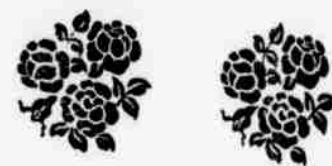




EDITORIAL



Notes and Comments

By Proclamation of Governor Bickett next Monday, August 19th, has been set apart as a day to minister to the relief of the suffering Jews. His proclamation will be found upon another page of the Advocate, and we wish to take the occasion here to commend it to the favorable consideration of our pastors and people. It is the Christian, the patriot, the humane thing to do.

¶ ¶ ¶

Will Bishop Barlington Take the Hint? Our eye fell upon the following announcement the other day: "Bishop Mouzon has announced that at the coming sessions over which he has charge he 'will inquire of each preacher if his official members take the Church paper.'" There is no question but that the importance of the Church paper ought to get more emphasis at our annual gatherings than it does. There are many faithful pastors who give the Church paper the attention that is due it; but there are many others who never seem to think that it is worth their while to give it any consideration. We believe there is no cause to which a pastor can give a due portion of his time to better profit to the Church and to himself than to the Church paper.

¶ ¶ ¶

The Progress of the War continues to go in favor of the Entente Allies. Just at this writing there has been a temporary lull in the battle, but the most desperate fighting of the German forces has not been able to turn the tide against them. Since the Allies took the initiative away from the Central Powers, they have captured some 75,000 prisoners, including about 1,000 officers of various ranks, and about 700 guns with an immense amount of ammunition. The progress up to this time has been most satisfactory to the Allies, and all of our war activities at home and abroad are going forward with renewed zeal and hope. Of course, no one thinks that the war is nearly won yet, and no relaxation of effort is for one moment to be thought of. At the same time there is cause for rejoicing to mingle with our grief over our heroes who have fallen on the fields of France.

¶ ¶ ¶

President Wilson on Mob Violence. When President Wilson undertake to say a thing, it is always stated pointedly and with force; but he has never said anything truer than the following:

We proudly claim to be the champions of democracy. If we really are, in deed and in truth, let us see to it that we do not discredit our own. I say plainly that every American who takes part in the action of a mob or gives it any sort of countenance is no true son of this great Democracy, but its betrayer, and does more to discredit her by that single disloyalty to her standards of law and of right than the words of her statesmen or the sacrifices of her heroic boys in the trenches can do to make suffering peoples believe her to be their saviour. How shall we commend democracy to the acceptance of other peoples, if we disgrace our own by proving that it is, after all, no protection to the weak? Every mob contributes to German lies about the United States what her most gifted liars can not improve upon by the way of calumny. They can at least say that such things can not happen in Germany except in times of revolution, when law is swept away!

I therefore very earnestly and solemnly beg

that the governors of all the States, the law officers of every community, and, above all, the men and women of every community in the United States, all who revere America and wish to keep her name without stain or reproach, will co-operate—not passively merely, but actively and watchfully—to make an end of this disgraceful evil. It can not live where the community does not countenance it.

The Soldiers and Religion

We are reading some right remarkable statements written by men who claim to know the soldier as he is in the trenches and the Church as it is at home. We are admonished that there must be some radical changes in the Church, if it is to appeal to the soldier when he returns from the battlefields of France. We are told that he has discovered a new reality, and that he has suddenly become endowed with a new wisdom concerning spiritual things. We are warned that the Church must "clean up," if she expects the returning soldier to be influenced by it.

We are not unmindful of tremendous religious changes that this great war is likely to effect. If it should result in many Church members "cleaning up" in their habits of life, it would be a great point gained. The pulpit has been saying this from our boyhood days—we do not know how much longer. We have observed—observed it with pain—that there is a wide gap between the preaching of the pulpit and the practices of the pew. It is a gap, too, which the pew does not seem to have realized. They will compliment the preacher for his utterance. They will give hearty assent to the truth of it and claim to have enjoyed immensely the hearing of it. But forthwith they proceed to live as if exactly the opposite were true. We have often wondered if they were conscious that they were doing it. Is the ministry responsible for this? Those preachers whom it has been our privilege to hear have in the main been faithful in the declaration of the truth, and they are earnest and consecrated men. Many of them have gone on with a broken heart, feeling that there was a wide chasm between the gospel they preached and the lives that professing Christians lived; but they have been told that they must not be pessimistic, and by this the minister was thought sufficiently answered if he gave utterance to the conviction that was breaking his heart. If this war will bring the average man up to the recognition of what the gospel really means for man, then it will not have been fought in vain.

