**December 9, 1945**

Dear fellow countrymen and countrywomen, I greet you with the words: Praised be Jesus Christ!

The image of the world at the end of total war is grim and sad. People had longingly waited for world peace. We prayed for a victorious peace. Victory came. The enemies signed the conditions of that peace. The roar of armaments quieted. The hiss of bombs went away. Machine guns fell silent. Nevertheless, the war in Europe left a testament written in tears and the blood of a million sacrificial lives, not only those killed and murdered but those suffering with ill health, starving, and without proper clothing. Workshops and livelihoods were destroyed. There are no food-stuffs; there is no communication nor transportation. The roads are filled with displaced persons, torn from their countries and thrown into the Reich. Great areas of land are devastated. There is little bread, but a great deal of destruction. There is a dearth of hospitals and medicines and antitoxins. Hunger, cold and illness are comrades of the whole demoralized and certainly catastrophic European economy which is in ruins. The people were able to survive six years of invasions, bombardments, blockades and imprisonment. Will they survive the winter months, which brought them victory, freedom and peace? Nations looked forward to a bright future, bathed in the sun, and a peaceful tomorrow and a satisfied future. Tomorrow came and became today, cold, in sickness, fear and doubt. And so people asked themselves, “Did we sacrifice so many lives for this? Isn’t it sad that our painful sacrificial offering was rewarded with hunger and do we need to face a downfall in morality and a fading freedom?

“ON THE VERGE OF A PRECIPICE”

In contrast to the look at post-wartime life described in the preface, we will look at life in the United States. Titanic plans of rebuilding confront us. Work hours and wages are debated, as well as the standard of living, supplying foreign markets with food supplies. The government stops organizing men for war; factories close their gates, workers are fired, unemployment statistics are up, and strikes multiply. What is prophesized is a catastrophe. Everyday problems loom. Society is in a state of doubt about the future. So, what are we headed for? What will be counted as loss for a civilization which does not facilitate, beautify, or enhance its society? Will our American society get rid of fighting the factors that debilitate it and live up the spiritual factors which have been neglected? Will it go forward blindly in a materialistic way so as to leave the society in ruins? Are we heading for oblivion? The common man looks with fear of the coming years. We stand at the doorsteps of cloud-laden and stormy tomorrow.

The Second World Wide War not only used the well-known armaments of death and destruction but discovered new ones, more effective and horrible. Gigantic bombers, better dynamite, fire, poison gases and finally the atom bomb. The demon of destruction grows, proliferates, day by day more powerful, fed by new discoveries devoid of moral thought. Beyond a healthy moral thoughtfulness, it does not even begin to heal the great wound of the big war.

There is, nevertheless, besides mechanical and material destruction which are external, internal factors. Internal repercussions are not easily determinable in a short period of time.

People will find a way to save our civilization and our life style, if the nation uses as a basis, the principles of sincerity; in other words, on the commandments of God. If you build upon other ways and other fundamentals, then, you will soon be convinced that your efforts will bring unsatisfactory results or they will be totally without fruit.

I don’t know if one of the dangers of modern times isn’t that ancient hydra with two heads – riches and pleasure. I remember well, when the famous ex-prime minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill, on the occasion of his visit to the United States, said in ministerial words and with a certain cynicism that “America suffers the plague of well-being.” Someone else said it this way: “Ninety-nine people survive unhappiness, and one survives well-being.” The United States is rich to a fault. The citizens of our country, despite certain fears of war, not only don’t experience hunger, but waste bread, and spend their money on unnecessary things. Please hear these statistics; the numbers are huge. Nearly 25,000,000 citizens possess federal bonds. The general sum reaches several billion dollars. Twenty million depositors have in bank savings, 9,500,000,000. It is said that the United States has 6 million farms. Their worth is estimated at 50 billion dollars, with yearly income of 10 billion dollars. Almost 11 million own their own homes. Our yearly allotment for education is more than a billion dollars. A bit more for theaters. Three billion dollars of food is eaten by Americans. Aren’t these tough times!!!

In ancient history I read, “Babylon, proud Babylon, has not seen anything like it. The sun has just set. On the banks of the Euphrates River, the towers cast their shadows on the walls of the proud capital. The palace of the monarchy glistened in the setting sun. The moon in a moment appeared with its light which covered the palace but the entire King’s garden. The chariots and the carriages arrive. Those invited and everything indicated riches and plenty. The Monarch was throwing a party. The well-dressed guests sat down to tables loaded with plenty. Wine was served win golden and silver goblets. The men and women dancers entertained the guests. Time was wasted money thrown away on trivia, evidently character was abandoned as well as God for suddenly “human hands wrote on the wall of the king’s hall” and wrote among other things: “You were weighed on the scale and were found wanting.” The proud Monarch lost his kingdom and his life. But who has the time to spend on trivia. Among us, the modern motto is: “Live it up; you can’t take it with you.” I understand above all that that the world is beautiful and life is grand. I understand that the generation begins to take the place of those departing and moving in the arena of life all have the same foibles and vices. Truly, the world ought to strive to be better, with better living and better people because of advances. I repeat ***ought.*** A very important helping role is education, beginning with elementary schools and on through the higher schools. Here in the United States the yearly expenditure for schooling is more than a billion dollars. All the efforts and care of the school authorities, are towards are built around the body while neglecting the soul. They teach the children how to read, write and count; gymnastics, games and recreate but not a word about the source of life, about the road to take, about enlightening life or the goal of life. Sadly the result of that 52.5 percent don’t admit to any kind of religion, although religion is the basis of morality and the underpinning of a happy life. It should give us some deep thought. It is not surprising then that in our social life those who steal 50 dollars is just are just common thieves; if they steal 5,000 dollars, they are called ones who break another’s trust. The greater the theft the more delicate nomenclature is assigned.

