

### The Ministers' Corner

#### THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION UPON THE NORTH AMERICAN REPUBLIC

By The Rev. J. Alfred Nansen

Among the influences which have shaped our national institutions and determined our national policies the Christian Religion must be given first place. In no country of the world has religion exerted greater influence in determining the character of citizens and the form of government than in the United States of America.

The pioneers of American settlement and civilization were men with deep religious convictions and motives. They came to our shores from Europe, not for the sake of material gain or commercial advantage but that they might here worship God in accordance with their own religious ideals unhampered by the interference of civil authorities.

The Christian Religion must be accredited with the educational enlightenment of Americans which made possible a representative form of government. The first educational institutions, from elementary schools on up to colleges and universities, were established by the church to foster and promote a more intelligent Christianity. But they also gave instruction in history, language and mathematics, in the liberal arts and sciences. It is a significant fact that, with one exception, all the higher schools, colleges and universities established in the American colonies prior to the declaration of independence were founded by Christian denominations upon distinctly Christian principles. Even since the colonies gained their independence more than three fourths of all the colleges and universities of the United States have been founded and supported by Christian denominations though very liberal in their curriculum. Literacy and intelligence is absolutely essential to a successful representative government so we can scarcely overestimate the influence of religion upon the form of our government at this point.

The influence of the Christian Religion has also been profoundly felt in our civic life. The old Town Meeting was modeled after the democratic principle of the New England church. The ideals of a representative form of civil government which Thomas Jefferson embodied in the Declaration of Independence were derived from the democratic form of government in the Baptist church where he attended services. Civic life, when in its infancy in the United States, was greatly influenced by religion because all the greatest statesmen were religious.

Every crisis through which we have passed in our national existence has brought forth glimpses of the tremendous influence of religion. When first the colonies declared themselves free and independent under God, the clergymen were the most ardent advocates of the patriotic cause. Their sermons sounded forth a clarion call to armed resistance of the oppression and unfairness of the English Parliament. The people who thronged the churches were inspired with the feeling that it was a religious, no less than a patriotic duty to fight in the cause of freedom. Throughout the struggle clergymen played a conspicuous part. Side by side with their parishioners they fought and dyed red the soil of freedom with their own life's blood.

In the Continental Congress prayer was offered regularly. This body set June 12, 1776, as a holiday in recognition of the "Indispensable duty devoutly acknowledged God's superintending providence." It also recommended that the 20th day of July of the same year should be observed with religious service as "A day of public humiliation, confession and prayer."

The colonists gained their independence and it became necessary to establish a permanent form of government. When the Constitutional Convention convened in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin arose in the assembly and said, "In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were most sensible to our danger, we had daily prayer in this room for Divine protection. Our prayers, sirs, were heard and they were graciously answered. To a kind providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the best means of establishing our future national felicity. Shall we forget this powerful Friend? Do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, can an empire rise to greatness without his aid?" Christianity is the greatest champion of national righteousness and virtue, essential to national prosperity. Christianity teaches men to look to God for his providential guidance and blessing.

When a form of government had been adopted and Washington, the great Christian leader and father of our country, was made president he accepted the responsibility as a trust from God. For eight years he served his country well. In his farewell address he said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. Vainly does that man claim to be a true patriot who seeks to destroy or pervert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and of citizens."

As settlement moved westward, alongside of the pioneer settler went the missionary and the circuit-riding. The little red schoolhouse and the spire of the country church marked the progress of American settlement and civilization. John Henry Barrows wrote, "The captains of industry and the leaders of commercial expansion have done far less to make ours the greatest nation than have the Christian pioneers who carried the gospel of Christ through forest and over mountain and prairie from Maine to California and from Minnesota to Florida."

With the exception of Jefferson and Johnson, all the presidents of the United States have been more or less active church men, with denominational connection. Even these two, while not members of the church, were Christian believers. An overwhelming majority of the statesmen and politicians who have shaped our national life have been men of Christian faith.

It has been these influences which have made the North American Republic the greatest nation of all history. America is the most Christian nation of the world because Christian principles have entered most fully into her legislative system. Her national life has been moulded after the pattern of Christian ideals of brotherhood and equality.

There has always been a class of citizens who have overlooked the things which make for national advancement in their greed for personal gain. Their unpatriotic conduct has brought upon us national evils which have been rooted out only by the persistent zeal of Christian spirited leaders. These national reformers have been America's best friends and most patriotic citizens.

