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Ragtime Church Music Utterly Destroys Spirit of Worship

Dr. Hubert Potat Declares Such Music As Much Out Of Place In Religious Worship As Buck-And-Wing Dance, And Urges Earnest Endeavor To Check This Evil

Delivered before an audience composed mostly of B. Y. P. U. workers of the two Baptist churches of the city, the address of Dr. Hubert M. Potat of Wake Forest College was one of vital interest to Christian people at large and altogether one of the most remarkable and striking utterances ever heard from an Elizabeth City platform.

Had Elizabeth City people known Hubert Potat as they ought; had they realized that as a speaker he is hardly less gifted than as a musician, as an author and as a teacher; had they known with what originality and incisive wit he would present his message and had they had an inkling of the extraordinary import of that message, the annex of Blackwell Memorial church would not have seated the crowd that would have gone out to hear him and hardly a speaker who has been heard on a Chautauqua platform in Elizabeth City would have been given more undivided attention.

No newspaper report could do the address justice. A full verbatim report would give the reader no adequate conception of the telling effect of the lecture when backed by Dr. Potat's virile personality and illustrated by his rendering on the piano of example of what he calls cheap music, the adjective referring to the quality and not to the price of this music.

The following does not pretend to be a verbatim report but is an effort to give in substance some of the main points stressed by Dr. Potat in the course of a lecture of over an hour's duration.

"Religion or Ragtime" was the speaker's theme, and he was insistent on the conjunction, taking the ground that ragtime is as much out of place in religious worship as a buck-and-wing dance in the pulpit. The address was a scathing philippic against ragtime music in religious worship and a plea for earnest endeavor to check an evil which, from the standpoint of the speaker, threatens to destroy utterly the worship of God in spirit and in truth through the medium of song.

"In non ritualistic churches," said the speaker, "participation of the congregation in the service is limited to the singing of hymns. And yet this exercise, instead of being universally recognized as of vital importance, is permitted, in innumerable churches, to sink into a kind of dull lethargy which invariably succeeds in communicating itself, in greater or less degree, to the entire service."

"Where this is the case," Dr. Potat went on to say, in substance, "the purveyor of the cheap, ragtime 'hymn' finds a fruitful soil. He argues that his book will take the congregation out of their lassitude; that the perfect panacea for the lack of interest in the singing is bound up within the cheap covers of his 'Tinkling Cymbal'; that the proper way to stir the souls of the people is to begin with their feet, which being galvanized into frantic activity under the spell of sundry jigs, waltzes and jazes will speedily communicate their exhilaration upward. So he sells his ware and goes on his way rejoicing to the next church. But the adoption of his book is not a cure for what ails the church. It is the substitution of a new malady for the old."

"God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Those who believe that statement of Scripture witness with genuine regret the growing popularity of cheap 'hymn' books. For those who buy these books forthwith forget about worshipping God in spirit and truth and begin to 'worship' him in ragtime and jig. Our ancestors were so considerate of the proprietaries of the sanctuary that for centuries they used only the actual words of Scripture in their songs. We, now will use anything, be it ever so cheap and unholy.

"There are a number of reasons for the advance of cheap 'hymns' in popular favor.

"In the first place they are extensively and shrewdly advertised. At large denominational gatherings cheap books are frequently 'furnished' by the publisher, who makes a habit of piously 'furnishing' with a view to remuneratively selling later on. Nearly every evangelistic singer, so far as my observation goes, uses one of these cheap books. Many sell them.

"Have you listened to a quack doc-

tor expatiate upon the excellencies of his nostrum? If so, you have heard him conclude his harangue something like this: 'Now friends, you can find out all about what ails you and how to cure it in my little book here; price only fifty cents.'

"Were you ever among those present at an exhibition of mind-reading? If so, you were exposed to some such peroration as this: 'Now, friends, you can find out all about my wonderful powers and develop similar gifts by a perusal of my little book here; price only fifty cents.'

"Neither the quack doctor nor the mind reader could be induced upon any consideration to invade the house of God with their books; but the professional singer hails the opportunity, and he is quite willing to degrade and prostitute the sanctuary and defile the worship of God by howling his wares from the very Holy of Holies. Jesus, once upon a time, with a scourge, drove from the temple the money changers and those that bought and sold in His Father's House.

"Perhaps the chief reason, however, for the popularity of the cheap 'hymn' is to be found in the fondness for secular music of the same type which seems to be characteristic of our time. Jazz, waltzes, blues, ragtime, slushy sentimentality, have become the musical expression of so many of our people outside the church that the same sort of thing, with a poor, thin veneer of religion, is demanded in the church.

"Worship embraces preaching, prayer and song, and no man can say which is most important. Sermons and prayers are not turned out wholesale by publishing houses to be hawked up and down the land by prancing evangelists and singers. Why should hymns be thus handled?

