

JUDGE LINDSEY AND THE DOUGHBOYS' RELIGION

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THERE is a rumour abroad that the young men of this generation have seen visions and dreamed dreams. There is much foundation for the rumour. Great visions come to men of great experiences and great deeds. And in these the young men of this generation are wealthy far beyond the richest stores of any people of any other time. Ernest men are listening, and they do well to listen, to any lifting up of the voices of these great young men. But they have not yet found their note. So far the intelligible utterances have been few, and tremulous, and far too brief, like that of the heroic "Student in Arms." But there are many false prophets abroad. Men with all sorts of fancies and theories on life in general and religion in particular, are making hay. They are in great haste to establish their heresies on borrowed experiences and sell them at a good price while the market is open and before the real fruit has ripened. These teachers will have no effect upon the men who have been there. Their utterances lack the ring of reality. Others will do well to ponder deeply before being carried away. The article in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for March, 1919, by Judge Ben Lindsey, is a case in point.

The Judge was first startled at one of the peculiarities of army life by an incident which happened at a certain headquarters. The lock on the Colonel's safe had become dislocated, presumably by jolting over the cobble stone roads in France. The situation was saved by the presence in the unit of a man who had been a burglar. The lock was picked and the military routine allowed to continue. When this incident was related in the ward of a military hospital, everybody there wanted to know where the Colonel got the safe and whether the guard would be needed when safes became part of the orderly room equipment. These matters did not arouse the Judge's suspicions, perhaps fortunately for the Colonel in the case, but he was driven to furious meditation and his judicial mind was set all agog at meeting a man who could pick a lock on the headquarters' staff. The lads in the hospital said the man had reached his level.

The Judge was next grieved and shocked to hear the men swearing at the Y.M.C.A. He, being very friendly towards the Y.M.C.A., and being versed in all methods of arguments and proofs, was able to show the men in each and every case, that their complaints were not supported by the facts, but the Doughboys would not stop their swearing as they drank the tea and coffee which the "Y" gave them. He found that the grievance of the men was more deeply seated than they themselves knew. Their antagonism had been aroused by the moral and religious teaching of the institution whose only excuse for being there was to do them good.

What especially angered them and drove them into sin was the frequent exhortations to purity of life. The Judge's inferences and insinuations on this subject are so degrading to the moral sense of the Doughboy and to the commonsense of the Y.M.C.A. speaker, that I cannot refrain from a *direct contradiction*. He is altogether wrong, and why he should go so far out of his way to insult these men and grieve their womenfolk, is a question that would surely puzzle the thoughtful reader. The temptations on active service were great. A deplorable number were not strong enough to withstand them all, but many did. And through all, the delicate sense of shame was not lost and very few sank so low as to try to justify immoral conduct in themselves or others. True to their positions and to the mothers and sisters of these boys, Chaplains and Y.M.C.A. speakers did frequently and constantly refer to this subject, and no audiences could have been more sympathetic or intelligently appreciative than the lads who gathered in the huts in France.

But the good Judge escaped from this wicked atmosphere by going up the line. He went up without a gas mask or a steel helmet. How he eluded the picket he does not stop to tell us. But there he is, away up past the "gas alert," with the shells bursting all around and nothing to protect him. The boys who could pick locks and would swear at the Y.M.C.A., did not call him a Cook's Tourist, or laugh at him, or swear, or send him back to the quartermaster for proper equip-

ment. There being no attack on, and time to burn, they busied themselves in making a trench soldier of the Judge. This kindness melted him. He called it true Christianity. Religion in action. He no longer worried as to the occupation which engaged their attention in civil life, as to their vocabulary or their lack of moral sentiment, they had helped him and they would go to heaven. The Judge felt himself a bigger and better man because of these new sentiments. He became from that moment an ardent advocate of the saving power of trench life. He went up, he saw, and he was conquered. The account of his adventures may make the intended impression upon the marines, but real front line inhabitants declare it to be a rumour intended to buck up the people who have not been there.

Well, this front line experience was further good, in that it prepared the Judge for the next educational jolt which he was to receive. He found the Doughboys, whom he had learned to suspect at the headquarters, and to "respect" up the line, busy with the "Y" people revising the Decalogue. The good, but misdirected "Y" folk were keen upon the retention of the seventh commandment and under the existing conditions of life, some of them would have it occupy the premier place for the sake of emphasis. But the Doughboys would have none of this. The first commandment they would have to be: Thou shalt not be afraid; and the second, Thou shalt not be mean; and the third, Thou shalt not be a cad. Besides these, the Judge implies they would have no other. This apostasy of the rank and file had a tendency to put the wind up the "Y" preacher, but the man whose heart was open to new things, was not disturbed thereby. He detects a spirit of prophecy and declares that the Church must come around to the new viewpoint.

