

Grangers and Their Thinking

While hardly qualifying as an "agricultural expert" in any sense, we often wonder when adoption of resolutions by farm organization conventions is completed.

A prime example of this is the recent State Grange convention and some of the resolutions coming from the organization.

Many of these planks in their official political platform are solid and more than reasonable. Some we question.

For example — The Grange requested a change in Pennsylvania Unemployment legislation to base payment limitations upon the net income of farmers applying for unemployment benefits. In the case of part-time farmers, who depend on limited farm operations AND a full-time job to support their families, this seems necessary and reasonable.

But if this is designed to permit marginal or low-income farmers to apply for and receive unemployment checks, it would appear rather unreasonable. Certainly a farmer who has worked only on his farm and not on a wage or salary job, should expect to stand on his own merit as a business-man. If he needs help there are governmental agencies designed to provide assistance — to farm businesses.

The use of unemployment checks to augment income from basically unsound farming units hardly seems reasonable. We can only hope the Grange was asking for consideration of part-time farmers, regarding their basic status as laborers and not businessmen.

During the same conventions, the Grange resolved against a minimum wage and hour act for farm laborers, pleading long and irregular hours required in farm work would, with such legislation work hardship on farmers.

No doubt such legislation would deplete some farmers' net income. But who needs protective legislation more than the

person who must work long and irregular hours to retain his job. And in many cases, with the benefit of little labor-saving machinery. We question.

The Grange also opposed, via resolution, any increase in rate of social security payments. The logic, reason or intent motivating this resolution completely escapes us.

Certainly if the funds are available for carefully planned increases in Social Security payments, farmers stand to benefit. But aside from this purely selfish motive for their own well-being, there is another and far more important humanitarian reason for any increase possible.

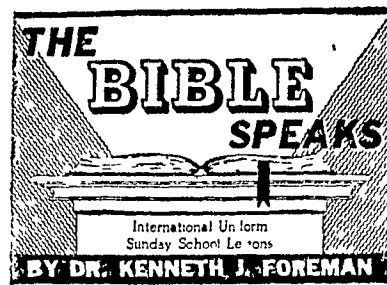
Very few persons receiving social security benefits are buying new topcoats every fall, smoking quantities of 25 cent cigars, dining on steak and mushrooms every evening or sharing in other luxuries.

Unless the Grange can honestly say every deserving benefit recipient is able to afford proper food, clothing, medical care, shelter and a few of life's pleasures — their stand on this matter would appear narrow, short sighted and lacking in basic decency.

Unless the Grange membership is young enough to have hopes of the Social Security treasury building huge reserves by the time they reach retirement age and sending them all on luxury cruises, we can't find a sound motive for this resolution.

You needn't buy many light bulbs, tractor parts, or brooms to know inflation is a very potent reality. How real it must be for the aged and infirm who must exist on a fixed income in an economy of spiraling costs. These people, most of whom worked many years before retirement, or disabling injury, contributed the funds for their social security benefits.

Are we to question their right to these funds? We question.



Bible Material: Matthew 5 through 7. Devotional Reading: Matthew 5:38-48.

Salt and Light

Lesson for November 9, 1958

WHAT are the marks of a Christian? It is true, only God sees the heart. "The Lord knoweth them that are his," as the Old Testament says. But we are not God. Have we any way of telling whether a person is a Christian or not? A farmer or a professor of agriculture may be able to tell wheat from rye while it is standing in the field; some city slickers can't do that. But even a person who never set foot off the sidewalks of New York, who wouldn't know either a wheat field or a rye field from a clover patch, knows wheat bread from rye bread.



Dr. Foreman

Jesus put it in a nutshell. "By their fruits ye shall know them," he said. A Christian has distinguishing features, he has fruits, he has "marks" by which he may be known.

Salt of the Earth

Talking not about, but to his followers, Jesus said to them, "You are the salt of the earth." This is one of the marks of a Christian, it was a mark of Jesus. The Master's way of putting things is always direct, simple, poetic. We can say poetic because Jesus has a preference for figures of speech which can convey truth with more force than if he spelled everything out in long and difficult sentences. "You are the salt of the earth" — there it is in words of one syllable.

Salt is an essential, not a luxury. In Jesus' time and even today it is used as a preservative. It keeps things from going bad. There is no substitute for it. So the Christian, wherever he is, in whatever situation, ought to be the kind of person who keeps things from going bad. Every human situation carries in it the germs of evil, and without the saving salt of true Christians, the situation will mold and ferment and grow worse. When a human

problem is to be solved, one mark of the Christian is that he is not part of the problem, he is part of the answer.

Light of the World

Jesus did not mind mixing metaphors. He loved parables, and a metaphor is just a one-phrase or one-word parable. He would make one point with one parable or figure of speech, and then make his next point with another. So he gives us another one-syllable word-picture of what Christians should be like. "You are the light of the world," he said. That tells us a great deal.

This world is a dark place. Jesus knew that. He was no Pollyanna, thinking the answer to everything is just to keep smiling. Tears often fit better than smiles, in this world. But still the world can be brighter than it is. Christians sometimes forget this. We sit around and grumble because the world is so dark. Who turned off the lights? Well, says Jesus, YOU are the light of the world. It's not your business to complain of the dark, it is your business to shine.

