

[Third Universalist Society, New York City]

## SOME LESSONS OF THE WAR

Sermon by the Rev. W. S. Crowe at the Church of the Eternal Hope

The Rev. W. S. Crowe preached upon the subject "Some Lessons of the War"<sup>1</sup>, at the Church of the Eternal Hope [Third Universalist Church], in West Eighty-first Street, yesterday.

"It is easy to imagine, when the conflict is over and the victory gained, that what has been done by heroism and sacrifice might have been accomplished by some gentler and happier method," said the preacher in the course of his remarks. "Mr. Sherman is quite convinced now that he could have secured Cuban independence by diplomacy. What a pity he did not go about it several years ago!

"The first lesson of the war—a lesson which applies everywhere—is the lesson of being prepared. When the gentleman whom the Empire State intends to honor the Autumn was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, it seemed to outsiders that a good deal of ammunition was being wasted in target practice. He declared that money could not be expended more wisely. 'Let the boys keep on shooting at marks,' said he. "This Republic could not get a greater bargain than in producing expert gunners." The 1st of May and the 3d of July were splendid vindication of his judgment.

"It never occurred to you, has it, that the War Department itself was practically, of necessity, a volunteer force in this war? Our Nation has gone out of the military business. Even had it kept in training, the conditions of this war were entirely new. We had never sent an army to a foreign shore. We had never gone to battle in a torrid climate. We had never been compelled to gain sudden victories at all hazards.

"Another lesson—a glorious one—which we have learned afresh in this war is the spirit of brotherhood. We have lost our North and our South, and we have found 'our one common country.' We have often turned down the old leaf, but it would blow up again. The mingled blood of Confederate and Federal soldiers on Cuban soil has pasted the old leaf down.

"Count up all the crimes and suffering of the war; this one good result, the reunion of the Anglo-Saxon race, outweighs them a thousand fold. Every mother who lost a son may proudly feel that her great sacrifice was not alone for the honor of America, but for the progress of mankind. Not only for the peace and liberty and progress in the Antilles, but for a new era of justice and righteousness throughout the earth, have our brave men suffered and died.

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<sup>1</sup> Between April and August of 1898, the U.S. successfully went to war with Spain to free Cuba from Spanish rule.

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“The war, too, has done what many years of preaching would fail to do in creating fellowship and sympathy and mutual respect, and a genuine spirit of equality between those who are socially estranged. The experience of that picturesque and somewhat romantic band—the Rough Riders—has put down a great deal of silly and mischievous comment on the strife between classes and masses in America. The wealth and culture of the East, the universities, the old and proud families, social exclusiveness, Newport and Bar Harbor, were liberally represented in that band of heroes, side by side with the frontiersman. They ate and slept and fought and suffered and died together.

“The survivors have gone to their homes with a marvelously increased regard for manhood, whether it grew on the cattle plains or in the drawing room. The entire country has witnessed a practical demonstration of manhood’s equality. The wind is all taken out of the sails of the Anarchist orator. His only speech was that the poor must do the work and fight the battles for the rich. He can no longer make this speech. The occupation of the Socialist is gone.

“When the Arizona boys mingle with their old neighbors and cronies, and fill their old haunts with talk of the war, the Far West will conclude that what has been hated as the aristocratic East is quite worthy of confidence.”

*New York Times*, New York NY, 19 Sep 1898

Transcribed on 27 August 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY