

MUST A GOOD SOLDIER BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN?

THE German Emperor, in his early days, was rather inclined to put a slight valuation upon religion; afterward he became the exponent of simple theism as embodied in the expressions of Bismarck and other prominent Germans; he is now more inclined to favor orthodox Christianity as understood by the majority of English-speaking peoples. The Empress, it is said, has largely influenced her husband in this, but his friendship for many prominent Catholics is also regarded as a cause of his increased regard for religion. Catholic writers are certainly inclined to defend him, and a writer in *United Ireland* recently declared that the animosity of the British press against him is chiefly due to his friendliness toward the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the Radical press believe the Emperor should be less pronounced in his religious views, and the following passage in a speech to the recruits of the guards is especially criticized:

"In taking the oath of allegiance to the colors, you German men have vowed to be true, as good Christians should vow, under God's free heavens, before His altar and upon the cross. He who is not a good Christian is not a good man nor a good Prussian soldier, and he can not possibly fulfil the duty of a soldier in the Prussian army. This duty is not light; it includes the exercise of self-command and self-denial—the two highest Christian attributes—and unqualified obedience and subordination to



SATAN (joyfully): "Now I remember what I put that knot in my tail for! I wanted to see if I couldn't get some of those good soldiers who got into heaven down into my department. — *Kladderadatsch, Berlin.*

[The issue of *Kladderadatsch* containing this cartoon was confiscated because of its reflections on the Emperor.]

* The Mennonites, who refuse to carry arms, are installed in the Prussian army as non-combatants. — *Editor of THE LITERARY DIGEST.*

Good Soldiers

the will of your superiors. But you have plenty of historical examples. Thousands before you have taken the oath and kept it."

The *Volks-Zeitung*, Berlin, refers to the many examples of brave soldiers who were not Christians, both in ancient and in modern history. The paper then continues :

"We believe that the qualifications of a soldier are altogether independent of his religious faith. Else the recruits would have to be examined very rigorously regarding their religious feeling and whether they lead truly Christian lives. Moreover, all Prussians or Germans who are Jews, or who, for other reasons, can not be included among the Christians, would have to be excluded from the army on principle. More than that, nobody could be forced to fulfil duties for which his religious principles do not fit him." *

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* wants to know why the Jews are required to take the oath if it is known that they can not keep it. The *Vossische* talks of 'Turks, Magyars, Hindus, and heathens "who have been brave soldiers and good men," and asks if the Emperor's words are to be taken literally. These papers, however, like many others of the best edited in Germany, are said to be controlled by the Jews, who, tho they form only one per cent. of the population, are said to influence more than half the German press. The Berlin *Tageblatt*, another pronouncedly Jewish paper, says :

"The Jews did not become liable for service in the Prussian army until 1812. In 1813-15 five hundred of them served as volunteers, proving that they were as patriotic as their Christian fellow-citizens, a fact which has more than once been acknowledged officially. . . . In 1870-71 they certainly did their duty; three hundred and twenty-seven of them were decorated with the Iron Cross."

The *Kleines Journal*, Berlin, which attempts to popularize "yellow journalism" in Germany, tho tho tho is still somewhat faint, fears that such criticisms will add fuel to antisemitism, and gives the following explanation :

"The Israelitic recruits are sworn in at their own place of worship, and the Emperor addressed himself to his fellow Christians only. If the commander-in-chief says that, in his opinion, a Christian can be a good soldier only if he is a good Christian, it means practically the same as when the rabbi tells the Jewish recruits that he who is not a pious Jew is not a good Jewish soldier. . . . What the Emperor meant is that the faith in God makes good soldiers, and as he addressed himself to a Christian congregation he spoke from a Christian point of view."

The Christian organs are very much displeased with the attitude of the Jewish Liberal and Radical papers. The *Kreuz Zeitung* asks if the Emperor is to shut his mouth for fear of offending the Jews. The *Staatsbürger Zeitung* says :

"Our Emperor, himself a good Christian and a good German, remembers that Christianity is the basis of the German state, and tells the recruits of his guards that they must uphold Christianity. Only the worst intent of Jewish papers and their followers can misinterpret his words, especially as the Jews and other non-Christian recruits had already been sworn in. Is the Emperor to be denied the privilege of speaking as a Christian to Christians? . . . We would be glad to hear that the Jews have been freed from the obligation to serve in the army. They could be made to pay a tax instead, and the army would be rid of their influence. They regard the duty of military service as irksome, anyhow, while we others look upon it as an honor."—*Translations made for THE LITERARY DIGEST.*