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citoyen manifeste son sentiment. Mais ce sera parfois le cas à propos d'une élection. Il suffira que l'on ait, d'une manière explicite ou tacite, reconnu le droit de tel ou tel partie à présenter un candidat, pour que les chefs de ce parti, ou leurs acolytes les plus zélés, entendent traiter l'affaire comme si elle leur était personnelle. Il y a là un abus contre lequel nous devons réagir énergiquement.

Au cours de la campagne qui a précédé l'élection du successeur de M. Motta, un journal conservateur romand a relevé avec aigreur que des gens qui n'avaient rien de commun avec la droite se mêlaient de donner à celle-ci des conseils et des avertissements quant au choix d'un conseiller fédéral. "C'est, ajoutait-il, un soin dont nous les dispensons."

Il semblait donc que, le candidat devant être choisi parmi les conservateurs, seul le parti conservateur eût son mot à dire. C'est là une prétention inconcevable, que l'on ne saurait tolérer. L'élection d'un membre du Conseil fédéral intéresse tous les citoyens; tous ont le droit de s'en occuper, de marquer leurs préférences, et cette faculté appartient également aux journaux qui, sans être les organes d'un parti, doivent rendre compte à leurs lecteurs des événements politiques.

Ainsi que M. Motta le disait fort bien, en 1911, lors de son accession au pouvoir central, un conseiller fédéral cesse d'être l'homme d'un parti et d'une région pour se mettre au service du pays tout entier. Le regretté magistrat n'aurait jamais souscrit à la thèse selon laquelle l'élection d'un membre du directoire helvétique est l'affaire interne d'un parti politique.

Nous venons de citer un simple exemple, dont il faut se garder de tirer des conclusions généralisées. Mais l'occasion est bonne pour rappeler — puisque c'est nécessaire — que si le rôle des partis est important et utile, les citoyens qui préfèrent garder toute leur indépendance jouissent des mêmes prérogatives que les autres.

(La Tribune de Genève.)

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## SWISS FREEDOM AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

(The following is the remarkable translation, rendered by a prominent City banker, of a sermon preached by Prof. Dr. Emil Brunner, of the Zurich University, to a large gathering of soldiers and civilians in the Exhibition Hall at Zurich, on September 17th, 1939, i.e., the Jeûne Fédéral. Though the article has been handed to us some months ago, its publication has been held back until it appeared in the current number of "Round Table"; we are sure that even to-day it has lost nothing of its rousing appeal and deep meaning. Ed. S.O.)

This day is known as the Federal Day of Thanksgiving, Penance and Prayer. By that we mean that our fathers, who ordained by a law of the federation that the third Sunday in September should have this character, were thus expressing their recognition that Prayer, Penance and Thanksgiving and the Swiss Confederation belong together. To-day, barely a fortnight after our people have been roused from peace by the tocsins of the European war and have been called to arms, it is easier than in quieter times for us to grasp the deep truth that lies in this federal confession of our fathers. Thanksgiving, Heartsearching and Prayer are the foundations of a strong and a free Switzerland.

*Thanksgiving.*

Can we give thanks even to-day? Surely, to-day more than ever. No one knows what will be left of the Europe of to-day or of Western civilization at the end of this catastrophe. But one thing we know: God will still be there and, though nothing is left standing of what we have built, His Kingdom will still stand. Through all conflicts He will bring to its accomplishment His plan which He has revealed to us in Jesus Christ, His Son. That we know this because He himself has told it to us and tells it to us ever again in ground enough for thanksgiving. One day Switzerland will exist no more, one day each of us will have left this home for ever, but God's Kingdom endures for eternity. Therefore our thanks for this must come first. If we put first not God and the things that are God's but ourselves, our country and our freedom, then we have already laid the axe to the root of that freedom. Where the nation and the state take the first place and not God, there is the end of freedom. That is the lesson of our time.

But it is this God, the Lord and Creator, who gave us our country and our freedom. The Swiss Confederation is the work of brave men who were ready for sacrifices. Let us keep their memory in thankfulness. Yet Switzerland and its freedom are not primarily the work of men, but the gift of God. We did not ourselves create this country in the middle of Europe, this country of heights, of springs and of frontiers, and we did not place ourselves in it. History teaches us that exceptionally fortunate conditions made possible the union of the Confederates and the maintenance of that union alone of all the similar confederations of those days. Unbelievers call these circumstances fortuitous, we Christians know that God's Providence so ordained it.