"We have in our great hymnals songs that grew out of genuine Christian experience and not out of a desire for a more impressive bank account.

"The method of construction of a cheap 'hymn' is the same as that employed in the composition of a secular song of the same type. The 'poet' gets an idea around which to write. This idea is expressed in the chorus. 'There Is Power in The Blood' and 'Brighten the Corners' are fine examples of 'sacred' songs composed in this fashion. The chorus is the main feature—as in all cheap songs, whether for church, or home or dance hall consumption. When a song of this type is perpetrated in the house of God the congregation invariably mumbles the verses and bellows the chorus. Really, you are supposed to say 'Tum-te-tum' etc. until you arrive at the chorus when you are expected to get under a big head of steam immediately and roar 'Bright-on the cor-nur where you are.' Incidentally that very popular song offers a sorry ideal to our ambitious young people today. And what could be more ridiculous than the idea of guiding some one else from harbor across the bar with a candle in a corner?

"But the 'composers' of cheap 'hymns' are far more responsible for the sorriest of the product than the 'poets.' The words of the song may be but poor doggerel, the verses may show only a distant kinship to the chorus, the grammar may be nauseating; but there is enough religion about them to give the thoughtless singer at least a vague impression that he is rendering something that was intended to be a sacred song. But the 'composers' have abandoned utterly the spirit of worship, and have fled, bag and baggage, to the dance hall, the musical comedy and the cheap movie for their inspiration. Thousands of churches and Sunday schools are using the same sort of music exactly as is jingled forth by the electric piano at the picture house, the pony ballet in the theater and the jazz orchestra in the public dance hall.

"We set great store, in our moral teaching, by association. The card table is wrong because of its immemorial connection with gambling. Now how can a devout Christian worship God by singing a waltz? How can a sorry piece of ragtime carry a prayer upward to the Throne? How can a one-step, beslimed with the sensual postures of the dance hall, make its way, as the bearer of holy adoration, into the pure air of the New Jerusalem? The very popular 'Saved! Saved!' is a waltz, thinly disguised by twelve-eight time, and a fairly good waltz, too. The chorus

LODGE PRESENTS TREATY DRAFT

Formally Lays Before Arms Conference Document Supplanting Angla-Jap Alliance

Washington, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—The draft of the proposed treaty between the United States, Great Britain, France and Japan which is to supplant the Anglo-Japanese alliance and pave the way for the acceptance of the American proposals for naval reduction was formally laid before the arms conference today by Senator Lodge.

It is a ten year agreement in which the four nations bind themselves to respect their existing rights in insular possessions and dominions in the Pacific and in case disputes which cannot be settled by diplomacy agree to adjust them through conferences among themselves.

Any one of the parties may withdraw on twelve months notice.

The treaty requires confirmation by the Senate.

In order, Rene Viviani, head of the French delegation; Arthur J. Balfour, heading the British delegation; and Prince Tokugawa, chief of the Japanese delegates, arose and gave their assent to the new arrangements. They were followed by the chief delegates of the other powers represented who also expressed satisfaction at the new arrangement. Minister Sze of China expressed "great satisfaction" with the proposed treaty. While the actual perfection of the treaty goes forward it is expected that the naval armament and Chinese questions will speedily go toward settlement. The conference adjourned without giving attention to the question of naval arms.

POPE BENEDICT IS WATCHFULLY WAITING

Rome, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Pope Benedict, while following all phases of the Irish question with deepest interest, has decided to await the final developments before pronouncing his opinion on the peace settlement.

Oiling Machine For Big Frolic

Elks' Minstrel Show Will Have Big Time Acts In Olio

The local lodge of Elks is perfecting plans for the two biggest days in its history, the occasion of which will be the annual "Jollies" at the Alkrama theater, December 19th and 20th. Those participating are all enthusiasm and in a few days will be in trim to give a finished rehearsal, and by show time the machine should be well oiled to run with the precision of a professional performance.

The olio, a longed-for feature by those taking part as well as outsiders, will be of four acts. Two of the acts are at present running on "big time" in some of the largest theaters of the country, and, being handled by an excellent cast, they should get over with a bang.

The big minstrel circle and end men will be better than ever if such a thing is possible. The end men are well equipped with laughing matter, and the soloists have numbers that are at present running on Broadway, and will be put over with the same effects used in the original productions. Everything connected with the show will be new, the scenery, the costumes, the acts, the songs, the dances and the jokes. It will be remembered that last year the show closed with a hotel scene which proved a veritable riot. But Director Gosden says he has something up his sleeve that will make the last scream look like a thin dime.

