

These Are the Things I Believe

I COME NOW to the end of 20 years of these once-a-week commentaries. The words I've spoken in these quarter hour talks would fill at least 20 books of conventional novel length. Subjects have ranged from the love life of the honeybee to man's place in the scheme of things. I've really covered the waterfront.

It would be possible—let me hasten, however, to say I'm not suggesting it—to browse through my three-foot tall pile of typewritten manuscripts and either identify my credo or discover that I don't have one.

Most of the time since March 19, 1943, when I launched my series of broadcasts, my little network has included two state university stations. Conscious of the obligation thus implied, if not actually imposed, I probably have tempered my preaching more than I otherwise would have done.

My abiding belief in the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man has been stated more than once. Corollary to this is my belief that there is a God-directed evolution . . . always upward. The gift of an intellect and a conscience made man a partner of the Supreme Architect in this evolutionary process of which I speak.

With Grove Patterson of the Toledo, Ohio, *Blade*, whom I was proud to call my friend for many years, I can't bring myself to believe that this Supreme Architect would build for man a stairway leading nowhere.

Throughout the period of these commentaries I have rejected the oft-repeated assertion that man is a fighting animal. To the exact contrary, I have maintained—and do

maintain—that the deepest instinct in humankind is the instinct for peace, not war.

This premise was at the center of my opening commentary two decades ago. Although the outcome of World War II was by no means decided, I predicted victory for the free world and a peace organization which would permit America to make amends for its role in scuttling the League of Nations.

It was my contention then, as it has been many times since, that people throughout the world are entitled to better government than they have had. In a true democracy such as ours—and there are few others—people get almost precisely what they deserve and demand. But for nine-tenths of the world's population this rule is not applicable.

Not in modern times certainly, and probably never, have those who must do the fighting and the dying been responsible for our wars. The decision is made by those far removed from the fighting and dying. In this I find the most compelling argument possible for a quest for lasting world peace through a system of enforceable law.

It may be a far-off goal but there can be no security against future wars unless and until we have a world peace organization equipped to reach down into the individual nations and eliminate the Hitlers, Mussolinis and, yes, the Stalins and Khrushchevs before they plunge us into another blood bath.

Some say—and I readily agree—that the course of action I've suggested here involves substantial risk. I ask only that this risk be set down alongside the risk which attaches to following the same road which has led to two world wars within my own span of maturity.

Almost before the ink was dry on the United Nations Charter, I sensed that we had sent a boy to do a man's work. The lofty goals set up in that document were not matched by the means of reaching them. In fairness, as

I have pointed out innumerable times in these commentaries, it must be admitted that we were no less responsible than the Kremlin for the inadequate setup we got in the UN eighteen years ago.

How to make amends for lost opportunity is by no means clear at this time. We're locked in a life-and-death struggle with world communism. Even if it ended in complete victory at an early date—and this is by no means an impossibility—I'm not sure that we'd profit fully from the lessons we've learned from two attempts at world organization for peace.

Now for a moment or two, let's turn our attention to that most nefarious ideology ever visited upon our world—communism. No subject has had more frequent or extensive attention in my commentaries down through the years. I've spoken about it with more than a little feeling.

Communism presented itself as a reality to me, as distinguished from a theory, a dozen years ago. First it was Tito's Marxism, then Stalin's. In Yugoslavia I saw empty store windows and ill-clad people in the center of a land suggestive of Iowa in its fertility. Then it was East Berlin, still in ruins whereas West Berlin was a flourishing city.

Later I saw Marxism at its fountainhead—Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow. I viewed its collective farming at close range. I studied its education from nursery schools to graduate level in 35-story University of Moscow looking down on historic Moskva River from a commanding site on Lenin Hills.

I didn't see Russia's assembly line industry because my intourist guide was under orders not to let me. I could only judge it by its products, which included automobiles and trucks and tractors 20 years behind the times alongside their American counterparts.