Swiss freedom has a character of its own with which the much later and different free institutions of other nations cannot be compared. Switzerland is a Union and stands as a Union down to our day. The Union is not the Government in Bern, but the will of

the Confederates, of the communes and cantons, to form one whole for mutual aid. The 3,000 communal flags and the twenty-two cantonal banners are more than a fine decoration for our national exhibition, they are at once an admission and a warning: we must and we will help one another, we of German Switzerland those of French Switzerland, we who are stronger those who are weaker, with our votes and our taxes, without grumbling and in joyfulness, even when it goes against the grain. Only in such thankful readiness to help can our Union live. Switzerland is no fact of nature, like other countries; it is a moral fact and rests on the will to unity and the loyalty to unity of the Confederates. In so far as this sentiment of unity and of willingness to help is a living thing, in so far, but not otherwise, is there strength and life in the Confederation.

Union means "One for all, all for one." The Confederation was always strong when these words were true and weak when they degenerated into a phrase. But Switzerland is not merely an association, but an association under oath (*Eidgenossenschaft*), a Union before God, a Union in which He is the connecting bond. If God ceases to be the cornerstone of Swiss union, then the association under oath will become a mere association for profit, then the Union will founder. And the same is true of freedom. The centuries have shown where freedom without God leads — to anarchy. When every one is his own master, freedom becomes the struggle of all against all. And this anarchy cries out, as we have learnt in the last twenty years, for dictatorship, for the rule of force. We people of Switzerland owe it to the merciful Providence of God that we have not sunk to such depths here at home, for even here the evil spirits of disruption and force have walked abroad. Too many even of our own people have forgotten that freedom without God is the decay of community, community without God is union under compulsion. Only when we recognise God without reserve as the Lord can there be freedom with authority, independence with community. He who owns God as his Master is at once free and bond, and it is only of such that a Union can be made and maintained. The thankful recognition of God the Lord is the backbone of the Confederation and the marrow of its freedom.

*Penance.*

And so we come to the enemies of Swiss freedom. The enemies within are more dangerous than those

without. Switzerland has only been conquered by its enemies without when it had first been undermined by those within. I wish to name to you the four greatest enemies of Swiss freedom, so that we may know them and hate and resist them. The first is the perversion of that principle on which our Union is founded from "One for all, all for one" into its opposite, "All for me, I for none." The old Confederation more than once came to the edge of ruin, because the selfishness of cantons or of classes outweighed their sense of community. So it was after the wars with Burgundy and in the French days of 1798. We can thank God that before the present trial of strength He allowed us through our national exhibition to make good much in which we had gone astray by denying the confederate spirit of the Union. If we look on the Union as a milch cow from which we are each to draw all we can, we must perish. How often in our days has the Federal Parliament seemed to be only a party mart, how often have the rights of minorities been overridden by a majority at the polls, how often has federal help gone not where it was most needed, but where there were most votes to be had. And how many of us are in the habit of grumbling and of evading when there are taxes to be paid. How shall we now behave when food is to be rationed and taxes will mount higher? Shall we again try to put off the burden on to the next generation? Let us not forget that the foundation of the Union is those words of Holy Writ, "Let each one of you bear the other's burden."

The second enemy is materialism. In plain language, "Above all I want a good time." Remember those diagrams in the exhibition: "How Switzerland is growing grey." It is more popular to limit children than to limit our pleasures. Even in the crisis Switzerland was a country of festivals. There are many who think, "Bread is worth more than freedom, and cake more than bread." How great would be the power of resistance of our people if some enemy from without said, "Give up your independence or we will make you into a nation of paupers"? What we call the mentality of the hotel-keeper is to be found far and wide in all classes. How many of us believe, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you"?

The third enemy is smallness of spirit and the anxious striving after security that flows from it. The founding of the old Confederation was a "venture of faith." By all the calculations of probability the Confederates should have been defeated and destroyed at Morgarten, Sempach and Murten. If the Swiss of old had lived by the light of that principle which is so widely honoured to-day — "I shall not take part unless you can guarantee success" — no oath would ever have been taken on the Rütli. What future has Switzerland if it becomes in increasing measure a vast insurance institution? The totalitarian revolutions have owed their immense success above all to their appeal to the daring of youth and their capacity to call into being a passionate faith. It was a false daring and a pernicious, fanatical and inhuman faith, and thus it has led inevitably to catastrophe. Let us guard against *this* daring and *this* passion. But to be without passion is as false as to be fanatical. There is a daring and a passion that lead not to fanaticism and inhumanity but to true humanity, which is trust in

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God and the passionate love of our fellow men that springs from that trust. The great men of Switzerland, from Nicholas von der Flüe and Huldreich Zwingli to Pestalozzi and Dunant, were great spirits because they had this true daring and this true passion. They were fanatics for the Kingdom of God and the dignity of mankind.

