

The Sun

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COMMENTS ON MEN AND THINGS

BY SPECTATOR

Christianity and Communism can't live together, says Mr. Peurifoy.

Is religion worth anything? Do we believe what we read in the Bible? Is there any reality in our profession, or is the work of the Church just a sort of make-believe? I ask all this because I purpose to argue a point which you will not accept if you think our faith is vain, or if you have no faith in the reality of our religion.

I do not have to apologize for discussing the greatest question which confronts every man and every woman. The cemeteries in every community proclaim the certainty of death; and nearly all wonder about God, certainly when they think their days are numbered and that they may soon stand before Him.

I am not planning to speak of death and personal, individual salvation; but the Book of Life tells of God's dealing with Nations, as well as with individuals. Nations can be lost as surely as can men.

History tells of the splendor and arrogance of ancient monarchs; and their sumptuous style was not more imposing than the voluptuous ease of rulers of later eras. But the power of those Kings is now "one with Nineveh and Tyre." The intellectual greatness of Greece is as deeply submerged today as is the grandeur of Caesar, while the realms of Assyria and Babylon and the Kingdom of Alexander the Great are buried so deep that they are of interest only to patient, persistent delvers and diggers, as truly in the mists of lost empires as that of the

ancient Incas of Peru. Those who follow the lessons recently used in the Church Schools will find that Jehovah rebuked His people for making alliances with heathen people; He chided them for not seeking His guidance with quietness and confidence, full assurance in His power against any and all combinations of earthly forces.

Is it true that Jehovah is more than a match for the embattled nations of today? Is He interested in us? Do we deserve His interest and help?

If we really believe in the fact of the Creator's intervention in the affairs of men what are the conditions upon which we may have His strength to buttress our efforts?

We are told that our religion must be practical. Well, what is the essence of practicality? Have men shown great wisdom? Need I ask? What brought on all the wars? Were they the blunders of men, or did they prove the wisdom of men?

I quoted recently a passage from the Book of Deuteronomy: "For what Nation is there so great, who hath so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?"

We read in the Scriptures that Jehovah responded to the call of His people when His people served Him. But He doesn't mean to become a mere tool of our begging and urging. We must do His way; He is not going to accommodate himself to our puny minds and unstable purpose.

Now to be practical: and the worship of Jehovah must be

the most practical purpose of our life since the failures of mankind are seen floating all along the stream of time.

Just think of this: who can tell what will happen next year? Who can surely forecast the next generation? Sometimes our wisdom seems sufficient for a short time, but even at best we are poor guessers. But Jehovah of Abraham will hold the universe in his hand thousands of years from now.

Who then, are we to challenge Him?

If we believe the lessons of the Bible should we try to have relations with a Nation which repudiates Jehovah? I ask this in all the sincerity of practicality.

Men and women may become so impressed by the apparent strength of certain powers that the so-called discretion and prudence we have cultivated suggest emphatically that we make friends with the unreligious nation rather than to be imperilled by its displeasure. We are here face to face with a problem which involves the very warp and woof of our religion: do we believe in our religion? Or is the last word in wisdom the counsel of men?

I do not hesitate to ask the question because either we believe or we do not. Sometimes it seems that there is a middle ground, but that is usually the case of one whose mind dilates one course, but whose courage fails. You will recall the case of the man who brought his son to Jesus after the disciples failed to heal him. The response of the Master of "All things are possible to him that believeth." The distressed father's reply probably expresses what afflicts most of us: "Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief." May we consider for a moment whether we believe that?

Our religious problem is not only that of individual salvation; history proves clearly that judgment comes to Nations, as well as to individuals.

Would not America be stronger in the strength of Jehovah than merely by reliance on superior physical force? We understand, of course, that the Most High requires a man to try, to use his best efforts, even when dedicating himself to Jehovah and invoking His protection. You will find it interesting to read the story of Gideon in the Book of Judges; and one equally practical is that told of the investigators sent out by Moses to study the Promised Land. As is true now, the majority said that the enemy were giants and that the investigators themselves were only as grasshoppers, both in the sight of the enemy and in their own sight. But two of the Committee were men of better stuff—Caleb and Joshua. Caleb stilled the anuished cry of the multitude, saying "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But the people were so thoroughly frightened by the report that giants lived in the Promised Land that they cried out against Moses and threatened to overthrow Moses. In this turmoil Joshua and Caleb spoke: "If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us." Do we believe that? Are we of the same enlightened spiritual force as Joshua and Caleb? Or do we believe that Jehovah is a figure of remote antiquity and no longer the "I am" of the day of Moses?

As practical men, as soldiers, Caleb and Joshua said again: "The Lord is with us; fear them not." And the children of Israel made a vow to Jehovah, and they took Canaan.

We have been taught the lesson of Jehovah's protecting care, and we recall His dealings with Assyria, so long as His people called on Him in faith.

