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the SECRETARY OF STATE
on

*Faith of
our
Fathers*

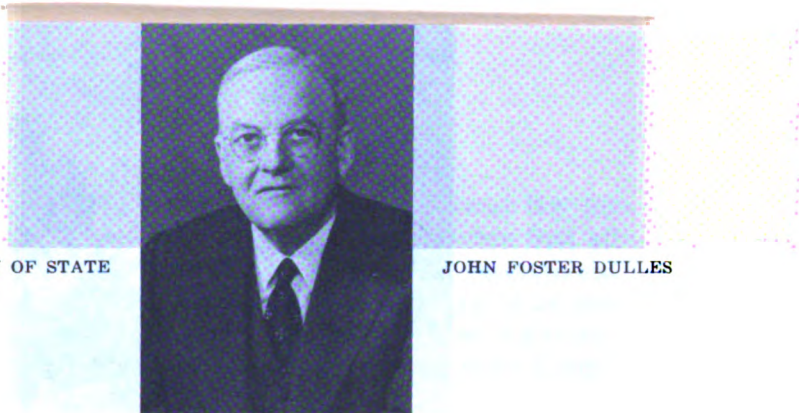
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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highlights

- ▶ A NOBLE HERITAGE
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- ▶ FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

BASED ON AN ADDRESS MADE BY JOHN FOSTER DULLES,
SECRETARY OF STATE, AT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF WATERTOWN, N. Y., OCTOBER 11, 1953.



SECRETARY OF STATE

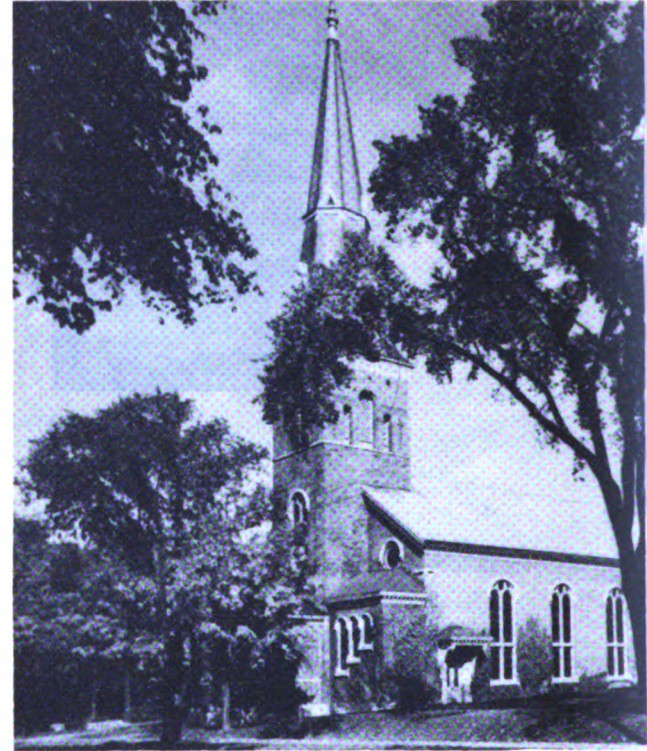
JOHN FOSTER DULLES

► A NOBLE HERITAGE

THIS is the 150th anniversary of the founding of our church. To me this church is richer in memories than any other earthly spot. My father preached here for 16 years and radiated a spiritual influence that is still felt here, and elsewhere, as I have learned in my travels about the world. Our family life revolved around this church. Before me is the pew in which we sat three times on Sunday and frequently during weekday evenings.

At times the church services seemed overlong and overfrequent. But through them I was taught of the two great commandments, love of God and love of fellow man. Ordained ministers are uniquely qualified to deal with the relations of man to God. But laymen, who have to deal with national and international problems, are perhaps qualified to make some observations on the relations of man to fellow man.





" . . . a church was built."

