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INDEPENDENT IN POLITICS

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THURSDAY, AUG. 19, 1937

When 111,000 Americans Died

A generation has passed since the sinking of the Titanic, yet that great disaster is still well remembered. Fifteen hundred persons died.

The Johnstown flood will never be forgotten—the world war aghast when the death total of 2,209 was tabulated. The World War was the most sanguinary conflict in history. In it, 50,000 Americans lost their lives, and they are still mourned.

The recent Texas school explosion, which killed 294 children, brought universal sympathy and horror.

Yet last year 111,000 Americans met accidental death—more than twice as many as were killed in the great war—and it caused hardly a ripple in the flow of news. We read of some of those accidents in our paper—"John Jones, aged 45, died in an emergency hospital after being struck by an automobile"—turned the page, and forgot them. This astounding callousness—this attitude of "Accidents always happen to the other fellow, not to me or mine"—is death's greatest ally.

Among men, heart disease is the only thing which kills more than accidents. Such plagues as cancer, tuberculosis, pneumonia—plagues which are being fought by all the resources of science—are down the list. Recklessly driven automobiles, burns, falls, drownings, and so on—these are the great killers.

Practically every accident is preventable—and this is especially true of the motor car, greatest of all the great killers. Care, competence, courtesy—these make up the accident prevention triumvirate. It's up to you—to all of us.

Farm Legislation

Congress in the next session is expected to pass another crop control bill to aid the farmers.

Those who would thus aid the farmers are of the opinion that farmers, collectively speaking, are not able or are not willing to produce according to demand. The result, they say, has been great surpluses of crops that drive prices down below the point where the farmer can realize a profit sufficient to maintain his home.

However, it is our firm conviction that surpluses would be unknown were it not for faults in an economic system and a system of distribution that allows for burning wheat for fuel while thousands go hungry for lack of bread.

If the people of this nation could buy according to the wants and actual needs and the export market hold up, farmers would be up against a difficulty in producing enough.

It is a complicated problem which we do not attempt to solve. While sugar growers clamor for higher prices and government aid, farmers in a greater area must buy sugar. The same applies to other crops, particularly cotton and tobacco, which grow only in certain parts of the country.

And if crop control goes too far the export market is ruined. Without an export market American farmers would be in bad shape, especially true relative to growers of tobacco, cotton and wheat. As prices of American farm products go up, foreigners begin to make arrangements for growing these crops themselves and often when tariff protection is inadequate they compete in our own markets for American consumers.

Thus the situation presents a picture where moderation seems to be the better course. If we as a nation go radical toward one group we hurt another. If we go too far in artificially raising prices we destroy the export market and invite competition.

These Rising Costs

There are two ways of looking at the rising cost of living. One is the optimistic approach, which points out that the necessities of life still cost less than they did at the peak of the boom, in 1929. The pessimistic angle is that costs have been climbing steadily since the bottom of the depression, in 1933.

The important fact, however, is that we have to pay out of our 1937 incomes, and the drain on this year's pocketbook is greater than it was a year ago. The latest report by the U. S. Department of Labor shows that it costs 13 per cent more to pay the rent, keep the pantry stocked and buy the usual clothes than it did four years ago, and that a quarter of that increase has come about in the past year.

Rents have gone up faster than food, and food faster than clothing.

The question whether incomes have gone up at an equal or faster rate is something else again. There is no question that more people are on payrolls or otherwise earning a living than there were a short time ago. But otherwise these incomes are as much higher than the incomes people received who earned anything at all in the years of low prices is not so certain.

That is what really counts. It is not so important whether pork chops cost 25 cents a pound or a dollar a pound, as whether we are getting enough dollars to pay whatever they cost. If some kind of a dollar could be invented which would always have the same purchasing power, and everybody could be assured of having enough of those dollars, what a nice place this world would be for everybody.

Seeing America

We read the other day of a railroad conductor who has just retired on a pension after forty years on one run of a hundred miles or so, back and forth between two cities. He said he was going to spend the rest of his life riding on trains, to see all the places he had heard his passengers talk about.

The average American of today has a better opportunity of seeing the real America than anyone ever had before, and more millions are taking advantage of that opportunity this year than ever before. With good, reliable automobiles within everybody's reach, and good roads running everywhere and even to the very edge of nowhere, there is no reason except lack of energy or curiosity why anybody should grow up in America without becoming familiar with the whole of his own country by the time he is thirty or so.