We could leave the matter here as far as the Judge and the Doughboys are concerned, but there are others to be considered. There are some good people who might be inclined to credit the author with first-hand knowledge and to accept his opinions at par. They love the Doughboy; in fact, they are his father, and his mother, and his sister, and his sweetheart, but for all their love, they cannot agree with his ethics as here set forth. A word of assurance to such as these may be in order from one who has been with the boys from the training camp to the trenches and back again, and through the wet and dreary winters and the long, terrible summers has shared their billets, and their bully, and their confidences.

The boys are not philosophers or theologians, and they did not go to France for the sake of any new religious light. They went there to win the war, and they were obsessed with the idea of beating the Hun. The virtues which would further this end, were to them, for the time, the cardinal virtues. Courage and fellowship, and humility, did take on great proportions, but other virtues were not crowded clear off the field. And now that new conditions prevail, these boys can be depended upon to give equally sensible and candid answers to any one who will take the trouble to look for their opinions where they may be found. Rest assured, that they will be the last of all to call for the establishment of a Church, whose ethical system can be practised by a pick-pocket, or a safe-cracker, without interfering with his business.

Just why the Salvation Army is made the apostle of the new religion, is not clear, as no body of Christians have been truer to the old standards during the last five trying years than they. But the Judge is wrong in expecting them to do all there is to be done. In the new era, the Church, as ever, will be able to adapt her methods of approach to suit the temper of the people, and she must do so in a way that will leave no suspicion of a lowering of her standards or a loss of her dignified self-respect. In her anxiety for the sinful and the simple, the Church will not forget the wise and wealthy.

The Judge has been very anxious that the soldier shall have a Church where he can meet his friends and feel at home. The Church must meet him more than half-way in this and must also see that provision just as satisfactory is made for the Judge and his friends.

Hearts that are Brave

JESMOND DENE

THE last weeks have been a time of overpowering happiness for very many; soldiers returning; homes reunited; real outward and visible signs of the ending of the war. But for all of us:—

"A dead man shall stand
At each live man's hand
For they also have come home."

We cannot forget, we would not forget the ones who are not coming home in the flesh; nor can we forget the homes which are nursing their own grief in the midst of the general rejoicing. Saddest of all is the sadness of those who sorrow as apparently without hope; not because they deny the Great Hope, but because it exerts no power over them.

"I have nothing to look forward to," said a mother to me the day the 3rd and 4th Battalions marched home. "Oh, of course, I'm glad other people are more fortunate than I've been. I'm glad their sons have come back; but there's nothing for me." My thoughts turned to the son she mourned; to his large heart and noble spirit; to the grief he would feel over this hopeless sorrow of hers; to what he had said before he left home for what proved the last time. He had been sent home to recover after being seriously wounded, and just before leaving to return again to the front, he had spoken to me with unusual frankness in a moment of unusual unreserve.

"Don't let all this disturb you too much," he had said. "Somehow God is working His purpose out. This isn't really going to stop it. This is all part of the struggle, I believe, which the Blessed One went through for us. Remember how long things take. We see not yet, but we see Jesus because of the sufferings of death crowned with glory and honour. Isn't it wonderful? Doesn't it make one see that it's the only way for us? Doesn't it make one sure that it's really all right? . . . A good many of us, you know, were forgetting how to fight and that we had to fight. Before the war we were giving away positions to the enemy in all directions, letting him undermine our defences pretty well. Now through this spirit of evil incarnate, as it were, in the world, we can see better what evil really is, and that you can't compromise; or at any rate that you can't compromise without knowing what you're doing. You'll remember Kipling's story of the French officer who said that 'the Boche was saving the world,' because he was letting us see what we were tending to before this came, and so we were pulled back from the precipice we were heading to; just in time, only just. . . . Want to return? Well, it depends on what you mean when you ask. I wouldn't be anywhere else than there just now, because I believe there, at this time, is the concentrated essence of the struggle between good and evil. There's my place, of course, till this fight is over, and I can take my place in some other part of the fight; for evil will still be there, only the form will be changed; the attack and weapons will be different. But we'll have to go on fighting against evil, whatever form it takes. . . . If I don't come back, try to help my mother to understand how I've felt about it all, and that I'm absolutely content. I'd like her to be so, but it will be harder for her."

There have been days of great joy. The Sunday after the return, a member of the same congregation as myself—typical of many—was sitting in church between two soldier sons, one come home with many honours, the other after many hardships. This was their reunion; they had come to make their united thanksgiving to God. Heaviness had been for a night, but joy had come—as it always does at last—in the morning. And oh! the joy. This is too sacred to be talked of much, and is not for curious eyes to look into too nearly, but the fellowship of joy as well as sorrow is so strong and wide embracing, that there were many thanksgivings ascending to God that day for these happy hearts.

Some of us find it easier to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice. Yet fellowship must be in joy no less than in sorrow. Joy surely completes itself in this fellowship, even as sorrow seeks comfort in it. It is natural in these times of universal joy to feel that one's own grief sets one apart, as Geoffrey's mother does; to escape from the manifestation of other's happiness. You cannot blame the desire. A real joy in others' happiness is perhaps part of that fruit of the Spirit which is joy; a grace of heaven; and this unselfish supernatural joy which takes you out of your own griefs into the

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