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The Fool-Killer

When you get hold of a Good Thing pass it around—Tote this paper in your pocket and show it to everybody you see.

Volume IX.

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Number 10.

BACK TO THE OLD NAME

After Resting for Two Years, "The Fool-Killer" Goes On Duty Again.

This paper was published for nearly eight years under the name of "The Fool-Killer." In August, 1917, the name was changed to "Good News."

For several years previous I had been gradually getting my eyes open to certain Religious Truths that I thought needed emphasizing along with the Political Truths that I was trying to hand out. And it seemed to me at that time that maybe the name "Good News" would fit the religious truths better than "The Fool-Killer." Also it was impossible just then, on account of the war conditions, to be as outspoken about things in general as I had previously been. Being a loyal citizen of the United States, I had no desire to violate the regulations which were necessary during the war.

So I changed the name and toned down just a little, and began to air my views along religious lines more than I had been doing. Having long ago discovered that the old political parties had sold out to the devil, I was then beginning to see that the old orthodox churches had done the same thing. I awoke to the fact that Church and State were in the same boat and both headed for the rapids and total destruction. I saw the folly of trying to be true to my honest convictions and at the same time "stand in" with the old gangs who were running things in society, Church and State.

I first had to choose between honesty and popularity in politics, and I chose honesty. Then came the day when I must make the same choice in religion, and again I chose honesty. Having got my eyes open to the truth, I positively could not go on winking at the blasphemous lies the church taught.

This was not a sudden awakening that came to me. It had been coming over me very gradually for several years. In fact, the light is so bright that I probably could not have stood it all at once. I think nearly all people who get the TRUE LIGHT on the Bible get it like I did—gradually—a little at a time.

And when I saw that there was something so much better than what the orthodox churches had to offer, it looked like "good news" to me. And it really IS good news—the best news that was ever announced in this old world.

But I have had an awful time trying to get some people to see it. I have had to deal with so many blind, ignorant and hide-bound fools that I have sometimes thought I ought to have kept the old name. If a Fool-Killer is needed anywhere in the world it certainly is needed to thin out the religious fools.

"Good News" has been mighty popular among the intelligent, thinking people who already have their eyes open. And I have had many assurances that it has helped to open the eyes of a good many. But what Good News has done in that line The Fool-Killer could probably have done just as well—or better.

If I could get people to look far enough ahead and see the times that are coming, they would all admit that it was good news. But so many of the blind ones are now insisting that man in his own power, through the league of nations, is going to bring in the good time and hand it to us on a silver platter.

And when I have to tell them that they are mistaken—that the trouble is not over yet—they come back at me with "Looky here, that ain't good news you are giving us—that's bad news." And I have to admit that it is bad news—from their standpoint.

The trouble with man is that he is too impatient. He wants to run ahead of God and do big things in his own name, and he always makes a mess of it. And this present mess is going to be just about the messiest mess that he ever did make.

And so it has come to pass, in view of all these conditions, that I believe the old name is more appropriate, after all, for just the things that I have to say. "The Fool-Killer" will give me better elbow room to hit just anything that I think needs hitting, and it will help to eliminate the mistaken notion among some folks that I am some sort of a long-coated preacher doins. I am continually having to repeat the statement that I am just a common old one-gallus working man, with only a very limited education, and no frills and fandangles of any sort to me. The only way I can preach is through the printed page, and I've come to the conclusion that no other name fits my plain old flat-footed sort of gab as well as The Fool-Killer.

So here is The Fool-Killer again—the same old Fool-Killer—with a little more age, a little more sense, and the same old jolly grin that it used to wear.

Swing on, boys—here we go!
Yours for the truth,
JAMES LARKIN PEARSON.

"DEMOCRACY"—SCAT!
"Safe for democracy" is a song that I have heard until I am sick and tired of it. Where is any real democracy, I would like to know? We sure to goodness ain't got any of it in this country.

We were solemnly assured by our silver-throated Woodrow and a thousand of his orators that the war had to be fought to "make the world safe for democracy." And now that the thing is over with, what have we got to show for it? Where in the bloomin' creation is all that "democracy" that we were going to have? Seen any of it going around loose in your neighborhood? Huh?

