

THE KU KLUX KLAN AND THE CHURCH

THE ZEAL OF THE KU KLUX KLAN to "support the Church" has been displayed by many signs, and intimations multiply, we are told, that certain Protestant ministers are in its confidence and would seem on occasion to be directing its activities. But to some ministers the Klan's mark of approval appears to be embarrassing, a favor which they would much prefer to do without. Scarcely a Sunday passes, says *The Christian Century* (Undenominational), without the publication of the news that a Klan has visited a church in a body, simply to signify approval, or to remain decorously through the service. Latterly it has been the custom, on the occasion of these visits, for the leader of the Klan to present the minister with a "donation." This, we are told, is assumed to be a mark of the favor which the particular minister enjoys with the Klan, or of the favor which the Klan seeks from him or his congregation. Furthermore,

"It is noted that the congregation breaks into applause on some of these occasions. The banners carried in public parades of the Klan give further intimations to the same effect. They support the introduction of the Bible into the public schools, while accompanying legends indicate that the Roman Church does not enjoy the favor accorded Protestant bodies. The chief hindrance to the permanent and universal installation of the Bible as a text-book in the schools is assumed to be the Roman Church. Some of the legends are interpreted as siding with Masonic orders in their assumed controversy with Romanism. All of which reminds one that the restorer and head of the Klan is said to be a Mason and was in earlier years a minister of one of the Protestant denominations. In developing the ritual and ideals of the Klan he is alleged to have drawn upon his acquaintance with Masonry and the Church usages. Here is a field where accurate knowledge can not be gained. By shrouding its operations and principles in secrecy the Klan is subjecting itself to all manner of malignant charges which it can not refute by evidence satisfactory to the public, and may be suffering an injustice which it has itself invited. Its partiality for certain Protestant ministers and their churches must prove an embarrassment also to those enjoying its favor. Such ministers and churches may well devoutly pray to be delivered from the tender mercies of their friends. The accumulating suspicions and antipathies which prompt high-minded citizens to think what a Texas judge asserted in his court the other day, that the Klan is 'the most dangerous organization that has ever been organized in this country,' must reflect upon ministers who graciously accept its donations and other favors, and upon congregations who applaud its presence and its 'benevolence.' To be the passive recipient of such flattering attentions is embarrassing enough, but to be the inspiration and directing mind in the activities of such an agency, as ministers are believed to have become, can lead only to defeat and undoing for those allowing themselves to be deluded into such 'zeal for righteousness.' The minister who resorts to such devices must have some cause to 'put over,' or must desire to 'get across' with some purpose, not consonant with the aims and ends of the gospel of Christ."