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What I Saw and Heard at Church

The Same Being a Visit To the First Baptist Church of Marshfield.

By A. GLOBE TROTTER

I never knew going to the movies would cause one to go to church. I was astonished to read between the pictures in a moving picture show last Saturday night on the canvas these words:

"Do you dance? Do you play cards? Or do you wear a long face? Anyway come to hear!"

"The Religiousness of Merriment" by Albert F. Bassford at the First Baptist church, Sunday evening at 7:30. Good music."

Well, I never! What would grandma think if she could have seen that sign? She would have seen that sign? I imagine. I nearly did. I got out of that show house as soon as possible. But before going to my room for the night I chanced to drop in at another one and to my surprise there was that church sign again popping right out on the canvas. I read:

"The Religiousness of Merriment." "Come to church. Do you dance or do you wear a long face?" "At the Baptist church."

This was all I had time to read, but I recognized it again easily. I thought: "What kind of town is this? Are the theaters helping out the churches or are the churches helping out the theaters?" As I thought on this, it seemed to me too big a question to decide, but it made me want to go and hear this sermon. I like to see the baker advertise, "Home-made Bread," especially if the bread is made at home and it is good. Some bread and some sermons are not worth advertising. But my visit this time proved that the "goods were up to the advertisement." I resolved then and there that a man must be a good preacher to manifest such enterprise as this in telling me about it all, when I did not even care to know.

Nothing happened of special interest as I know. I noticed when I went in that the audience was "seated well in the stern." No wonder some of the churches make slow time and drag the bottom. But the pastor, Rev. Albert F. Bassford in a very pleasant manner cordially invited the people to "trim the craft" and when they shifted the cargo it went "full speed ahead" better. Some church members are in the "crew" working their shift regular, some are only "cargo," and some hardly make good "ballast." I wondered which I was as I sat among them.

Pastor Bassford speaks quietly and at times forcefully. I thought of one of my old teachers in school as I listened to him. He said he was not going to discuss the problem of worldliness, but rather what he had to say was along the line of fun, joy, merriment and gladness.

The Bible a Book of Gladness. "Nowhere does the Bible exalt gloominess. The opposite is the rule. It does not advocate a sad and insipid life. The Bible on the other hand seeks the happiness of the individual. Christ's life was full of intense interest in human welfare. It can be truthfully said that no part of human tendency was ever repressed by him. The normal tendency of us all, Christ well understood, and he did not legislate against this."

Church Has Been Too Strict. "On the other hand the church has been repressive. It has no doubt been misguided. It has the best of motives and even is ruled by love, yet, like some parents, it has been too strict."

"The church has perverted certain texts of Scripture, too. This comes from the fact that the church is fallible and liable to err. There was a time when the church believed and taught that in a sense the world was lost and was to be abandoned, but now neither you nor I believe this at all. Worship was confused with forms, and in order to get happiness one must refrain from all intercourse with individuals and withdraw from men. Christ did not teach so. His prayer for his disciples was that they might be kept while in this world, not taken out of it."

"The church has been heretofore too serious, has been blinded and has only seen one side. Appearances have been too much the guide."

"When one considers the old time Puritans, one can not conceive of any lot of people with better morals and with grander ideals, yet their main defect was in the manner or rather

lack of manifestations of joy and happiness.

Church Today is More Human. "Life is not a sob, not a giggle. Today the church is far more human in its treatment of these questions than ever before. If I were to discuss the other phases of this topic, such as dancing, card playing and theater going, I should not in any way tell you what you should do, for I believe you should decide this for yourself. I have for myself, I accord to you the same privileges I take."

Play is Necessary. "A German philosopher has discovered that play is natural, wholesome and necessary. In the light of this, how many parents realize when their children are at play that it is necessary. Did you ever hear any one say to their children, 'Keep quiet; be still.' They do not know that they are robbing their child of that which is absolutely a necessity."

"The old cat will actually teach her kittens to play. She will participate with her offspring. (If fathers would play marbles occasionally with their boys it would tend to lessen evil companions and habits, I thought here.) While at play both the body and mind are built up. Play is good for the grown-up person. As I look at some persons in this vicinity, life seems to be indeed a humdrum affair to them. They eat, sleep, and work, then repeat it over again, with perhaps a visit to the moving picture shows. What men need is real fun as they go along to relieve the strain that comes into life. If a man can't get joy out of his work as he goes along, he had better get another job."

"A vacation is a necessity. We all need a change in both occupation and in location. It helps to keep up normal."

God Wants Us to Be Happy. "To some, amusement means merely cards, theaters, dancing and drinking of strong drink. They can not seem to get happiness out of anything else. This is a pitiful confession of poverty of both body, mind and soul. I noticed the free booze while at the railroad celebration at North Bend and I also noticed the men crowding up to drink like pigs squealing for their swill."

"The church asks us to give up something, but to give up only that which our own self-respect demands of us. There are certain kinds of fun and happiness which one's self-respect tells him to participate in. Fun that does not leave a wholesome effect, fun that does not recreate, and that makes one less a man, and fun that hurts. God does not want us to be indulging in. God wants to make us happy."

I was surprised to hear the pastor make an apology for keeping us over the hour, it seemed very short. I might have gotten more out of this sermon on the "Religiousness of Merriment," had it not been for some young people who acted as though this excellent pastor was speaking on the "Merriment of Religion," and I was bothered a number of times. I remember that Mr. Bassford announced that he would be glad to speak on any topic which the people might suggest, and he urged them to place in a small box in the vestibule such requests."

A man announced that he wanted some of the members to pay up their notes to the church. This is certainly practical, but it's pretty hard to run a church on just money."

I'm glad I went to the picture show and I'm glad I went to hear Rev. Bassford.

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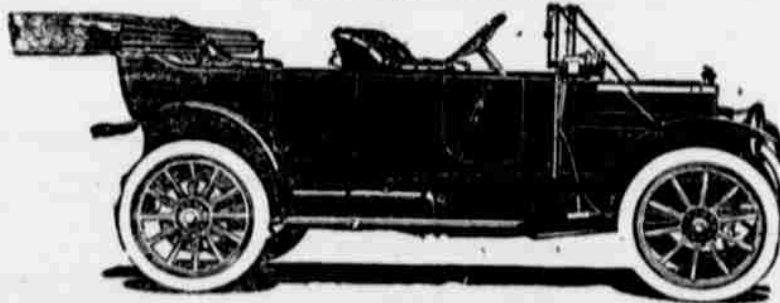
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- 7:15 A. M.
- 8:00 A. M.
- 8:45 A. M.
- 9:30 A. M.
- 10:15 A. M.
- 11:00 A. M.
- 11:45 A. M.
- 12:30 P. M.
- 1:15 P. M.
- 2:00 P. M.
- 2:45 P. M.
- 3:30 P. M.
- 4:15 P. M.
- 5:00 P. M.
- 5:45 P. M.
- 6:30 P. M.
- 7:30 P. M.
- 8:30 P. M.
- 9:30 P. M.
- 10:30 P. M.
- 11:30 P. M.
- 12:30 A. M.

LEAVE NORTH BEND.

- 7:00 A. M.
- 7:45 A. M.
- 8:30 A. M.
- 9:15 A. M.
- 10:00 A. M.
- 10:45 A. M.
- 11:30 A. M.
- 12:15 P. M.
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- 8:00 P. M.
- 9:00 P. M.
- 10:00 P. M.
- 11:00 P. M.
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