On the other hand, I am certain you can see, if you are not plum stone blind, that we are ten times more in the grip of autocratic power than we were before the war. During the war Congress delegated to Wilson all kinds of unlimited "powers" with the expectation that he would turn them loose when the emergency was past.

But has he turned them loose? Not enough so that you can tell it.

Lemme see. Oh, yes, he has loosened up some in matters where the money power is concerned. He has permitted the capitalists to resume trade relations with Germany. That means more money for the plutes, you know, and it just had to be done. But has the Wilson autocracy limbered up any in its war on free speech, free press and the rights of the average citizen? I should say not.

And on top of all the rest, here he is trying to put a blind bridle on us and hitch us up to the old greedy monarchies of Europe. That looks like we are traveling toward "democracy" in a trot.

England and Italy both call themselves democracies, but they are both monarchial governments ruled by hereditary kings. Japan, as absolute a monarchy as Germany ever was, does not even make any pretense of being a democracy. These three monarchies, with one republic—France—are expected to rule Europe. And we are expected to smile upon that mess and call it "democracy." I just want you to hush, as Tom Watts says.

HE DIDN'T CARE MUCH

But He Would a Leetle Bit Rather His Best Friend Would Stay Away.

I reckon human beings can be the most inconsistent critters in all God's creation. And of all inconsistent people in the world, I think the adherents of orthodox churchanity take the cake.

A few weeks ago I heard a Baptist preacher, in the course of a sermon, make the astounding statement that he "almost wished sometimes that Jesus would come now."

Do you get that? There is a man who has been pretending to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ for many years, and who professes to love Jesus better than anything else in the whole universe. He gets up and tells his congregation that Jesus is his best friend, and he just hops up and down telling how much he loves that dear friend and how happy he is going to be in heaven with Jesus some time in the future. To hear him cavorting about it in his orthodox way, one would think that the prospect of living with Jesus was so alluring that he would want to begin it just the very first minute possible.

And then to hear him say: "I ALMOST wish SOMETIMES that Jesus would come now." It fairly knocked me backwards. I couldn't help wondering whether his love for Jesus was as deep and sincere as he pretended, else why did he have to put such limitations on his wish for Jesus to come? He never did quite wish it at any time, but SOMETIMES he ALMOST wished it. Don't you reckon Jesus is pleased with such ardent love and longing as that?

Suppose that preacher should be suddenly called away from home to be gone several months. At the end of three or four months his wife writes him that she ALMOST wishes SOMETIMES that he would come home. How would that sound? Why, he would be tempted to take it as an insult, and he would reason that if that was all the bad she wanted him, he would just about as soon not go at all.

Now, looky here! I ain't no preacher, and I don't often get up and make a public show of myself telling how much I love Jesus, and all that sort of gush. But I don't have to stop at saying that I ALMOST wish SOMETIMES that Jesus would come now. I can say from an honest heart that I ALTOGETHER wish it ALL THE TIME. There is no other event that I am so eager and anxious for, and the sooner He comes the better it will suit me. This old world is not going to be fit to live in any more until He does come, and I don't see any reason why I should want it put off for a single day.

But for a preacher of the gospel to "almost wish sometimes that Jesus would come"—that was what got me. After analyzing it carefully, the meaning I get is that he would just a leetle bit rather Jesus would stay away.

THINKING ABOUT IT

Another thing I can't understand is this: If Bolshevism is such a terrible thing as they try to make us believe—if it is only a gang of cut-throats and murderers, with no redeeming feature about it—how is it possible for it to spread so fast and get so many new followers everywhere? If it were utterly bad and dangerous, the masses of the people would have nothing to do with it, because you can't argue to me that everybody have suddenly gone wild and reverted to the jungle stage. The very fact that this movement can grow and spread over the world so rapidly as it is doing proves to me that the common oppressed masses see in it something that offers them some relief. They at least believe that it cannot possibly be any worse than what they now have, and it might be better. So they would just about as soon try it as not. Unless I am badly mistaken, that is how the American masses are thinking on the subject.

CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS

Read any of the capitalist papers and you will be sure to find them railing against the idea of "class-consciousness" among the workers. They say that to encourage class-consciousness is to encourage divisions and dissensions among the people, who other-wise might all be ONE people and live in harmony.

Fiddlesticks! Also rats! Likewise bull's foot! I wonder if you don't know that the rich bosses and exploiters are also class-conscious? You can bet your bottom dollar that they never lose sight of the fact that they themselves are the "upper class"—the ruling and exploiting class. But they don't want the poor workers to find out that THEY (the workers) belong to the "lower class"—the ruled and exploited class. Because they know that when a worker finds out that he is being purposely held down and systematically skinned by an "upper class"—right then he is going to start something on his own account.

Just as long as the money bosses are able to maintain their proud position as an "upper class," just so long will the slaving masses be FORCED into a "lower class."

Don't fool yourself into thinking that any man WANTS to be on the bottom with all the world's weight piled on top of him. But when he IS there and has to stay there and suffer for years, I say he is a mighty big fool if he don't find it out and begin to kick.

PREACHERS PLEASE ANSWER

Once in awhile the plute publications allow a good thing to slip in. I just happened to be looking back over my April copy of The American Magazine, and I found the following which I had marked in an article by Bruce Barton:

"Whenever I see a faction of folks who seem to me most in need of criticism, most wrong in their ideas and influence, I cannot forget what a sorry appearance that crowd must have presented who followed Jesus of Nazareth along the shores of Galilee. When I find all the good men on one side of any question, I am reminded that all the leading citizens were on the side that sent Socrates to death and that stoned Stephen in the market-place."

Read that again, and think about it. There is a great lesson in it. We are too much inclined to think that the popular thing is the right thing, and that the unpopular thing is always bad and dangerous. Why, sakes alive, man, when you come right down to the facts it is more often just the other way. You may study the history of every reform movement that has ever been in the world and you will find that all the big leaders of society, church and state were against them.

I have been advertising for an orthodox preacher who is willing to say that he would have joined with Jesus and his little bunch of ragged fishermen if he had been living at that time, but I haven't found him yet. The preachers can primp up their long faces and talk mighty sugary about Jesus now, since He and His cause have gained recognition in the world, but how many of them would have been willing to face the disgrace of being one of His early disciples? That's what I want to know.

The money that Germany spent in building submarines was her sinking fund.

They Keep On Slandering God

They Do Not Know the Difference Between Punishment and Torment.

Republican, Ark.,
Aug. 4th, 1919.
Mr. James Larkin Pearson,
Boomer, N. C.

Dear Sir:
After Reading your paper for some time And will have to say there is Nothing to your argument you read the Bible and try to twist it Just to suit you But Am glad to say that you and All the people that Believe as you Do cant change gods pans so you had Better get Rid of such belief as you have and give your hart mind soul and strenth to god if you are going to fix your way or a plan by Which you Will Be saved christ Died in Vain But Christ Fixed a Way Where by We Might be Saved and there is no other way if there is no Everlasting Punishment What Was the need of christ Comming into this World and Dying on the cross that we might be saved from our sins I am sending you a Booklet Entitled Hell and Everlasting punishment please Read carefully and notice scriptures carefully that is given far reference Also the writer of the same Book has Written A Book on Christ's Kingdom and reign also Christ second comming and What Will fallaw it will Do you good to get them and read them
Very truly yours
J D Willis

REPLY.
My dear Mr. Willis:

I am genuinely sorry for you and all people like you. The great trouble with you is that you are terribly ignorant and don't know it. Look at your letter, printed above, and notice how beautifully it is spelled, capitalized and punctuated. You spell the name of God with a little g and commence about half of your common words with capitals. And there is not a period, comma nor any other punctuation mark in the whole thing. That certainly does look like you know something. Ain't you a pretty thing to be trying to instruct an editor? If I were in your place I would be ashamed. There is no sense in supposing that a man as ignorant as you are is capable of forming an intelligent opinion about anything.

