

SPEECH BY THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

It is of profound importance in these tense and difficult days to understand the situation in which we are placed. We need knowledge of facts and all too frequently knowledge of facts is denied to us, sometimes deliberately so.

To be deprived of knowledge is to walk dangerously in the dark.

The past week has provided the most glaring instance of such deprivation of knowledge in my experience. Hence this sermon to-night.

It has been in the power of the press to impart knowledge just released of the greatest man-made upheaval of nature of all time. The wires of the press agencies have tingled with terrifying news, headline news, news of supreme importance to every living man, woman and child. And the National morning press was dumb or almost dumb.

In the Pacific Ocean, at Bikini in the Marshall Islands, a Hydrogen Bomb has been exploded. The shock and its aftermath were terrible. A Japanese fishing vessel with a crew of 23, 91 miles distant from the dropped bomb, reeled with the blast. White ash fell. Irritation of the skin began, followed by burn-like sores. Grave sickness supervened. The very fish of the catch were radio-active. Merely to stand near the dead fish was to court disaster and probable death. Tokyo was in panic.

On an unspecified island atleast 50 or 60 miles away and supposed to be in the safety zone, 236 Native islanders together with 17 Westerners, presumably Americans suffered grievous damage.

The dropped bomb was 600 times more powerful than that which destroyed Hiroshima, nine years ago. Equivalent to six million tons of T.N.T. it was equal in devastating power, on a rough estimate to all the T.N.T. bombs dropped in World War II.

After a silence of two years, an official report recently published records the dropping of the first Hydrogen bomb. It fell on an ocean island. The island entirely disappeared and a cavern, capable of containing the corpses of the entire human race of to-day, was carved in the bed of the sea.

The bomb dropped on March 1st was vastly more devastating. Scientists say they can produce one ten times greater still. Against such bombs defence is useless.

Eight such bombs dropped in a chain along England could obliterate all life on this island. Radio-guided missiles would hardly be needed. A near miss of 20 miles, if London were the target, would matter little; London would be destroyed. Falling into the sea such a bomb could destroy all fish in a wide neighbourhood, and the Channel would be rendered unsafe for shipping. Radio-active spray could carry death far and wide. How long the deadly gamma rays last, no one knows; but even now, 9 years after Hiroshima, an American Scientific Commission is daily discovering ever-new facts of deadly consequences.

This thing has happened.

This bomb with effects transcending all calculation has fallen.

A Hydrogen bomb equivalent to 6 million tons of T.N.T. has been discharged with terrifying effect.

Disaster akin to all this might at any moment recoil against England if through some hasty move General Eisenhower--should that new "American strategy" as first put forth past unchallenged--were to launch an all out atomic attack and precipitate a Third World War.

American could launch a Hydrogen Bomb without consultation. Russia could retaliate with bombs as vast or vaster. For reports, according to London's Conservative newspaper 'The Recorder', that Russia is ahead of the U.S. in the Hydrogen bomb race are disturbing top Government circles in Britain and America.

Here is our peril.

But here also, I would add, is our hope. Here certainly is a challenge to all Christian people and to lovers of peace everywhere.

For Russia seeks to ban the bomb totally. During nine successive years Russia has urged the banning of all weapons of mass destruction.

She urged it before she possessed the atom bomb.

She urged it after such possession.

She urged it before she possessed the Hydrogen Bomb.

She urges it still, and immediately after she announced her achievement.

Russia makes no threats, switches her war-time to peace-time production and bids us join in competition, not of armaments, but of goods for the home.

If ever, then, there was a duty laid upon a Christian people, it is the duty of insisting that negotiation be renewed at once to with a view to a Universal Banning and that the masses are supplied with the facts as they arise. Not a moment must be lost. Millions of lives are at stake. It is a challenge personally to each and all. Do something--speak out to your friends, and act.

Act now.

Act in conjunction with your neighbour.

Act for your country's sake.

Act for Humanity's sake.

Make your will for peace, for the abolition of all bombs and for continued negotiations, known.

If the Christian Church fails in this great quest; if she fails to seek peace and ensure it; if she spurns, by refusing to demand negotiations, the chance to join Russia in abolishing all deadly bombs; if she tolerates the blinding of the people's eyes by suppressing the news of the situation as it actually is, and tolerates handing over our destiny at crucial moments to others; then she is false to Him she calls her Master, she sides with the warmongers.

Neutrality in this situation is impossible.

This note of alarm and this message of realisable peace should ring from every pulpit in the land, the Dean concluded.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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