But is this going to be the fact? We are very fearful that it is not, and it is quite possible that the last end may be worse than the first. We hope it will not be. We have been moved to write this editorial by a communication that appeared in the Greensboro Daily News of August 4th. It is copyrighted by the "Ellis Service," and was written by "The Religious Rambler," otherwise known as Wm. T. Ellis. He wrote in the role of a reporter. He was stating conditions in the camps as he saw those conditions, and not passing judgment so much upon the rightness and the wrongness of the things which he reported. So be it. We need certainly to know the facts; and, if the facts are as confused as his statement of them—well, there is something for somebody to do.

After stating that "the fate of the social order" depends upon "the people back home learning before it is too late the lessons which the war has taught the soldiers", he proceeds to

affirm: "Churches, especially, should heed the monitions of the men back from the front. This war has been a profound spiritual experience for the soldiers." And then, as if to prevent making a false impression, he continues: "It has not conformed them to the conventional standards of Church membership back home. They are less than ever like the commonly conceived type of 'religious' man. Anybody who thinks the war has been a sort of sublimated Billy Sunday campaign to 'convert' the troops, is due to be sorely shocked when the boys come back. Of piety and churchianity there is less among the fighting men than ever before." We have no sort of defense for "the conventional standards of Church membership" that in large measure prevail among us today. There are entirely too many who assume those solemn vows without any inner experience conforming to them. They arrive at the age when it is thought proper for them to come into the Church, and it is done as a pure formality. This is one of the perils of our Church life. But a "profound spiritual experience" that sneers at "conversion" is not going to improve the situation.

Mr. Ellis emphasizes the "fraternity" of the men in the trenches, and no one will question that fraternity is a good thing; but here is his description of it: "Nobody except the newcomer remarks the fact that within the one Y. M. C. A. hut at different hours of the same day there are held Catholic masses, Jewish services, Protestant meetings and Christian Science gatherings. 'Sure! Why not?' comments the soldier." There is perhaps no reason why a Y. M. C. A. hut should not be used as indicated, but the Y. M. C. A. has been supposed to stand for Christ as the world's Redeemer, while the Jewish service will repudiate Him as an unworthy imposter. Is there no real difference between these things? Is it only a mere matter of form, a varying whim of the human fancy, that separates Christianity from Judaism? And is the hocus-pocus of Christian Science of equal value with either of them? Is that what is meant by "fraternism" in the camps? Is that the view of things to which Dr. Ellis would have the Christian Church to come?

From such universal slaughter of religious convictions as this, Dr. Ellis turns to the question of denominationalism. He seems to think that the differences between Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, etc., are of the same type as the differences between Catholics and Protestants, between Jews and Christians, or between the Christian Church and Christian Science. It is this wholesale disregard of religious truth that has caused us to raise a warning voice before. Jesus Christ says: "The truth shall make you free." He prays the Father: "Purify them through thy truth; Thy word is truth." He affirms that "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"; but the drift of Dr. Ellis' writing would indicate that any sort of a sentimental fraternity will pass them up to everlasting life with equal assurance. The differences of views that separate good men into different denominational camps may be ignored without imperiling the salvation of the soul, but it is perilous to treat all questions of doctrine as if they belonged to the same class.

We cannot follow Dr. Ellis in all of his confusion of the false and the true, but here is a bit of information that seems to carry his idea of a chaplain's duty: "I know a Knights of Columbus chaplain who was in the thick of a heavy action for three days continuously, and while he sometimes gave the last rites of the Church, he more