

HOW TO SAVE OURSELVES BY SAVING OTHERS

FROM AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE WORKING-
MEN'S RED CROSS SUNDAY CELEBRATION AT
JOHNSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, ON SEPTEMBER
30, 1917

I TAKE not merely peculiar pleasure but peculiar pride in coming to Johnstown as the invited guest of the various local organizations, who

have joined in making this the Red Cross Sunday. I feel that this war is not only essentially America's war, but also a war to make measurably good, at least for large portions of the earth, Lincoln's doctrine of a government for the people, by the people and of the people. Therefore, it is as emphatically a war primarily in the interest of the working people, as the war for the preservation of the Union itself. It was not possible that the man who himself works with his hands, whether as a farmer or on the railroad, or in a shop or factory could permanently prosper or even exist in a country which tolerated black slavery, and this Abraham Lincoln clearly saw. In just the same way it is not possible that the working men, and the farmers who till the soil they themselves own, can permanently enjoy political freedom and the right to rule their own destinies in their own country in a world which is dominated by Prussian militarism. Remember that the essential part of Lincoln's statement was that this should be a government by the people, and not merely a government of the people and for the people. Every government is of course a government of the people. This is just as true of a despotism as it is true of a democracy. Again there have often been despotisms or autocracies which for a greater or less length of time have handled their government for the people. But it is only in a free country that the government is by the people. Bismarck's oft-repeated saying was that "Everything should be done for the people and nothing by them." We feel that not only everything should be done for them but by them. We hold that Bismarck's, or the Prussian theory inevitably in the end means that inas-

much as nothing is done by the people, less and less will be done for them. Every man in this country believes in the American doctrines for which our fathers and fore-fathers struggled, and often laid down their lives, must see that the difference between us and our allies the other free peoples on the one side, and the Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns on the other, is an absolutely fundamental difference. Germany sees this clearly. If this war ends in a German victory or a stalemate we can count with absolute certainty upon Germany at her own time striking down this republic, for she rightly feels that our existence is incompatible with the safety of that spirit of despotic autocracy which she embodies to-day more than any other nation in the whole world.

Of course we went to war purely because we had a special grievance against Germany. We did not go to war to make democracy safe, and we ~~did~~ go to war because we had a special grievance. We went to war because after two years, during which with utter contempt of our protests, she had habitually and continually murdered our non-combatant men, women and children on the high seas, Germany formally announced that she intended to pursue this course more ruthlessly and vigorously than ever. This was our special grievance—the special grievance because of which we went to war, and it was far more than an empty justification for going to war. As you know, my own belief is that we should have acted immediately after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. But in any event, no self-respecting American can doubt that we had to act when we did act. The man who is not willing to see his nation fight

when its men and women are habitually killed by the order of the government of another nation, stands on a level with the man who will peacefully submit to having his wife's face slapped and his children kidnaped by a black-hander. The man who submits tamely to such private outrages is unfit to associate with decent people, and the nation that submits tamely to such private outrages forfeits all right to the respect of its own citizens or of other nations.

In our school books we read of the wrongs committed by George III, and the English of his days on our revolutionary ancestors, and we rightly applaud the conduct of those revolutionary ancestors in following Washington and standing for our rights, at the expense of war. But King George and the English of his day never committed against us crimes which in any way compare with the atrocities that have been committed against us during the last two and one-half years by the German government, acting through its diplomatic and military agents, and with the full approval of the German people. We not only had a special grievance against Germany, because of which we went to war, but this grievance is of the very gravest character, so grave that we would have rendered ourselves infamous had we declined to go to war. But, in addition, it was imperatively necessary that we go to war on behalf of outraged humanity.

I wish every one in this nation would read the sermons now being delivered by the Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, pastor of the Plymouth church, Brooklyn. Dr. Hillis is one of the most high-minded men in this country, and he possesses a singularly accurate mind. He abhors injustice

or wanton war. Nobody could ever make Dr. Hillis support this country in going into an unrighteous war. But much though he loves peace, he loves honor and justice and mercy and self-respect and national rectitude even more than he loves peace. He has recently been on the other side and he looked at the affidavits and photographs, the legal proofs that, as he said, make the German atrocities committed in France and Belgium, and in their air raids on England far better established than the crimes of the Sioux Indians on our western frontier, the murders of the Black Hole of Calcutta, or the hideous infamies committed three centuries ago in the dreadful wars of religion. He has seen himself, as I have said, the countless photographs of dead and mutilated girls, children and old men. He has read some of the countless affidavits describing cruelties and brutality, which literally make the heart sick. Germany has reduced savagery to a science, and this great war for the victorious peace of justice must go on until the German cancer is cut clean out of the world body. There are official records of more than 10,000 separate atrocities committed by the German armies, not sporadically, but as a part of the deliberate plan of "schrecklichkeit" of horror upon which the German government has counted.

In a recent letter from Dr. Hillis he says: "For weeks the Germans on the eastern front have been gas-bombing and driving the children and women back through the French lines. The prefect, Governor Mirman, of Nancy, showed me 2,500 children and women that he had brought into his town, and there are not less than 50,000 of these orphans, half orphans and aged women,

who have suddenly and quite unexpectedly been thrust upon the villages south of the Verdun line. These poor children represent France's supreme need and America's supreme opportunity. They must be saved to-day, or there will be no France of to-morrow."

The conditions thus authoritatively described by an unimpeachable witness should wake every man and woman in America to the need of trying to help the tortured people of Belgium and France. Your committees here in Johnstown should get in touch with Dr. Hillis and follow his advice as to how to proceed, and you should of course back up the Red Cross in every way. France and Belgium together with England have been fighting our battle as surely as they have been fighting their own. The Prussianized Germany of the Hohenzollerns is seeking world dominion. It has shown ruthless treachery and brutality. Its course for three years has proved that it wants only the opportunity to strike down and plunder any power not able by military force to resist its attacks. In trying to save themselves, France and England and poor little Belgium have saved us; for this wealthy and helplessly unprepared nation would have been an easy and most desirable victim for Germany if it had not been for the allied fleets and armies which for three years have stood between us and ruin. During these years of ease our wealth has grown; and all of us should give what we can to help the wretched victims who have suffered such intolerable wrongs in France and Belgium.

But this is not enough. Merely to help the sorely stricken does not meet the situation. We must punish the aggressor in such fashion that

never again will there be a repetition of wrongdoing as Germany has committed in this war. Never again must we be put in such an ignoble position as to owe our safety only to others. Next time it may not pay other nations to save us from the effects of our folly. Uncle Sam must hereafter prepare his strength so that he himself can guarantee his own safety against any foreign foe. We have gone to war because Germany had, during two years, committed upon us outrages to which no self-respecting or manly nation could endure. We shall fight in Europe so as to save ourselves or our children from the necessity of fighting on our own continent against alien conquerors. We are also fighting the battle of liberty-loving, self-respecting, decently behaved nations of mankind. We must back up the Red Cross and all similar organizations in every way possible. But we must remember that our first duty is to develop to the limit our military strength. Everything else is of secondary importance to this. If we of this great democratic republic do not show that we are able to defend ourselves by our own might, if we do not teach Germany that she cannot commit acts of insolent brutality at our expense without being called to account, we will lay up either for ourselves or for our children a future of shame and disaster.