There are two opposite faults in lighting as every one who has been to church knows. One is to put the lights so they shine in everybody's eye. A glaring light doesn't help the eyes, it hurts them. On the other hand, lights can be so few or so weak that they only "make the darkness visible." A very dim light may be more exasperating than no light at all.

Needed Now

Salt and light were already pretty old-fashioned when Jesus was born. But now, almost 2,000 years after Christ, salt and light, older than ever, are just as necessary as they always were. Some things Jesus said about Christians are hard to understand. But this is easy even for children to understand. Christians salt-and-light Christians are never out of date. Science does not get rid of our need for them. Suppose the dreams of the Buck Rogers crowd come true, as indeed some of them may in this age of space—suppose that we can extend the borders of the human race on out to Mars and who knows where next? Salt and light will be needed out yonder. And people will be needed there to be the salt and light of the pioneers.

Don't envy communities with salt-and-light people in them. Make your own community enviable—be one!

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Now Is The Time . . .

By MAX SMITH
County Agricultural Agent




Max Smith

TO KEEP GOOD FARM RECORDS — Tax return time is rapidly approaching and is just another reason to keep records on your farm business. However, the main benefit is to know the enterprises making the greatest net returns and to uncover the "leaks" in your farm operations. Farm account books are available at a minimum cost at any Extension Office.

TO SPRAY WILD HONEY-SUCKLE — Early winter is the best time to use chemicals to kill honey-suckle vines. One of the recommended chemicals is to use one part of 2,4,5 T brush killer and 20 parts of No. 2 fuel oil. This mixture can be sprayed on the vines during late November, December and January with good results. Do not spray on trees, shrubs or any other plant that is not to be killed.

TO PRODUCE QUALITY MILK — The fall and early winter months should be a period of peak production of top quality milk, prices are usually higher at this time of the year. Maximum production should return greater dividends during the late spring and early summer. Regular washing of dairy utensils is essential, the equipment should be sanitized just before using it, rather than immediately after it has been washed.

TO KEEP HEIFERS GROWTHY — Research work has shown that it does not pay to get growing heifers too fat. Cows with higher production and better udders will result if too much fatty tissue is not present around the glands of the udder. Daily outdoor exercise, plenty of good roughages, and limited feed are recommended for yearling heifers.



THIS WEEK
— In Washington
With Clinton Davidson
FARM PROSPERITY

Davidson

The official farm story now being distributed from Washington could convince many city people and Congress that all farmers are rolling in unprecedented prosperity and wealth.

That would be a serious mistake. There is danger that some of the more recent favorable farm news will be so over-emphasized as to obscure the still serious difficulties which farmers face.

The farm news generally is indisputably good. Good weather and careful planning have enabled farmers to produce bumper crops this year. The total is a new record high 10 per cent above any previous year.

The average of prices received by farmers has been rising faster than farm costs for almost two years. Beef, cattle and hog prices have been especially favorable to producers.

Farm Income High

Farm income per capita is at an all-time record high. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Benson has pointed out in a number of recent speeches. It still, however, is only about half the non-farm average.

Net farm income after payment of production costs has been running nearly one-fifth higher this year than a year ago. Benson points out, "Agriculture" he emphasizes, is increasingly prosperous, expanding and free.

Others less optimistic point out that bumper crops are not an unmixed blessing. That the result is an increase in our already burdensome surplus. There is

every indication that farm surpluses will continue to be a serious national problem.

While per capita farm income is up, total farm income is 25 per cent below 1952 — \$12 billion compared with \$16 billion. The difference is explained by the fact that there are fewer farmers.

Purchasing Power Down

Although income measured in dollars is up because of inflation, farmers can buy less with 1958 income than they could with much smaller income in 1940. It is what you can buy with the dollars you have, not the number of dollars that counts.

Farmers now own an estimated \$188 billion worth of real estate and other property, against which they have mortgages totaling \$11 billion. That, too, is largely a result of inflation rather than increased wealth.

Farm ownership is at a record high and that is good. Two out of every three farmers are completely free of mortgage debt. The standard of living on farms, Benson emphasizes, is the highest in history.

Farm people own more appliances, radios, televisions, automobiles and other conveniences than ever before. The average how-ever, still is well below that of city people.

Washington may be guilty of being over-anxious to paint too bright a farm picture. Fairness requires that emphasis be placed on complete accuracy rather than on making the record look good.

Lancaster Farming

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Egg Production Continues Climb

Fewer than normal number of laying hens were added to flocks on Penna farms during September. The State Department of Agriculture has announced.

A Penna Crop Reporting Service tabulation shows that numbers increased during the month, averaging 17.6 million replacements compared with 16.9 million in August, and was slightly above the 1957 total.

Egg production for the first nine months of 1958 is about the same as the first nine months of last year.

The long time upward production trend continued during September. With the rate of 16.05 eggs per bird this is the fifth consecutive month in which rate of lay was record high for the month.