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Friday, August 22, 1919

Production and Moral Issue

It is very wrong to attempt to blame the merchants and storekeepers for the increased cost of living. It is doubly wrong:—first, because it is unfair to these people, and second, because the publicity connected therewith directs the people's attention away from the real cause and the real cure. It likewise is wrong to blame high prices onto high wages, or vice versa. Both are relative and always will be. When expressed in dollars neither prices or wages mean anything. It does us no good to get \$10 a day and work only 6 hours a day if this means that bread will be \$1 a loaf. A discussion of either wages or prices alone is like arguing which existed first, a hen or an egg! We have fooled ourselves long enough by putting our thumb on the thermometer bulb.

It is time that we went down cellar and put some coal in the furnace. The increased cost of living can be reduced only by increasing production or decreasing consumption, or by both. When production exceeds consumption, the cost of living declines; but when consumption exceeds production, the cost living increases.

Usually, the cost of living is reduced thru the latter method, namely, by reducing consumption. This comes about by prices getting so high that people curtail their buying to a point which makes prices decline. When prices begin to decline they fall further than is needed, because people get panic stricken and refuse to buy on a falling market, even for their legitimate needs. Hence, in accordance with the law of equal and opposite, prices on a declining market fall as far below their normal, as they rise above their normal during boom times. This is why the cost of living declines during a business depression even though production falls off and unemployment is common.

The ideal way to reduce the cost of living is by increasing production! Reductions in the cost of living which come thru reductions in consumption are only temporary. As soon as business picks up and people again become employed, the cost of living again begins to climb and we are worse off than before. This explains why all the commissions and other attempts to reduce the cost of living during the past decades have failed. The high cost of living is a necessary reaction to the grasping attitude which 95% of us take toward life. We are taught to get all we can and give as little as we can.

As long as only comparatively few families had this grasping nature, things went on very well. In our fathers' days enough people had the right point of view toward life to keep the rest fed, housed and clothed on decent basis. We are like a party in a rowboat. As long as all row, we get along finely. One, even, may loaf and still we make progress. Now, however, almost everyone is slacking on his oars, and the boat is stopping. We can get on with a few robbers. The country will stand a certain amount of burglary and still prosper; but when all turn burg-

lars, production falls off and prices shoot up. That is what we are up against now. Hence, I say, the cost of living can be reduced only by a nation wide revival which will change men's hearts!

The cost of living is more of a religious question than an economic one. Its solution awaits a religious revival rather than the passage of more legislation or the adoption of a new industrial order such as the Socialists, the Bolsheviks, or I. W. W.'s demand. Until the hearts of men are changed, we should be no better off under Socialism than at present; with the hearts of men right, we can get on well under any system. Hence, I again say, we should quit fooling with the thermometer either by changing the scale or by putting our thumb on the bulb. We should go down cellar and put more fuel on the furnace. This means go out into the forests and cut more wood, mine more coal and produce more of everything.

How can we increase production? First, let me say there can be no such thing as too much production, or over-production, provided all is properly distributed and labor is properly proportioned among the different industries. There could be an over-production of pepper, or even of sugar; but it will be many, many years before there could be an over-production of foodstuffs in general; while I cannot imagine a time when there could be an over-production of good homes and comforts. We need not fear over-production. What we must fear is that too many people will loaf on their own jobs, and consequently will not be able to buy their share of good things. In other words, the problem is to get everybody to producing something useful! We can't do this by merely stating economic facts. We must make it a moral issue!

The abolition of slavery was never accomplished by an argument of economics, but when the majority of people were made to feel that slavery was wrong, it was abolished. When the majority of people were made to feel that drinking was wrong and were ashamed to be seen in a saloon, we got prohibition. In the same way, when the people are educated to regard with contempt the non-producer or the man who curtails his production, we shall strike at the tap root of the high cost of living!

ROGER W. BABSON
Wellesly Hills, Mass.

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Rev. Thurston B. Price

famous evangelist in a series of meetings
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in the

**Roanoke Rapids Methodist
Church**

We would shun the use of superlatives and all exaggerated forms of speech in this statement. No good comes of loose and reckless statements. We certainly are free from such when we say that Thurston B. Price spoke with great effectiveness of utterance in rebuking sin, and with fine clarity of statement in instructing those seeking the better way, and showed commendable tact in dealing with men and situations. Wilmington has had, at one time or another, all the leading evangelists, such as Moody, Jones, Torry and Chapman, but none have pleased more than he. Not a few would like for us to arrange another meeting like this at a future date.—Signed: M. T. Plyler, J. H. McCracken, E. C. Sell, V. P. Schovell, Pastors; J. H. Shore, P. E., Wilmington, N. C.

As a powerful preacher, Mr. Price stands among the best evangelists of the country. He is a close student of the Bible, and free from sensationalism and other objectionable features, and disarms all prejudices against the revival. He is a man of striking address, clearcut features, determination depicted on his countenance, and a voice that takes you immediately into the realms of interest and holds you in close attention.—Rev. R. C. Craven, when Pastor Trinity Church, Durham, N. C.

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