Our American political institutions are what they are because our founders were deeply religious people. As soon as a community was founded, a church was built. Also, wherever a community was founded, its members developed practices and ways of life which reflected their belief that there is a God; that He is the Author of a moral law which all can know and should obey; that He imparts to each human being a spiritual dignity and worth which all should respect. Our founders sought to reflect these truths in their political institutions, seeking thus that God's will should be done on earth.

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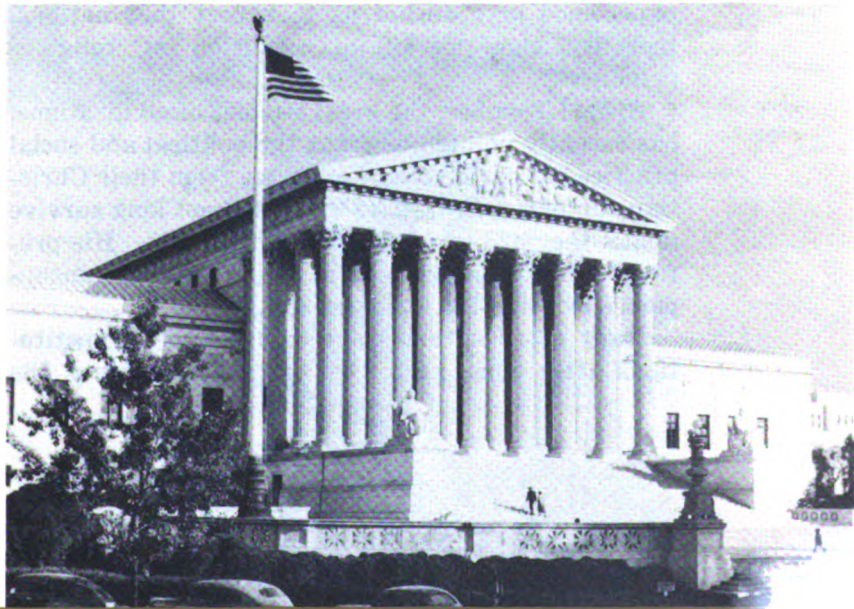
The Bill of Rights puts into our supreme law the concept of the Declaration of Independence that all men are endowed by their Creator with "certain unalienable Rights." Our Constitution says, in unmistakable terms, that men, even in the guise of government, cannot lawfully deny other men their fundamental rights and freedoms.

From the beginning of our Nation, those who made its laws and system of justice looked upon them as means to assure what seemed just and right. Thus we became heirs to a noble heritage.

► **NEED TO REVITALIZE THE WORDS**

WE must, however, remember that that heritage is not inexhaustible. Our institutions of freedom will not survive unless they are constantly replenished by the faith that gave them birth.

“ . . . heirs to a noble heritage.”





“. . . morality and religion are the two pillars of our society.”

General Washington, in his Farewell Address, pointed out that morality and religion are the two pillars of our society. He went on to say that morality cannot be maintained without religion. “Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

Arnold Toynbee, the great student of civilizations, has recently pointed out that the political and social practices of our civilization derive from their Christian content, and, he says, they will not long survive unless they are replenished by that faith. His profound study convinces him that “practice unsupported by belief is a wasting asset.”

Many other nations have modeled their constitutions after ours. But they have not obtained the

same results unless there was a faith to vitalize the words.

The terrible things that are happening in some parts of the world are due to the fact that political and social practices have been separated from spiritual content.

That separation is almost total in the Soviet Communist world. There the rulers hold a materialistic creed which denies the existence of moral law. It denies that men are spiritual beings. It denies that there are any such things as eternal verities.

As a result the Soviet institutions treat human beings as primarily important from the standpoint of how much they can be made to produce for the glorification of the state. Labor is essentially slave labor, working to build up the military and material might

"Such conditions repel us."



of the state, so that those who rule can assert ever greater and more frightening power.

Such conditions repel us. But it is important to understand what causes those conditions. It is irreligion. If ever the political forces in this country became irreligious, our institutions would change. The change might come about slowly, but it would come surely. Institutions born of faith will inevitably change unless they are constantly nurtured by faith.