To know one's country is to love it. There is no better lesson in patriotism and no pleasanter way to teach it than to put the children into the car and take them touring around the United States, for as much of the summer vacation period as the family's time and pocketbook will stand.

There is a close analogy between hearing a simpleton "lambast" a real man, and seeing a mouse try to drag an elephant by the tail.

Sunday School Lesson

By REV. CHARLES E. DUNN

RELIGION'S PLACE IN A NATION'S LIFE

Lesson for August 22nd. Exodus 25:1-40

GOLDEN TEXT: PSALM 33:12

Our lesson topic could hardly be more timely in view of what is happening to the organized forces of Christ today. Not long ago Martin Niemoller, staunch champion of an uncompromising Christianity, was arrested by the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police, and thrown into prison. Again and again this heroic Lutheran pastor has openly defied the authorities, insisting that rather than subscribe to Nazi paganism he would burn down his influential church.

This dramatic incarceration, of a preacher of the gospel is one illustration, among many, of the bitter warfare between church and state in contemporary Germany. One the one side stand all of the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, united, despite former differences, by a common peril and a common platform stressing the fundamental teachings of Christ and proclaiming liberty of conscience. On the other side stands the totalitarian man's highest ideal, and its doctrine of race as a divine revelation.

For a parallel to this clash between hostile systems of thought one must go back to the days prior to the Emperor Constantine. Once again the Christian movement finds itself in sharp conflict with the prevailing culture of its day, and once again Christian folk are called upon to herald the eternal sovereignty of Christian values. The foes of religion are too powerful and well organized to be deterred by a complacent church.

Christianity is now facing quite as severe a test as in past crisis. Many feel it has no real chance of survival. But as we look over history's pages we observe that our Christian faith has an amazing power of recuperation. God give it grace, in its present ordeal of fire, "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

TODAY AND TOMORROW

HOUSING purpose

The Federal government is going into home-building in a big way. Under the new Wagner Housing Act it proposes to provide \$700,000,000 in the next three years to finance the building of better homes for the poor, and \$20,000,000 a year more for twenty years. The work will be done under Federal supervision and the rents charged will be regulated by the Government. The cost of these houses is limited by law to \$1,000 a room or \$4,000 for each home of four rooms, whether in an apartment or in a separate house, exclusive of the value of the land.

The humanitarian purpose behind this project is based upon the assumption that one-third of the people of the United States are inadequately housed. That may be true enough, but I wonder how many of that lower third can or ever will be able to pay rent which will yield even 1 per cent net on such costs.

I haven't any statistics—there aren't any—but I'll venture that most of the other two-thirds of Americans, the comfortable ones, live in houses which cost far less than \$1,000 a room.

COSTS variance

I have had quite a bit of experience, in the past 40 years, in house-building, both in city and country. I am not talking through my hat when I say that in New York City, where building costs are as high as they are anywhere, a good modern apartment house can be built for less than \$750 a room. I have done it, at a time when building materials and labor costs much more than they do today.

In small towns the cost of building is far lower. I have recently been getting estimates of the cost of building two five-room houses on lots my daughter owns, one in a Florida city, one in a Pennsylvania village. For \$2,500 in Florida, \$3,500 in Pennsylvania, where cellar and heating equipment have to be figured in, she can build a five-room house which nobody would be ashamed to live in.

It is easy to say that the houses for the poor which Government proposes to build under the Wagner Act need not cost as much as the maximum allowance. I never heard of any Government bureau spending less than the law allows.

RENTS tenants

If the new Housing Act actually does, as its friends say it will, stimulate the building industry all over the country, then perhaps it will be worth what it costs. But I have my doubts that it will benefit the people whom it is designed to benefit—at least, not directly. The low-income people, the ones who are now inadequately housed live that way, because they don't earn enough to pay the rent which it would take to provide better accommodations, even with no profit at all to the landlord.

They are talking about renting these new Government financed houses at around \$20 a month. That would be a bargain rate in the cities, for families with incomes of \$25 a week or so. It would be a high rental in most small towns. I think the people who earn good pay would gobble up these new homes and leave only the old and less desirable places for the very poor to live in.

That is the way every better housing plan I know anything about has worked.

NEGROES accommodations

About twelve per cent of the people of the United States are negroes. The great majority of them belong in the "underprivileged third" of the population. Few negroes have steady jobs at good enough wages to enable them to pay rents based on what new, modern housing would require.

