

PERILS IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

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"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34.

Our nation is in a great crisis, probably the greatest it has been called upon to pass through. In relation to this time of supreme trial and testing, we are reminded of the meaningful words of King Solomon when he said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Here is the battleground between righteousness and sin in the life and living of a nation. We can be sure that it is the great conflict of earth which commands the attention of God more than it does the attention of men.

Much of what we see and feel in the chaotic world about us today is only the effects set in motion by other greater causes which have gradually worked themselves into the vitals and virtues of the nation. We dare say that any exalted position that our great nation may hold is due to righteousness, its holding to great righteous principles, its display of righteous tolerance, and its exalting of righteous virtues. Right on the heels of that truth, we dare further to say that any reproach, any defeats, any embarrassments, that have come to us as a nation have come because of our sins, our unrighteousness, our godlessness. It is true without contest that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

There are certain great dangers in the present crisis which we do well to recognize. These dangers underlie whatever fears we may have that this great war shall be lost, and we need to remind ourselves that we have not won it yet. We are still being held in the cruel vortex of this howling calamity, and that inescapable reality is making Americans think. There has never been so many men and women who are interested in the spiritual side of life, in the truths of the Bible, and in the saving character of the Gospel, as today. The men in the armed forces are especially enquiring after the spiritual and the eternal. There is a stirring, a moving, a convicting, an awakening, among us to these things. But that very fact and experience may constitute our first great peril of the crisis. It is that we shall have conviction and awakening without action and performance. It is a fear that we are growing sensitive to these things, and then will fail to do anything about them. Men have felt the spiritual urge, the moral necessity, the jogging convictions, but not enough to do something about it. The churches are still avoided, the Bible is still neglected, the revival fires still burn low, the Sabbath is still desecrated, the better life is still the ideal rather than the practical, and we want God to win the war for us, but we don't want to get too familiar with him.

That is the great peril of the crisis, that its sobering, awakening, spiritualizing effects shall be wasted on us. We shall go through the dark valley and be none the better for it. Our needs, our defeats, our bewilderments, our sufferings, are but merely driving us to a shallow concept of religion. We are making it an instrumental thing, practical in a pinch, soothing in our sufferings, and full of advantages when we need them. We are putting it on like a raincoat in a thunder-storm, only to discard it when the storm is over. We have an awakening from apathy, but not an arousal to action in spiritual things.

There is a second peril for us as a nation

in this time of unparalleled jeopardy, and it is that we shall come to fully trust and repose in a comparative righteousness which is determined upon our own goodness rather than upon any vital relation to God. We hear considerable talk, and we have come to expect that God's blessings and favors come upon us as a nation because we are better than other nations, and that comparison favorable to ourselves gives us a sort of a "pet" standing with the Sovereign of the Skies. If there is any truth in such reckoning, it can't be more than half-truth at its best, for we have some tremendous sins of national size and seriousness of our own; and before we begin to make comparisons, we need to deal with these monsters of evil, and to set our own house in order. God responds with his supreme blessings, not on the basis of how good or bad we may be in comparison to someone else, but on our recognition of and our relation to him. That note is definitely sounded in the National Recovery Act of the Old Testament, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land." Such is God's remedy for the curse of drought, the devouring locusts, the scourge of pestilence, and the ravages of war. The great question is not how do we stand morally and righteously in comparison to Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and other countries either for or against us, but how do we stand in relation to God and absolute righteousness? We can win this great war with brute force, but while doing it, lose the divine benediction and the approval of a righteous and holy God. That would mean losing the peace after winning the war. A nation may carry off the glories of successful battle, but it is still only righteousness that exalteth a nation in the sight of God. Our faith in our own righteousness, short of conformity to the will and ways of God, to bring lasting victory to the nation is delusion and ignorance of the working methods of God. We may win by force, but never by such faith. May God help us to build upon the solid rock of true repentance and truth, rather than upon the sinking sands of self-righteousness and human goodness.

The third peril characterizes most panics and crises. It is the rash and stupid turning to and trial of every offered remedy and solution. The seriousness of the distress inspires the trial of anything, and it is quite common philosophy that most men will try anything once. Our nation has been guilty of resorting to the "trial and error" method too much, and we have blundered through the last decade with little regard for the real and righteous remedy for all ills, whether national or personal. In our delirium, we have taken poison for medicine, and in a daze have been led too close to the brink of destruction. We have spent money for that which is not bread, and we have labored for that which satisfieth not. The treaties following the last war were rush documents to get a feverish world back to normal, but they proved to be "a shot in the dark" which finally set the world ablaze afresh. It was a "try" with God and righteousness left out. It is time that men and nations come to face the fact that they have no remedy for re-occurring wars and woes of humanity. All human reasonings and remedies are like pink sugar pills when the disease is entrenched like a cancer in the very nature and heart

of man. We must get back to God, back to the Bible, back to righteousness made possible through the blood of Christ, and back to the only remedy for sin and evil.

We need to face the future with the determination that we shall build into the fibre of national life and character, those principles of righteousness, and those factors of moral and spiritual fortitude which shall make for recognition of God, repentance of our personal and national sins, and restoration of peace and prosperity throughout the world. —Pentecostal Herald.

OF INTEREST TO SUNDAY SCHOOLS

At the S. S. Convention of District No. 2 held at Moncton Sunday, March 7th, a three-point discussion was carried out on the task of the Sunday School. The discussion was under three headings: Getting the Scholar, Keeping the Scholar, and Saving the Scholar. The meaning of each of these headings will be clear to all. They suggest the three-fold task of the Sunday school, viz.: building up attendance, retaining new scholars as regular attendants and leading them into saving fellowship with Christ.

For the benefit the suggestions of this convention may bring to other Sunday schools, we have been asked to print them.

1. Getting the Scholar (means of increasing attendance)—

- (a) Personal Contact through Home Visitation.
- (b) Rally Days.
- (c) Attendance Competition between Classes.

2. Keeping the Scholar—

- (a) Perfect Attendance Chart.
- (b) Qualified Leadership, Officers and Teachers.
- (c) Interesting Programme.
- (d) Personal Interest in Scholars (Friendliness),
- (e) Vacation Bible School.

3. Saving the Scholar—

- (a) Interest in the Salvation of Each Individual.
- (b) A Good Example in Christian Living on the part of Teachers, Officers, etc.
- (c) Prayerful Preparation of the Lesson by the Teacher.
- (d) Definite Spiritual Appeal to the Scholar.

A GREAT DIFFERENCE

A single word, "regeneration," explains the great difference between Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths, says Dr. Leo H. Lehmann. Writing in Revelation he says:

"As a former priest of the Church of Rome, I have many times been asked to explain the reason why the Catholic Church insists on its outworn teachings and practices—why purgatory, confession, indulgences, worship of saints and their images, transubstantiation, infallibility of the pope, mass, fasting, penances, rosary beads, and the other man-made devices in Catholic practice which are a puzzle to most Protestants. * * *

"The answer is simple. Each of these strange practices is necessary in the Church of Rome because it is without the regenerative message of the true Christian gospel. Men are born again, made new creatures, having direct contact with God through Jesus Christ, do not need them.