The story of Elisha's servant has always been interesting and illuminating. He saw the army, the horses and chariots of Assyria surrounding the city, and he cried out to Elisha "Alas, My Master! how shall we do?" And Elisha answered: "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And the servant saw the forces of Jehovah, horses and chariots of fire. Now let me quote something you will recall: "And that night the Angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred, four score and five thousand."

Is this Mighty Power available to us now? What means all the churches, the organized army of the Lord?

So when Mr. John E. Peurifoy of the State Department says that "Christianity and Communism cannot exist in the same world," he is thoroughly supported by Scripture, if he means that Communism is a repudiation of God, as is true in Russia.

If we could put aside our conceit and forget our importance for a while we might see life in a long view, like one on a hill-top overlooking the long stretches of low land. One of our troubles is that life is somewhat of a mirage. Did you ever see a mirage? I had heard about them all my life, but I saw one while travelling

across the desert of California. Miles away we saw a river, clear, sparkling, rippling water. We were going towards it and I thought of what a glorious, heartening sight it must have been to the early explorers who saw it after days of toilsome climbing over mountains, with hunger and thirst about to shrivel them to mummies, Miles and miles we travelled, always approaching that inviting stream, but when at length we had located the river, it was no river, it wasn't even water, not even a drop. Men had committed suicide on finding this tragic deception; their parched throats and hanging tongues had endured as long as they saw what looked like water.

Standing in the old graveyard at Stoke Poges, England, I saw life, human ambition, human wisdom, human achievement, human frailty, human failures, human glory, as the poet Gray saw them and wrote:

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

The span of human life is short; the range of human knowledge is small; the reach of human wisdom narrowly circumscribed; the vision of man, of short distance, as to time as well as space; the work of his genius crumbles and decays; so the practical man, the eminently practical man, calls for something better than he finds within himself. What is there that will stand against time and error? The Book has an answer for that, too. And Solomon who was a builder and a ruler, a man of wisdom still celebrated as preeminent among men, made explorations in life; as he said: "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: . . . I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; . . . I am come to

great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for that is the whole duty of man. So said Solomon.

So how shall we practical men of America act to maintain the greatness and security of America? Are we sufficient of ourselves? Or, is the highest practicality an alliance that won the wars for Israel, even when surrounded by heathen nations in full panoply of war?

PROSPERITY

Miss Dorothy Leapart entertained with a lovely party Saturday night. The Thanksgiving motif was used in the decorations and games. Most of the entertainment was group games with prizes for the group. One individual game prize was won by Miss Joy Thomason. The hostess's mother and grandmother assisted her in serving a sweet course. The favors were miniature baskets of candy.

The November meeting of the William Lester chapter of the UDC was held Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. John Stockman with Mrs. Mary Epting as hostess. The subject of discussion for the afternoon was "Boys of World Wars I and II." Each member gave a sketch of a veteran. The scrap book compiled by the chapter was almost completed. The hostess served a sweet course.

The garden clubs are all pleased with the response to their appeal to clean the Prosperity cemetery. Again they wish to thank all who have cooperated.

The Literary Sorosis will meet Friday afternoon at 3:30 with Mrs. T. A. Dominick.

R. W. Ballentine of Cameron spent the weekend with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Ballentine.

Mr. and Mrs. Mayo Creel of Hemmingway were week end guests of Mrs. Creel's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Perry.

Mrs. Jake Wheeler spent last Monday in Abbeville with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Cochran.

Mrs. A. E. Tinsley and Miss Annie Lee Langford of Spartanburg were guests Saturday of Misses Susie and Mary Langford.

E. B. Kibler of Dublin, Ga., is visiting his sister and brother, Miss Blanch Kibler and Dr. E. N. Kibler.

Mr. and Mrs. Cole Wessinger spent Sunday in Columbia with Mr. and Mrs. Earle Derrick.

Mrs. M. D. Derrick and Roy Derrick were in Columbia Sunday as guests of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Derrick.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde E. Bedenbaugh of Manning spent the weekend with their parents, Mrs. J. A. Counts and Mr. and Mrs. Maxcy Bedenbaugh.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Sumner, of Newberry, with their children, were Sunday guests of Mrs. Sumner's parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. N. Bedenbaugh.

Mr. and Mrs. David Lee and their little son, David, Jr. and little Miss Beaumont Ballentine of Greenville spent last week with Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Ballentine.

Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Wise and their son, Bobby, of Washington, D. C., were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Young.

Misses Jeannine Ballentine and Nelle Harmon, Winthrop College students, were at home for the weekend.

Mrs. John Schrum and her daughter, Harriette and Johnnie, of Lincolnton, N. C., were weekend guests of Mrs. Schrum's mother and sister, Mrs. E. O. Counts and Miss Ethel Counts.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Taylor and their three children of Ware Shoals were guests Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank Browne.

Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Barnes and Mrs. Emily Counts spent Sunday in Columbia as guests of Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Barnes.

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