I inspected, a few weeks ago, the largest Federal Housing project for negroes so far completed, at Miami, Florida. It is a beautiful group of brick apartment buildings, forming a quadrangle around a park and playground which covers two acres or more. The buildings are fire-proof, the rooms large, light and airy and equipped with every modern convenience. The tenants have the use of a big community house, with a recreation hall, commodious kitchens and rooms for classes in sewing, domestic science, and other subjects.

I have many white friends who are not nearly so comfortably housed. I would think it no hardship myself to live in such pleasant surroundings among people of my own kind. These Miami negroes who get such nice houses for from

\$2.50 to \$5 a week are fortunate among their kind in being able to pay such rentals.

The nation as a whole is still facing a terrific shortage of homes. We have only just begun to take up the slack caused by the almost complete suspension of new house building for five years.

In my home village there are six or seven real estate agents. Every one of them gets inquiries every day from persons looking for homes to rent, and there are no vacancies. Several large factories in nearby cities have been taking on more workers, and these newcomers can't find places to live. Every carpenter, bricklayer, plumber and electrician in town has more work than he can do on new buildings going up all around us. The lumber yards can't get building materials as fast as the contractors demand them.

I am all for better housing for everybody, but I'd rather see the Government lend its money to help people build and own their own homes first.

Negro, Blind For Life, Able To See 'Beautiful World'

Anniston, Ala., Aug. 17.—Major Barron, 37-year-old negro beggar, blind since birth, paused in his celebration of seeing "a beautiful white world" today to credit the "miracle" to divine aid.

Major said he prayed, and was blessed with sight.

Other negroes said Major accompanied H. C. Kidd to the parsonage of the West Anniston negro Church of God, where Rev. S. D. Brown led in prayer.

The slender negro shouted with joy, and ran from the parsonage into the street.

As curious negroes gathered around him, a policeman approached Major. Assured by the throng that Major was "cured" of blindness, the officer allowed him to continue his celebration.

Barron said he was "learning to tell colors" today and would spend the "rest of my days" in religious work.

"I was born blind," Major told all comers, "but I prayed . . . and now, Bless God, I can see."

Ads. get attention—and results!

PUBLIC PULSE

This is a column open to the public for free expression. The Journal-Patriot does not assume any responsibility for articles printed under this heading, and neither editors nor condenser accept. Please be as brief as possible.

COMMENT ON SERVICE

To all and for all whom it may concern, I submit a few remarks concerning the meeting held at Blue Ridge church on the top of the mountain, the 8th of August, on the Lord's day.

A very large congregation of folks were there. After the business transactions were over the singing choir were called on to perform their parts. So they did, which was enough to fill and thrill everyone's heart with ecstasy that is a lover of vocal music. After intermission, refreshments were served.

Judge Johnson J. Hayes occupied the stand in the open and delivered one of the most appropriate, heart thrilling and soul cheering speeches—well, I might say one of the best sermons, far exceeded by the Apostle Paul, for he delivered the truth, and the truth can't be bad. It sure was edifying and alarming to both saint and sinner. I am sure that every Christian should be on the alert, using their influence over the lost of our country, to help them turn from their sins and seek the Lord while He may be found. For Jesus has said His spirit would not always strive with man. Therefore we should live in words and action praying sincerely to Him for grace to sustain us through this unfriendly world, that we might win souls to Christ, making our lives useful while we sojourn here in this sin-stricken world.

May the Lord bless every reader of this article to become a lover of the Lord if they have not and join in with the little few to work for the Heavenly Master and make life worth living and rejoice in the same.

MRS. LYDIA C. BLACKBURN

OLD AGE AID PAID

Raleigh, Aug. 17.—Nearly 5,000 North Carolinians received \$41,513.80 in old age assistance and aid to dependent children benefits in July, J. A. Stewart, state department of welfare auditor, said today. Old age payments totaled \$32,097 to 3,381 persons for an average of \$9.94, he said, and 1,587 children received \$9,416.75.

BITTER WARFARE

Shanghai, Aug. 17.—(Wednesday)—Undisciplined mobs stole through the streets of Shanghai today, searching, beating and killing natives they suspected of plotting to poison the city's water supply, while thousands of homeless refugees clamored for food at the barricaded gates of the international settlement. The bitter battle between Chinese and Japanese, with its toll of 1,496 Chinese and foreign dead, burst again at dawn along the silt-laden, murky Whangpoo river that winds about Shanghai's famous waterfront bend and hence to the mighty Yangtze, exit to the sea.

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