What is the situation in social life? Misunderstandings and the problems in marriages are, in the smallest degree are splattered on the newspaper pages. Separations, divorces, stealing someone’s wife and the like are and presented in the greatest degree. Men change their wives like old shirts. Wives get rid of their husbands like last year’s gloves. To acquit and justify themselves, they give false testimony, and make up excuses and swear falsely. Theaters and the cinema denigrate the fidelity in marriage and the unity and holiness of marriage, making light of fathers and mothers, fostering relationships beyond marriage. They emphasize instinct over rationality. It is all covered over for the sake artistry and expression.

I must not omit the notorious exhibition of women termed, “Beauty Contests.” Someone appropriately named them “Human Flesh Fairs” and another named them, “Marketing Human Bodies.” Women in a variety of costumes, often shortened and skimpy, parading before the judges and the presence of thousands of viewers to win the coveted title of Queen of Beauty. In such contests there is little difference between the selling of slaves and today’s beauty contests. In one of such contests the Queen said that she received 100 propositions for marriage. She said she was going through them to see which one was the richest and chose that one who would be able to show her “a good time”. - Now if that doesn’t mean selling one’s 120 pounds of flesh, let me know.

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Another contestant after losing commited suicide with the help of poison. She left a letter to her mother, in which she wrote: “I didn’t make it. I regard my life as worthless and without a goal: “The Lad Buys Wisdom with Death”, I read: “At midnight, before the sounds of a saxophone, a sixteen year old boy took his life with a revolver, because he said to his fifteen year old girlfriend, “I have no reason to live any longer. I am bored with life. There are no more thrills in my life.” The statistics regarding suicides among the young have risen to an alarming degree. Parents blame the war, the environment after the war; others maintain that too great a freedom was given to children, the lack of parental care, or boredom with family life were reasons. The average age of young girls committing suicide is 15. One took her life “for the fun of it.” Another was seeking “a new thrill.” A third poisoned herself because she didn’t like her bobbed hair. The police in one town uncovered a Suicide Club. Members belonged to higher education. I have to ask, “What is happening in our schools?”

And it isn’t any better in regard to the older generation. Unfortunately I do not have countrywide statistics. I know that in New York, two people commit suicide daily and four on Sundays. Bullet , gas, poison, jumping from high places and throwing self under railroad engines or subway cars. These are ordinary means. Some women chose poison when their neighbors criticized them. A man committed suicide because he wife wouldn’t let him play golf. A lady gassed herself because she was late for her commute twice. One jumped out of a window after a controversy over a cat. Don’t imagine that only poor uneducated people commit suicide. In Federal Police records of one year, a hundred business executives took their lives. In addition 88 bankers, 50 principals; 38 university students; 52 judges and lawyers, and 84 doctors. Of these, who was at fault in these incidents? Not long ago, I read a chaplain’s report: “Unless schools pay more attention to our youth and care for them and fathers and mothers give more attention and better example to their children it will be a sorry state for them. May God have mercy on that country when its sons and daughter begin to govern our country?” The chaplain put the solution mainly on education and parenting. Unless the school is silent about morality and the elderly throw stones and accuse religion and old conventions and outlooks on morality, the young will go the same way they are heading. If all social life is headed against the commandments of God and responsible adult living the young will be under the impression that life is to be lived without responsible work and is negligent of personal responsibility and obligation and sacrifice.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to talk with a young American. A clear type of the current generation. Sharp-witted, educated, and seemingly hard-working. He admitted that his religious education had something to be desired. He gave various reasons for that. His parents were in a mixed marriage. His mother was not convicted. She was more social. She began to a variety of organizations and well read in a variety of areas. Ostensibly, she was very impressionable in religious argumentation since she once admitted that at one time she said she believed in one church and at another time to a different religion. That jumping from one religion to another resulted being divorced from all religions and ultimately brought her to a marital divorce. The young man had observed her journey as he was growing up. His father sent him away to a boarding school where God and religion were not mentioned since the school was run on the principles of freedom of conscience, based in reality, on radical non-denominational thought. The greatest efforts were put into games. That here exists a higher being, smarter, that man is created for some temporal goal wound up by the hand of the Creator. That this goal may be reached in heading the experienced of previous civilizations, that man possesses some spark of the Creator himself; of these matters there was no in depth coverage. Life without a dependence on religion, which explains the beginning and goal of this life, is empty and without sense. – Many more of these ideas this young atheist spoke. He interpreted his world sans God or belief. It was just now that this young man finished his interesting dialog. He ended his conversation with this bit of worldly wisdom: “There is instilled within us one purpose of life, namely: “Do worry about what tomorrow will bring, as long as it would serve you well.”

Someone wrote once, “He will have moments of great disappointment, sadness, yearning and lack of peace. Amidst his daily activities, in the midst of his daily troubles, he will feel in his heart a poison ruining his peace and joy.. Then nothing will bring him pleasure; his intellect will feel stuffed, the world will relentlessly go forward. He will not complain. People will marvel at his being life will bear heavily upon him in dis taste because he has no religion, and he is absorbed, wondering about his own beginning, his end and the God who created him.

Before the end of today’s talk, once again, I ask all of you: “Where are we going?” We walk step by step together as others did: The civilization of Greece, the majestic Rome and the proud Spain! There are those people who turn our attention to the dangers of social termination. There is not a man, who would not want to see the United States be first in producing a world technical and material, but at the same time in spiritual and moral endeavors, in peace, justice and the love of fellow man, with mercy and religiousness. These virtues we wear in our souls. They came with us into this world. We need to show them in practice, in daily life. Then, truly and with ease we will avoid the ill fortune staring us in the face and will not fall into the open precipice that is before us.