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EDITORIAL

TO SEEM AND TO BE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**N**OTHING in his life became him like the leaving it” is the inscription, which, with a slight modification so as to read: “Nothing in his ministerial career became him like the leaving it,” should be entered in the records of the Leavenworth, Kan., Presbyterian Church opposite the name of the Rev. R.A. Ellwood, who has just resigned his pastorate.

Capitalist morality consists in seeming moral. The only difference, from the moral standpoint, between olden days despots and modern days “democratic” capitalists is that the former were no hypocrites, the latter are; the former brutally stood out for all that they were, the latter find it more profitable to conceal what they are behind the mask of what they are not. To be sure, the mask frequently drops, by accident; or is frequently torn aside; nevertheless, the important lesson of capitalist inherent uncleanness evades observation from these loose instances. It takes the instance of a real pillar of capitalism to bring out the fact convincingly. There is no modern pillar of capitalism like the modern pulpiter. The fact being that Church and State, violently opposed to each other when Capitalism started, are now once more united in a loving embrace. There is no place like the modern average pulpit, and no individual like the modern average pulpiter, to sing the praises of the capitalist class, gloss its iniquities, and exalt its crimes. Rockefeller, for instance, would be a lame duck without his ministers. Indeed, modern pulpiters, as a class, are the modern regimental captains of the bandit capitalist army. When, accordingly, one of these stands well exposed, the morality of the whole Capitalist Class is exposed.

The Rev. R.A. Ellwood was a ferocious lump of virtue. Long to fame unknown, his name suddenly burst forth refulgent on the occasion of the assault of a Negro, George White, upon Helen Bishop, a young white girl in Delaware, on June 23, five

years ago. At that time, the Rev. Ellwood was still an obscure personage as pastor of the Olivet Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. The Negro White was lynched under peculiarly savage circumstances. Even Delaware held her breath. A man was needed to say “the right word at the right time.” The Spirit (we may judge the Spirit of what) moved the Rev. Ellwood. Readers of *The People* will remember the comments made in these columns upon the Satanic utterances that came from the Rev. Ellwood’s pulpit. This apostle of Christ, this pillar of Law and Order, of the “sanctity of life,” “property,” and the “family,” and the rest of the capitalist beatitudes, simply rolled civilization back fully one thousand years in his glorification of the Negro’s murder.

Not quite five years have elapsed since that day. The fame of the Rev. Ellwood brought him many fat “calls.” He took his pick. Went to Leavenworth where his activity greatly promoted the increase of his flock—until he suddenly resigned upon charges preferred against him by the mother of ONE OF THE YOUNG GIRLS IN THE CHURCH CHOIR. At first, the Rev. Ellwood showed his teeth. But, being confronted with a batch of letters written by him to the young choir girl, he did not set up the claim that the letters were “personal, private and confidential,” or that it was an “abuse of confidence” for her to disclose them. He did not even set up the claim of his “individual rights.” No. He resigned instanter.

Seem one thing, be another—such is the characteristic of the Capitalist Class. And not slight are the deserts of the Rev. Ellwood for having brought out the fact with all the conspicuousness of his revered pillarship. What, in the gentleman’s whole ministerial career, is more valuable than this service rendered by him to the public? What, in his ministerial career, became him like the leaving it?

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