The fourth enemy is self-righteousness and that priggish and carping outlook to which it leads. Was it not the greatest of all the wonders of our national exhibition that for once we found all Switzerland united in praise, and for once heard no captious voice? But the exhibition will soon be over. Who will then drive out of us the opinion that we are better than others and know better than others? The only radical remedy against that opinion is belief in God, before whom we have nothing of which to boast, God who pardons us in His mercy alone. Or shall we pretend to know even that better than God, who says to us "Thou art a sinner and hast need of redemption by Jesus Christ"?

#### *Prayer.*

He who does not pray is self-sufficient and his own master. To give up prayer is the first step to self-idolatry. We see to-day where the self-idolatry of men and of nations leads. To pray means to place ourselves with thankfulness and humility under God's will. There are many who think that prayer is unmanly. The heroes of Morgarten, of Sempach and of Murten did not hold that opinion. They prayed before their battles and gave the honour to God after their victories. Our greatest men knew that true humility is the only real magnanimity. For humility is the right measure of what God is and what we are.

From humility grows humanity, pure goodness. Remember the three crosses, for they are the Swiss confession of faith. The Swiss cross had its origin and its power in the Cross of Christ and finds its destiny in the Red Cross, in the service of reconciliation and active brotherly love. From God's love which He gave us in the Cross of Christ comes true humanity. Love from God alone is goodness without sentimentality, strength without brutality.

Such love we cannot create, it is grace. It comes from prayer in faith, from the converse of the creature with the Creator. The destiny of Switzerland in the world, before all other nations, is to seek for greatness in this helpful love. Switzerland would lose her honour if she refused, at this hour of all others, when she is spared the miseries of war, to give shelter and help to refugees and emigrants who need comfort.

We can be great in service only and not in ruling others, and thus we can be great only through our humble faith in Him who alone is great. Our Swiss people have been placed not by their own eminence but by the grace of God the Creator at the sources of the rivers of Europe, as their wardens. Again not through our own eminence, but by God's merciful Providence, we are wardens to-day in the spiritual sense also. It is our duty to watch over the sources of the best spiritual tradition of Europe. We cannot guard those sources except by keeping them pure, here amongst ourselves. The root of all true humanity lies in reverence for Him from whom all life flows. And so the source which above all others we must keep pure is that from which God's own water of life springs, the Holy Word of His revelation. If that spring is choked, then our soul will die and the soul of the Swiss nation will die. If ever the Swiss nation should cease

to be a people that prays to God and believes in Him and hearkens unto Him, that will be the end of our mission amongst the nations of the world.

Swiss freedom and the Sovereignty of God are not just beautiful ideas with which we can intoxicate ourselves and about which we can make fine speeches. They demand to be turned into realities, they cost a high price, they claim our whole devotion. What sort of price are you ready to pay? So far we are not called on to face the ordeal by blood — may the Lord of the destinies of nations spare us that once more — but out there they are fighting for our freedom. What are we to offer in return? Shall we willingly make the sacrifices that are asked of us? Shall we willingly deprive ourselves to help others? What is your voluntary sacrifice?

It is only when our people turn again to God that we can stem the flood of selfish enjoyment and that we can overcome self-seeking and destructive criticism and cowardice. A godless people has no moral reserves. Swiss freedom without the reign of God is like a branch sawn from a tree. There may still be fruit on the branch, but before another year it will have withered away. A living force for good can come only from a connection with the source of goodness. What are we doing to establish this connection, to maintain and to strengthen it? Through the meadows and fields of the mountain parish in Glarus, where for many years I worked as pastor, there stretched a high-tension line from a large power-station. But the parish had no benefit from it, because it had no connection to this stream of power which passed it by. And then those mountain peasants thought of something; they built a transformer and linked their network to the great power stream. Since then they have had all the light and warmth they needed. That is the question for every one of us citizens of Switzerland, the question on the answer to which everything turns: "will you do likewise?" Will you do likewise? Will you seek to be joined to that great source of strength, which alone dispenses the light and power of goodness? Will you set aside a short time each day to hear God's word and speak with Him? He who does that will learn that community with God creates new life, neighbourly love and that unshakable trust in the ultimate victory of righteousness which is our pressing need to-day.

People of Switzerland, *here* lie the strong roots of your power. My country, hear the word of the Lord.

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