The first members of the Anti-Slavery Society were clergymen. Pulpit agitation against the liquor traffic led to the organization of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The Anti-Saloon league was organized, officered and directed by clergymen. The Lord's Day Alliance, now seeking to check the commercialization of the Christian's Sunday by effective legislation, is officered by nationally known and trusted clergymen. They are pitting their best efforts against the desecration of the Christian's Sunday by the promoters of Commercialized Amusement. They are attacking an evil which is incompatible with the religion of Christ. They are insisting upon economic fairness. These intelligent leaders should be followed as readily as similar leaders have been followed in the past. They are working to safeguard American ideals.

Each succeeding age will have its new problems to solve. But I believe that we have discovered a successful method of their solution. It is by continuing to exert the influence of religion—the Christian Religion—upon our national life. May the Christian clergy of America, with the foresight and enthusiasm of their worthy predecessors, continue to cry aloud and spare not. "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." This is the greatest philosophical truth of universal history. Christianity has produced the world's highest standards of righteousness. May her influence continue to determine the character of our national institutions and policies!

#### ANNEXATION NEXT SUBJECT AT THE PEOPLE'S FORUM

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Darby was introduced and spoke on work for the boys in a suburban community.

The next speaker was Mr. Matthew Foley, managing editor of a great hospital magazine and now known throughout the country as the originator of "Hospital Day." Dr. Goodwin referred to the letter from President Harding to Mr. Foley and read another letter to him from General Pershing. Mr. Foley spoke eloquently on the meaning of Hospital Day and the great benefits that must come to the country from observance of the day on May 12th.

The principal speaker of the evening was Dr. Frank Smith and his subject was "The Prevention of Disease." "Few people die of old age," said Dr. Smith. "It is disease that kills and not old age." In the Stone Age man used remedies known at that distant time, but now science has revealed the causes of disease and the remedies are adapted to the causes. Bacteria are responsible for most of our ills. It is against them that we must guard. The common house fly is a carrier of germs and the rat and mosquito are responsible for some of our most terrible plagues. The greater number of germs enter the body through the mouth. Care of the mouth and teeth is of vital importance.

#### SPECIAL MOTHERS DAY SERVICES AT LOCAL CHURCHES

(Continued from page 1)

One of the pleasing features of the program will be the presentation of carnations to each mother present at the service. This act, coming from those who are at an age which is generally considered the thoughtless age is a magnificent prophesy of the future.

The young men of the Endeavor Society will also have a part in the

regular morning devotional service. Seats will be reserved for mothers. The minister will preach on the subject "The Three Greatest Words," and special music will be rendered by the choir. The latter of itself means much, for the music is a feature of all the services of this church.

#### LA GRANGE HERE SUNDAY TO OPEN BASEBALL SEASON

(Continued from page 1)

night and explained the non-appearance of the team and made profuse apologies.

Playing good baseball on Tuesday evening at Memorial Park, the Downers High School lost a close game to Elmhurst High by the score of 7 to 6. This was the first home game of the season and demonstrated that the boys are players.

The box score:		AB		R		H		E	
Downers Grove	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boon, c	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Klein, cf	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
L. Stevenson, ss	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
D. Stevenson, p	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boldebuck, rf	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grout, 2b	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Smith, 3b	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Knoblauch, lf	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Berry, 1b	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Grumhaus 1b	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	23	6	7	4	0	0	0	0	0
Elmhurst	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kreiter, ss	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robins, 2b	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Buck, c	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banderole, rf	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Olson, 3b	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crane, cf	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miller, p	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thorne, 1b	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Bathum, lf	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
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Yes, the old time home was low in price but what kind of a home was it compared to houses demanded this year of 1921. There's a vast difference in the type of homes and the conveniences now and then.

When we built a home twenty or twenty-five years ago, the low price times, here's how we did the job. First dig a hole fifteen feet or so square, wall the sides with a course of brick. We called that a cellar and used it for vegetables. A brick wall set on top of the ground, or just a few posts, and then the house built thereon.

The building was plain, porch narrow, floors of six inch pine, probably no sheeting, just the siding, and plastered inside. No double floors, no plumbing, no bathroom, no gas or electric light fixtures, and no heating plant. Just the bare house, plain pine inside finish, and built as cheaply as possible.

This old time house of our fathers or grandfathers was heated with stoves, lighted with lamps, the floors covered with carpets to hid big cracks and rough places. The coal we carried from a shed at the rear of the lot, water we pumped from a back yard well, and there was only an outside entrance to the cellar.

Of course that kind of a home cost but little money in the old days. The family satisfied with that type of a house now can get it at low cost. It was a cheap house with few conveniences but would not fill the bill now no matter how low the cost. What do you think about it? It's interesting to reflect a little on now and then.

Next week we will talk about a modern home. In the meantime lumber is much cheaper than a few months ago and the modern home costs less. Talk to us about lumber prices. We know and will tell you. Bring your building problems to us. We want to serve you.

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