching the user patient of God's power of our human life and destiny? On these questions, the Christian conscience needs to become informed. Those to be sure who do not believe in God, do not mind playing God. Indeed they have no God to stop them and possibly no alternative. But it is almost as bad and certainly justice dangerous to play God unintentionally and unwittingly despite our protestations. And this brings me to a second point in Christian reflection upon our recent and continuing encounter with nothingness, whatever the forthcoming symposium on dimensions of defense may disclose this week for our edification, it would do well to begin by recognizing that this is not a dangerous world merely because in it, there are bad guys who endanger good guys, that is true. The problem, however, is somewhat more subtle from the Christian standpoint. And from this standpoint, the world is hideous is in a hideously dangerous position, because there are no guys at all good enough to exercise at one and the same time, the power of national sovereignty and the power of thermonuclear destruction. I said that 16 years ago in this pulpit. I think it may be appropriate to say it again. A new fact of our time is that with the present level of so-called technological achievements, the price tag plan lay, the price tag of unrestricted national sovereignty seems to be the perpetual risk of both self-annihilation and genocide. In such a world, the experts who take it for granted. And simply the highly informed bookies, who hope they know how to read

and play the odd. But those who do not understand the new fact of our time cannot hope to begin to learn for our time, the things that belong on to peace. Finally, from our recent encounter with nothingness, there is a third reflection that is assisted by our Christian faith. It is indeed the hard core of the gospel, it has come to pass in our time that not suicide, but genocide is the likely option before us. So if we, as a nation and the people are reduced to the absurdity of destroying ourselves in defense of ourselves, then it might be, we are in great need of a new concept of defense. And point of fact, we might be in the world might be just right for serious attention to the paradox of the Christian faith. The paradox was long ago offered in our Lord's familiar words, that were not very well understood by Jerusalem. "He that strives to save his own life shall lose it." That's the first part. And the second is, the absurdity or apparent absurdity that "he who is prepared to lose his own life for God's sake shall keep it." The new fact of our time is, that mere self defensiveness is with diabolic logic the surest way to self-destruction. Never before in history was it so plainly evident that he, that takes to the sword shall perish by the sword. Never before it wasn't so manifest that in this course do not lie the things that belong on the peace. I may have not be on full and deep reflection, that the way out of this perpetual existence under the sword of Damocles is the other way, not the way of self reputation and contradiction, but the way of paradox. The way that was hid from the eyes of Jesus' contemporaries and is still largely hid from ours. Paradox is the way of seeming contradiction, that is however, actually self confirmation. It is the way of hidden wisdom and apparent losing of the life as the only way to find and keep it. This can be translated into the political realities of our world. It is not restricted to the sacrifice of the cross on Calvary, though the cross is it's everlasting sign and Sentinel in terms of the political realities of our time. This losing the life is not primarily our first of all world disarmament, disarmament will be its consequence. Losing the life means for our time and history, I think the limitation of national sovereignty, in a real Federation of national states under the rule of world law. As a nation, right now, we have our opportunity as well as recognize our desperate need and clear a directive to enhance the power and authority of the United nations, to assist in every way we are able to assist it, to transcend its limited sovereignty and to advance into a real Federation of people. This is the only answer to the threat of Cuba. It is impossible, consider the alternative. This I believe is what it means today as a nation, in terms of political realities, to lose our life in order to find it, this or something like it is the will of God for our time. And all of that will, I do not hesitate to say that the lady who died in New York this past week was a prop. This is that which truly come parts with the paradox of the gospel and must replace the imperiling, and self-destructive contradiction within mankind, present international political existence. We do not learn these things, the things which belong onto peace and our true defense, then they shall forever be hid from our eyes. In such a case, Jesus laments over Jerusalem will be repeated over the Gothams of the 20th century. James Russell has it about right here in, once to every man with nation comes the moment to decide in the strife of proof with fault sword, for the good or evil side, by the light of burning martyrs. Christ by bleeding feet we track, toiling up new Calvary's ever with a cross that turns not back. New occasion, teach new duty. Time makes ancient good on coop. They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast of proof. Oh man, let us pray. Now, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. (background noise drowns out other sounds)