► THE POWER OF MORAL FORCES

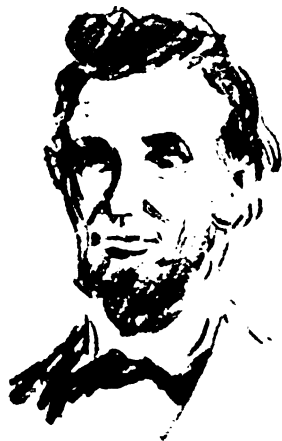
IT may be asked, may not aggressive material forces prevail unless met by materialism? It sometimes seems that material power is so potent that it should be sought at any price, even at the sacrifice of spiritual values. Always, however, in the past those who took that path have met disaster. Material aggression often is formidable. It is dynamic, and we must admit that the dynamic usually prevails over the static.

But it is gross error to assume that material forces have a monopoly of dynamism. Moral forces too are mighty. Christians, to be sure, do not believe in invoking brute power to secure their ends. But that does not mean that they have no ends or that they have no means of getting there. Christians are not negative, supine people.

Jesus told the disciples to go out into all the world and to preach the gospel to all the nations. Any nation which bases its institutions on Christian principles cannot but be a dynamic nation.

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“ . . . all should have an equal chance.”



Our forebears felt keenly that this Nation had a mission to perform. In the opening paragraph of the *Federalist Papers* it is said that “it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example,” to show the way to political freedom.

Our Declaration of Independence meant, as Lincoln said, “liberty, not alone to the people of this country but hope for the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight should be lifted from the shoulders of all men and that all should have an equal chance.”

► THE GREAT AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

WHAT our forebears did became known as “the Great American Experiment.” They created here a society of material, intellectual, and spiritual richness



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the like of which the world had never known. It was not selfishly designed, but for ourselves and others. We sought through conduct, example, and influence to promote everywhere the cause of human freedom.

Through missionaries, physicians, educators, and merchants, the American people carried their ideas and ideals to others. They availed themselves of every opportunity to spread their gospel of freedom, their good news, throughout the world.



"... the American people carried their ideas and ideals to others."

That performance so caught the imagination of the peoples of the world that everywhere men wanted for themselves a political freedom which could bear such fruits.

The despotisms of the last century faded away

largely under the influence of that conduct and example. There is no despotism in the world which can stand up against the impact of such a gospel. That needs to be remembered today. Our best reliance is not more and bigger bombs but a way of life which reflects religious faith.

► FAITH AND THE ATOMIC AGE

DO our people still have that faith which in the past made our Nation truly great and which we need today? That is the ultimate testing of our time. Admittedly some have come to think primarily in material terms. They calculate the atomic stockpiles, the bombers, the tanks, the standing armies of the various nations and seem to assume that the victory will go to whichever is shown by these scales to have the greater weight of armament.

Unfortunately under present conditions we do need to have a strong military establishment. We are opposed by those who respect only visible strength and who are tempted to encroach where there seems to be material weakness. Therefore, without military strength, we could not expect to deter aggression which, even though it would ultimately fail, would in the process cause immense misery and loss. But your Government does not put its faith primarily in material things.

The greatest weakness of our opponents is that they are professed materialists. They have forcibly extended their rule over some 800 million people, a third of the people of the world. They are seeking



to make these people into a pliant, physical mass which completely conforms to the will of the rulers.

But these people are religious people and they are patriotic people. They have shown that over the centuries. We believe that the Soviet rulers are attempting the impossible when they attempt to subject such people to their materialistic and repressive rule. We believe that the subject peoples have faith and hopes which cannot indefinitely be suppressed.

► PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

THE President, the Cabinet, and the Congress all recognize the priority of spiritual forces. We do not intend to turn this Nation into a purely material fortress and to suppress the freedom of thought and expression of the inmates, so that our people would



“ . . . faith and hopes which cannot indefinitely be suppressed.”

more and more assume the likeness of that which threatens and which we hate.

