

our chaplain, sincere, earnest, and well-intentioned. But what I remarked was that he seemed to have very definite duties, well understood by himself, and by his men. He did not have to convince his men of sin—they came to confession to him in throngs, and without urging on his part. He was always busy. To put it roughly—he seemed to have the goods, and the men were eager for his ministration. And they were as sincere and earnest as he was. They had absolute confidence in him, and in the value and efficacy of what he did. They told him things which I am sure they would hesitate to tell anyone else. And, after their confession, they went their way like new men, serenely confident that they had actually been absolved from sin. Their Mass, on Sunday, was a thing very mysterious and peculiar to the outsider, but it had one prominent characteristic. They missed no opportunity to go, and they thoroughly believed in it; whereas the C. of E. crowd would cheerfully dispense with the Bible-reading, and the sermon, which constituted their worship. And especially over the dying did the Catholic chaplain seem to have particular sway. His anointing with oils, and his prayers, gave the dying complete satisfaction. They died happily, and reconciled, and with entire confidence, after the rite had been performed.

If a mere lay observer might venture a prophecy, it would be that the Evangelicals—and among them I class that large number of the C. of E. whose religion is a vague belief in the Bible and the British Constitution—will demand something more definite and tangible in religion, than they have in the past. They have learned on the battlefield, not only that life is real, but that death is very real too. A man who has stood at the door of heaven or hell for months, has done some thinking about what lies behind the door. I think they will look for something more than Bible-reading and preaching, and words of consolation and inspiration from their ministers. Even those who formerly opposed the soul-saving machinery of the High Church, now see that it works well in times of great crisis, when there is not much to be said, but very much to be done: when action is called for and not words. They have seen that religion is not something invisible and intangible, but that it can be externalised, and realised, in symbols, ceremonies, and sacraments.

The intensely personal nature of the work which the High Church, and especially the Catholic chaplains accomplished, must have its effect. The confessional is very personal, man to man—or better, man to God squaring up of sin. I say man to God advisedly: for I know that Catholics look upon the priest in this office, not as a mere man, but as the representative of God. Contrast the work of the confessional with the frightfully impersonal ministrations of our C. of E. chaplain. His excellent sermons were like shrapnel. Some hearers were hit, but a vastly larger number were not touched. The work of the priest in the Catholic confessional is at close quarters—hand to hand, deadly personal. There was no escape for the individual under cover of the mass. There was no opportunity for camouflage, for the soul was bared. I envied the men the peace, and the satisfied security, that confession gave them.

No doubt it gave us some general satisfaction to be assured *en masse*, that Christ forgave all who were penitent. But it was by no means so direct and reassuring as the immediate absolution given by the R.C. chaplain. And my idea of it is that soul-saving is an individual sort of thing. Christ dealt very directly with individual sinners.

Yes, I think that the Evangelicals will try to make their religion more personal and direct, and, let us say, more human. The simple and primitive Gospel in a bare church, with a minister in a frock coat, is a cold sort of religion. It will never appeal strongly to those who have bivouacked in French cathedrals, and fought under the shadow of the Crucified, in Flanders.

The Reformers went too far in their destructive reaction from Catholicity, and the sons of the Re-

formers are going to demand from their Churches the lost heritage. What they have seen in France and Flanders they will want in their own Churches. They will ask why the Church of Rome should have a monopoly of what belongs to Christendom.

The Catholic Church is essentially universal in its appeal, and in its application. And the end of the war, I think, will bring a new growth in religious internationalism. As we get further and further away from mere nationalism in political life, so too we will give up mere nationalism in religion. I once saw a remarkable instance of how international religion could be. I stepped into a half-ruined French church one morning, and found Mass going on. There were, of course, French soldiers present, together with their officers. There were a few men from an Irish regiment. There were some officers of the Colonials, who, I suppose, represented South Africa or even more distant Australia. There was an Italian officer, attached to the staff, and a couple of Austrian and German prisoners, who worked in the town, and who had slipped into the church under the watchful but benevolent eye of their guard. They all understood what they were there for, and all were able to join in the service. For the moment they were not French, nor German, nor Irish, nor Italian; they were just Christians. It seemed very different from the Church of England, which never forgets the fact that it is English.

The ministrations of the Catholic Church are, we found, just as international as are its services. They were as well understood, and as welcome, among Germans, as among French or Italians or English. That is where the symbolism, and the official Latin language helps. Again and again I have seen an English Catholic chaplain helping an unfortunate Pole or Bavarian or Austrian to make his final peace with God, while even our good-hearted C. of E. chaplain could do nothing for the wounded soldiers of the enemy. He had nothing in common with them.

It is quite obvious to me now that anything so hopelessly limited as a mere national Church can never make much progress in Christendom. The sooner Christianity breaks away from the limitations of national boundary or race, the better for it.

From my own experience, I cannot speak too highly of the work the chaplains are doing in the army. I am glad that our own Government made such generous provision for supplying the boys with helpers and guides. The morale of an army is more important than ammunition: and a good chaplain can do more toward keeping up morale than any other officer.

Although nominally an officer, the chaplain can really be one of the men, or at least occupy a middle place between officers and men. The men can go to him with their just grievances, and he can set many of them right. He is also the link between the boys of the regiment and home. He keeps them in touch with the higher things of life. He keeps them from forgetting the high ideals which they learned in their homes. He can speak an effective word, now and then, about the particular dangers to which they are exposed. No other officer can do it. It is the chaplain's particular and official business.

Those who love the boys—the mothers, and wives, and sweethearts—want them to come home with untarnished honor. They pray, not only for their physical well-being, but for their spiritual well-being too. And good old Uncle Sam is doing the noble and paternal thing in looking out for the welfare of his boys to the best of his ability. It is only right, for they are giving him their all. He wants them to return better men, even, than when they went away. And as a means to this end he has given them plenty of chaplains. The mothers of America, and all who are interested in the boys, will bless him for that.

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