What had become a well-defined impression in Yugoslavia and East Germany a half dozen years previously

became a settled conviction on the basis of my time in Russia. Here are some of the things I believe about the ideology spawned by Marx and Engels, applied by Lenin and adapted by Stalin and Khrushchev:

Communism is as phony as a three-dollar bill. It never went anywhere on honest invitation. It could stay nowhere—not even Russia—if there was a free choice and a plausible known alternative. Its one genius, if that word can be used, has been its ability to hold a pistol at the temple of its enslaved people longer than any other tyranny of our time.

I verily believe that communism has the seeds of its own destruction. I am willing to stake my reputation as a reporter on a prediction that Americans now living—including my seven grandchildren—will be on hand to witness the burial rites for this most loathsome ideology ever conceived in the mind of man. . . . IF

We of the free world remain strong economically, militarily and—most important of all—spiritually.

This is a point of view I have expressed more than once—many times, in fact—in this extended series of commentaries now coming to an end.

Another oft-recurring theme in my weekly visits has been education in its varied manifestations. My conviction that education is the one most important business in the world has presented itself in numerous garbs. My reasoning has been rather elementary.

With education and an application of the technology embraced by education, there can be food for the four billion people who will inhabit our earth by 1970. With education—and only with education—can religion be elevated from superstition to something supremely meaningful.

Education is an indispensable precedent to true self-government in the democratic pattern. This was a studied judgment reached two decades ago on an extended fact-

finding mission through South America. I had to report—and I'd still have to report—that there wasn't in all of Latin America any true democracy—republics, yes, but no real democracy.

Where illiteracy prevails, as it does in at least two-thirds of our world, a despotism is inevitable. The only question is whether it shall be a benevolent or a malevolent tyranny. I know of no exception to this rule.

Where there's democracy—our kind or any other form which glorifies human dignity—aggressive warfare becomes an impossibility. No war, as I've already suggested, could be launched by popular vote of an enlightened people. It's as simple as that.

It may be said of me that I have been a sucker for causes . . . safety, Red Cross, Community Chest agencies, crippled children, cancer, Radio Free Europe, all of them. If I am so accused, I shall not be disposed to enter a denial. Support for causes designed to promote happiness and human welfare has been deeply rooted in my credo.

As I have given of my time, my effort and my means, I have always had the deep-seated conviction that I was receiving even more than I gave. That is my heartfelt testimonial. I'm truly sorry for those who have not experienced the comfort and satisfaction which comes from believing—really believing—in a cause and doing something about it.

Some of the causes I've espoused have prospered. Others—and a larger number I suspect—have not, at least not yet.

Safety doesn't lend itself to permanent solution. My approach to the problem is that we get the degree of safety we deserve and demand. There's a price to be paid and we haven't been willing as yet to pay it.

In recent years, even recent months, there has been a most encouraging cutting through the ignorance and su-

perstition that have blocked scientific water fluoridation. Vaccination's story is being repeated.

Iowa's adoption of a constitutional amendment which can put us at the forefront of judicial and court reform—if it's properly implemented by our legislature—has been a source of tremendous gratification to me by reason of my having headed up the state lay organization behind the move.

My story with respect to calendar reform isn't as pleasant to relate. There is a plan that would provide uniformity in months, quarters, and years. The logic for its adoption would seem to be unanswerable. Other nations favor it but American inertia blocks the path. We seem to need another Julius Caesar or Pope Gregory to take a giant stride forward in time-reckoning.

I had some slight part in bringing the City Manager Plan to my community. Its abandonment through apathy by our self-admitted "good people" was disappointing. But I haven't given up. Some day it will return because it constitutes the one best path to efficient and economical municipal government.

On the less serious side I haven't been able to make it known that it was Charles Dudley Warner, not Mark Twain, who said everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. Nor have I been wholly successful in getting across the information—even among some of my own associates—that the word is **adDRESS**—not **ADress**. . . .

But my happiest memory is going to be about the thousands of stimulating letters from listeners. They have undergirded my well-defined conviction that humankind is mostly good and that our God-directed evolution is ever upward.

W. EARL HALL