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THE MERCIFUL JUDGMENTS OF GOD

The two profound attitudes which best become America in these days are repentance and righteousness. These are very old-fashioned words but they are exceedingly fundamental to the Christian life and peace of a nation. With all the good that can be attributed to America and to individual American citizens, the fact is that very much is the matter with our corporate life - so much so that the Saturday Evening Post, in an editorial recently, in reply to readers who complain about having our delinquencies called to their attention, and plead for something "constructive," made this statement: "Now that we are in the midst of the pile-up, it does not seem altogether churlish to observe that in certain periods the most 'positive' course you can take is to be against practically everything." The title of the editorial was, "It Certainly Would Be Nice To Be 'Constructive.'"

Unless America can come to a genuine and humble penitence for her greed, pharasaic superiority, crime, intemperance, and immorality, it seems highly doubtful that she will be able to exercise any decisive leadership in the world at large. And this is true at a time when the leadership of America seems quite imperative. It still is true that "righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people."

Amos was a humble but thoroughly convinced prophet. Many of his statements seem to us quite simple and almost primitive. While we may know a great deal more science these days than he did, and may be able to understand the elements much more clearly, it is by no means sure that the central secret of the universe is more clearly understood by us. That person who sees God working in all of the areas of life, including the physical and material, is nearer the secret of the universe than those who see all the forces except God, who is the only true source. The burden of the message of Amos to his nation was that God had visited them again and again with great and severe judgments. These messengers to that depraved period were famine and drought, pestilence and war, and the like. Amos saw in these disasters not only the threat to the stability of his people but also the judgments of God against them. It was the merciful pleading of God to them to turn back. Five times in the fourth chapter of his book he reaches this conclusion: "And yet have they not returned unto the Lord."

May it not be that God is trying in these critical days to break through and call His people to turn back before it is too late? Dr. Adolph Keller, one of this generation's great souls, has reminded us in his book, "It is Five Minutes to Twelve." We cannot afford to be indecisive. It is too late to dilly-dally. Time is getting away. A generation which has witnessed twenty-two millions of its finest young men blown to their death,

Which has spent over a million million dollars in the waste and destruction of war, and which has hanging over it like the sword of Damocles the atomic bomb, needs to awake and decide its direction.

Where, then, shall we begin? It is both cheap and commonplace to blame it all on the President, or on Congress, or to expect the Government to solve the problem. Things desired do not get accomplished particularly in a democracy that way. All things Christian begin with the individual and then move out to their social applications. It is my firm conviction that if these dread evils in our civilization are to be checked it will be by youth. To limit that possibility somewhat further, it will be, I think, by Christian youth, intelligent, educated, convinced, and determined. In the defense of democracy, for the cause of peace, with passionate interest in humanity, and for the sake of Christ, let us return and take up the torch.