The ticket committee reports a hearing advance sale and it is confidently expected that all previous records for attendance will be broken. Reserved seats go on sale at the Savings Bank & Trust Company in a few days.

is an adaptation—departing very slightly from the original fount of inspiration—of the once popular ballad, 'I wish I was single again.' Even worse, however, than the walk or the ragtime is the jingle. It scrapes the very bottom of the slough of cheapness. And, strange to say, the jingle is more popular for such than for secular songs.

The more general characteristic of these songs must be noted. Not only to almost all of them possess a chorus as the main feature, but that chorus is subjected to those adornments of labor and love that should always distinguish the most precious. Continued on Page 3

Fell Dead While Making A Prayer

John Sykes, Colored, Passes Away Suddenly At A Neighbor's House Friday Night

While he was in the act of making a prayer, John Sykes, a colored man about 65 years old, dropped dead at the home of a neighbor, John Liverman, on Brown street, Friday night at a few minutes before nine o'clock in the midst of a family prayer meeting, supposedly of heart failure. Sykes had been employed for two years by Hillery Cartwright at his livery stable on Green street, and Mr. Cartwright says that the colored man was a willing and capable worker.

Sykes worked practically all day Friday at the livery stable, and appeared to be in his usual health, except that he complained of some soreness in an arm that he had hurt several weeks before. His death was entirely unexpected.

Sacred Opera Was Beautifully Rendered

Singing, Acting And Costumes Harmoniously Portrayed The Biblical Story Of Esther

The Elizabeth City Choral Society surpassed all former efforts in the beautiful rendition of the sacred opera, "Esther," Thursday and Friday nights.

Only one thing was lacking—a large audience.

Not only was the chorus excellent, and the orchestral music in complete accord, but the characters had been especially well chosen, and each person acted so well his or her part that children who could not perhaps understand all the words of the singing were able to grasp the meaning of the story throughout because of the splendid interpretation given. The beautiful costumes had their part, too, in making the story impressively real.

Mrs. J. W. Foreman as Esther was indeed the beautiful and gracious queen, with J. C. B. Ehringhaus as Ahasuerus, the King. H. A. Browne was the King's Counselor, Hamman, and his singing and acting were superb. L. E. Skinner as Mordecai, Mrs. W. C. Twiddy as Zeresh, Hamman's wife, Miss Hattie Harney as Mordecai's sister, Miss Margaret Sheep as the Prophetess, Miss Virginia Hufty as First Maid of Honor, Miss Lou Shine as a Median princess, W. C. Sawyer as the Scribe, George Brothers as the Herald, Charles Overman as Harboah, Shelton G. Scott as the High Priest, Marvin Mann and Carl Perry as cupbearers, Messes Lillie Mae Stevens, Aurilla Strahl, Beulah Hedrick Nettle White, Hilda Moran, Emerald Sykes, Willis Fearlag and Margaret Harris as the Queen's Maids, made up the remainder of the cast, each contributing in wonderfully harmonious manner to the complete success of the performance.

Mrs. I. M. Meekins as pianist and F. R. Hufty as director, through many weeks of faithful practice had, with the loyal co-operation of the entire cast, wrought this beautiful labor of love for Elizabeth City. The unstinted praise and the thorough enjoyment of the opera by those who were present is their reward.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR NORWAY-SWEDEN

Christiania, Norway, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—The Nobel peace prize for 1921 has been divided equally between Premier Hjalmar Branting of Sweden and Christian L. Lange of Norway, the secretary of the Interparliamentary Union officially announced today.

Schooner Carried Contraband Arms

Mexico City, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—The American fishing schooner Hebel, held by Mexican authorities at Ensenada, is described in the foreign office statement as a carrier of contraband arms.

DR. ALLEN ACQUITTED

Chattanooga, Tenn., Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Dr. W. P. Allen was today acquitted by a jury on the charge of murdering Brush Gerdeshire last May.

REHEARSALS TONIGHT AT NINE

The rehearsals for the Elks Minstrels will be held tonight at 9 o'clock in the Shrine Banquet Hall, third floor of the Robinson building.

Gurney P. Hood has returned from High Point, where he attended a committee meeting of the North Carolina Bankers Association.

Senate To Express Itself On Conference Agreements

This Decision Due To Desire To Leave No Doubt In Minds Of Foreign Governments Or Anybody Else Of Purpose Of American People In The New Undertakings

By DAVID LAWRENCE

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Washington, Dec. 9—The Harding administration has passed the word to the Senate that will be given an opportunity to express itself on the agreements which are signed by the American delegation at the Armament Conference.

This decision to consult the Senate on all agreements irrespective of whether they are technically called "understandings," "conventions" or treaties is due to a desire to leave no doubt either in the minds of the foreign governments or anybody else of the resolute purpose of the American people in the new undertakings.