There are a few within this Nation who do not share that viewpoint. They honestly feel that the danger is so great and of such a kind that we must give an absolute priority to material efforts. There are others who honestly feel that the danger is so imminent that we should impose uniformity of thought, or at least of expression, abolishing diversity and tolerance within our Nation and within our alliances.

Such points of view, while often heard, represent a small minority. Certainly there is some confusion of thinking, which needs to be dispelled. But I believe that the great majority of the American people and of their representatives in government still accept the words of the prophet: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

► FAITH IS CONTAGIOUS

HOW shall we surely become infused with that spirit? That is my concluding concern.

There is no mystery about that. The way to get faith is to expose oneself to the faith of others. It is not only diseases that are contagious. Faith is contagious. A strong faith, rooted in fact and in reason, inevitably spreads if contacts are provided. If, therefore, we want spiritual strength, we must maintain contact with those who have it and with those who have had it.

That is above all the task of our churches. The Bible is the greatest book because, as Paul pointed



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out to the Hebrews, it is a story of faith. It recounts lapses from faith and their consequences and revival and restoration of faith. Most of all, it is a story of men who lived by faith and died in faith, bequeathing it to successors who molded it into something finer, truer, and more worthy.

Our American history, like Hebrew history, is also rich in the story of men who through faith wrought mightily.

In earlier days our homes, schools, and colleges were largely consecrated to the development of faith. They were places of prayer and of Bible reading. Parents and teachers told daily the story of those who had gone before and who had lived by faith.

► **THE BURDEN OF THE CHURCHES**

TODAY our schools and colleges and, I am afraid, our homes largely omit this study in faith. That throws a heavier burden on our churches. They

“ . . . men who lived by faith. . . . ”



today provide the principal means of drawing together the men, women, and children of our land and of bringing to them knowledge of the faith of those who have gone before, so that today's faith is a contagious and vital force.

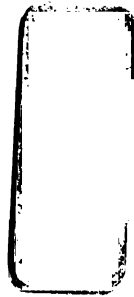
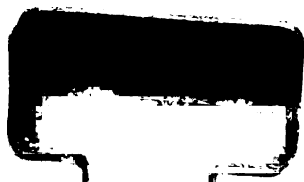
As our churches, synagogues, and other places of worship thus carry an ever greater share of vital responsibility, they should be strongly supported by all our citizens, for they all profit from the institutions which faith inspires.

Sometimes we feel that we are indeed compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses. Each of us knows that, in terms of loved ones who have gone before. We know it as we have heard read the great Book of Faith and as we are taught the lessons drawn from the story of the great prophets and disciples of the past.

Let us maintain spiritual communion with them. Let us draw faith and inspiration from their lives. Let us act as we know they would want us to act. Then we, in our turn, will run with steadfastness the course that is set before us. Then we, in our turn, will play worthily our part in keeping alight the flame of freedom.

► FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

OUR fathers have left us a rich spiritual legacy. Surely it is our duty not to squander it but to leave it replenished so that we, in our generation, may bequeath to those who come after us a tradition as noble as was left to us.



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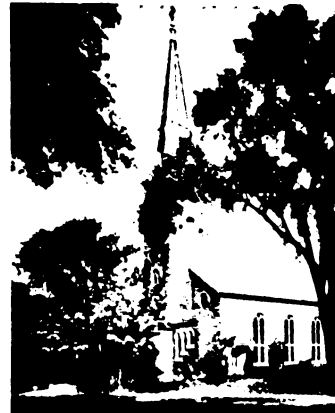
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A church is a place where we look upward to the Power above us, from which we derive our spiritual strength. It marks a building as a place where we can gather for a communion that renews our faith.

Let us be ever thankful for the church of our forebears, remembering those who founded it. Let us remember also those who during the succeeding decades maintained it, enlarged it, beautified it, and enriched it with their Christian labors. Let us dedicate ourselves to follow in their way.



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