You ask: if there is no Everlasting punishment What Was the need of Christ Comming into this World and Dying on the Cross?
You poor, ignorant, fuddle-headed simpleton, I double-dare you to point out any place where I ever claimed that there is to be no Everlasting Punishment for the wicked. Why, man, I believe in everlasting punishment just as strong as you or anybody else, and I have repeatedly expressed that belief in every article I have written on the subject.

Yes, indeed, I believe in everlasting punishment, but the thing I do NOT believe in is everlasting TORMENT. Now I'll just bet a purty that you are too big a gump to see the difference. But there is a difference, and a big one. Right there is where all you blabber-mouthed orthodox folks get tangled up in your whiskers and fall down. You have never learned the difference between PUNISHMENT and TORMENT. You think that the only way God could inflict everlasting punishment on a sinner would be to keep him alive and in conscious TORMENT through endless eternity.

Now listen to me just a minute. Suppose a man in your community commits a murder, and he is tried in your court and sentenced to the electric chair. In telling me about it you would say that the man was going to get a terrible punishment for his crime. And yet in using the word "punishment" you would not mean the conscious physical suffering the man would experience at the moment of execution; for, as a matter of fact, he would perhaps not be conscious of any suffering at all. And even if he did feel any pain it would last only an instant.

What do you mean, then, when you speak of the man's terrible PUNISHMENT? You refer to his being cut off from life—taken away from his family and friends, and deprived of all the things that we like to live for. Now here! In the name of all that is reasonable, can't you see that the man's PUNISHMENT is not the PAIN OF DYING, but the FACT OF BEING DEAD? And can't you see that the PUNISHMENT will last as long as he STAYS DEAD?

Don't you know how hard a man will fight for his life? Don't you know that a condemned criminal will move heaven and earth, as the saying is, to get his death sentence changed to life imprisonment? He would rather live a very unhappy life than die an easy death. Why? Simply because it is natural for us to love life in spite of its hard conditions, and it is natural for us to look upon death as the worst thing that can happen to us.

And yet when the Bible plainly says that the wages of sin is DEATH, you super-Solomons of orthodoxy begin to stutter and slobber and swear that the Bible told a lie—that a little thing like DEATH wouldn't be any punishment hardly. You think God ought to go back to the days of the Inquisition and study their methods and learn how to torment people good and proper.

I said just now that it is natural for us to regard DEATH as the worst thing that can happen to us. And in the natural course of events it is. But there is such a thing as deliberate brutal TORTURE being worse than death. You show me a man who delights in torturing any living creature just for the fun of seeing it suffer, and I will tell the world that he is a cruel and heartless beast. All civilized governments seek for the most merciful and painless way of executing a criminal. Any method of execution that causes the victim to suffer unnecessarily has long ago been abandoned. Whenever this rule is violated, don't you know how all civilization resents it? It was violated on all sides during the Great War. People were tortured just for the brutal delight of seeing them suffer. And don't you know how bitter we have all felt against Germany and Turkey for their cruelty in torturing and tormenting the victims that fell into their hands? And don't you know what a stink has been raised because some of our own army officers turned brutes and tortured the soldiers? Can't you see that the whole sentiment of civilization is against the idea of torture and torment?

And yet you dare to stand up and tell me that the Good God of all the universe is more cruel and brutal than even a Hun or a Turk? Dare you tell me that God will carry on a business FOREVER that our earthly governments will not permit for a single day if they can help it? Don't you realize that you are making God a worse brute than old Nero ever was? It is a wonder to me that God permits men to live and slander His holy name like that.

INVESTIGATE

I hope you will at least give me credit for being honest. I hope you will not say that I am printing this paper just to make a sensation, and that I do not believe the things I write. The fact is, I DO believe them, else I would not write them. And more than that, I have good REASONS for believing them.

Now if you are as honest as I am, you will not condemn until you investigate. It is not treating me fair to denounce or condemn my position until you have devoted as much honest effort to proving me WRONG as I have to proving myself RIGHT.

If often happens that a man will spend long weary years in study and investigation about something, and just as soon as he announces his stand, some little upstart who has never given five minutes study to the subject will bob up and say the man is wrong. That is a mighty foolish thing for anybody to do, and only a fool would do it. So if you think the things I say in this paper are all wrong, a little honest investigation might be an eye-opener for you.