Originally the president himself indicated that the agreements reached would be in the nature of executive "understandings" and would not involve specific obligations. That situation, however has developed a change within the past 48-hours due to the turn of events in the informal discussions which have been going on among the heads of the delegations. The opportunity to bring about an immediate abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance by providing a substitute treaty that would do away with the obnoxious pact was too good chance to lose and when Great Britain secured the approval to Japan it seemed to the United States delegation to offer a graceful solution to the whole business.

As an evidence of the seriousness with which the American government would view such a new treaty, indications were given that the approval of the Senate would be asked. This means too that foreign parliaments will have to ratify the agreements. Just how far the naval ratio proposals and the agreement not to build fortifications and the principal pact which is to bind the powers not to make war on each other in the Pacific has not yet been officially disclosed though it is recognized that all are intertwined in one and probably all will be merged in a single agreement.

As for the senate approval, the attitude of the rank and file of both Republican and Democratic parties, is one of sympathy with the United States delegation except of course for a few members here and there who, however, are not strong enough at this writing to endanger ratification of anything that might be submitted.

With Senator Underwood the Democratic leader, able to command the support of at least the majority of the Democrats and with Senator Lodge and the administration spokesmen able to master a majority of the Republicans, the bi-partisan coalition is powerful enough to put through such agreements as have already been outlined in the press. The word has been given to members of Congress that the new treaty would not include commitments or entanglements or guarantees. It would, of course, merely forbid the United States to go to war in the Pacific until nine months or a year had elapsed for investigation. This is a limitation of the right of congress to declare war and some administration officials believe it would even be wise to submit the treaty to both houses of Congress so that there may never be any doubt about the validity of the pact. The Senate has endorsed the principle of investigation in thirty treaties now in effect that all legislative bodies are alike and that if they are permitted to haggle and debate a thing indefinitely they will talk it to death. They declare that the rules of the American Senate make it possible for a discussion to be prolonged while public enthusiasm for any project slowly wanes. On the other hand, the Harding administration will have an advantage in this respect which its predecessors did not have. The Republican majority will be assisted by the Democratic minority for the latter instead of pursuing partisan purposes are giving indications through Senator Underwood of a desire not to be petty or partisan but to work with their political opponents on international questions, a fact that was revealed when only by Democratic help was a two-thirds vote secured for the treaty which recently had negotiated for months and so established peace between the United States and Germany.

Convict Says He Killed Slaughter

Little Rock, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Sheriff's posse are searching for the body of Tom Slaughter, who was killed yesterday in the Arkansas hills by one of the convicts he liberated from the penitentiary, according to a story told Sheriff Crowe by the convict, who was recaptured.

TRAINLOAD EMPLOYEES FOR THE STOCK YARDS

Chicago, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—A trainload of new employees said to number 8,000 was unloaded in the stock yard walls today while Federal and State officials here were co-operating with the officials of the meat cutters union in their effort to adjust the differences which brought on the strike of packing house workers. The packers later denied the report that 8,000 men were brought into their yards.

FOR BASEBALL PLAYERS

New York, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Training schools for baseball players or the formation of a special circuit for development of players are among the possibilities of baseball, having been suggested to major league magnates.

MISS HARRISON TO WED

New York, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Former Governor Burton Harrison of the Philippines, now in Spain, cabled friends here today announcing the engagement of his daughter, Virginia, to Christian Gross of Chicago, the wedding to take place at Algeiras Spain, next year.

FOUR POLICEMEN KILLED TWO MARINES WOUNDED

Managua, Nicaragua, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Four policemen were killed and one policeman and two American Marines were wounded when the police broke up a fight between a party of Marines off duty and civilians here today.

BONUSES FOR CHRISTMAS

New York, Dec. 10 (By The Associated Press)—Wall Street is gradually recovering from the general economic depression and signs point to a liberal distribution of bonuses at Christmas.

compromise of national viewpoints. Mr. Harding's disinclination to bring the Senate into the situation at the outset, however has been brushed aside by the words of his advisers who believe the public opinion of the United States is so strongly behind what is being done by the American delegation at the arms conference that nothing will be risked by submitting it to the Senate. On the other hand, several of the spokesmen of foreign delegations point out that all legislative bodies are alike and that if they are permitted to haggle and debate a thing indefinitely they will talk it to death. They declare that the rules of the American Senate make it possible for a discussion to be prolonged while public enthusiasm for any project slowly wanes. On the other hand, the Harding administration will have an advantage in this respect which its predecessors did not have. The Republican majority will be assisted by the Democratic minority for the latter instead of pursuing partisan purposes are giving indications through Senator Underwood of a desire not to be petty or partisan but to work with their political opponents on international questions, a fact that was revealed when only by Democratic help was a two-thirds vote secured for the treaty which recently had negotiated for months and so established peace between the United States and Germany.