

**ASSOCIATION HEARS
LESTER B. M'COUN**
(Continued from Page Two.)

college. He said, "If we are to have better newspapers, a better community, a better government, we must train a generation of young people to demand better newspapers and if it is right to encourage systematic home study of current, clean literature, including newspapers, it is also right to foster the same idea, at the proper time, in our schools. And while we are considering that which is good for the children, let us be fully aware that whatever is right for them is also right for adults. That which is good and right in the home and school must be so everywhere, and we ought not to encourage, away from home, a standard we would not freely recommend for our families. "We hear much of the freedom of the press. There are many who believe our forefathers did not mean, by free press, the license to publish anything which might technically come within the stipulations of the civil law. Those who labored and suffered to establish our nation had high hopes and spiritual aspirations for it. It is certain they had no intention of permitting the free exercise of any privilege to the detriment of our moral progress. I do not believe newspapers or other publications have the moral right to fill the minds of their readers with degrading news, any more than a parent or other instructor has such a right. Moreover, I do not believe any publication is upholding the law of the land in repeatedly displaying news items of a character which encourage willful violators of the law, and in this I have particular reference to the activities of manufacturers, sellers, and purchasers of intoxicants. "Some claim the publishing of crime news has a beneficial effect in that it tends to check evil. As a student of mental cause and effect, I dispute this theory. From a metaphysical viewpoint, it is known that the continued perusal of crime news by the weak-minded does not appeal to the moral sensibilities they may possess. As the apostle Paul has so aptly stated, "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The weak and erring are entitled to the protection and support which clean news provides. Proper appeals to the good impulses of the weak act beneficially, but those which excite opposite propensities fail to do good. Desiring to know of the experiences of police officials, I have made inquiry of some of them. They have

told me they regard the publication of crime news as a means of encouraging crime, and say they believe this to be the general view of police officials. They tell me they have many times observed, soon after the widespread publication of details of a shocking act, a noticeable tendency to commit similar infractions of the law. Furthermore, they tell me the publication of crime news, year after year, serves to create disrespect for the law, and to make even the better class of citizens more or less indifferent to the evils besetting us. I have myself heard those convicted of crime attribute their downfall partly to the vivid mental pictures gleaned from sensational reports in newspapers.

"Some journalists argue that newspapers should respond to what they claim to be a native curiosity to know all about evil. They reason that good is the natural inclination of man and evil is the unusual; concluding that evil must, therefore, be news. If good is the natural inclination of man, why not assume he wishes to know more about good? What reason would he have for becoming acquainted with evil? An editor, who is not a religionist, told me the seeming curiosity for details of crime and sensational news is due more to the character of our newspapers than to anything else. I believe too much attention has been given to satisfying the emotional desire to read something exciting, without regard to quality or value, and too little attention to the really natural inclination of man to search out the truly useful and good. There can be no substitute for good. The need is not so much for news as for good news; not so much for journalism as for clean journalism.

"In a recent conversation with an experienced eastern newspaper publisher, I asked him how he thought his readers would ballot on the question of whether crime and sensational news should be left out of his paper, if such an expression were asked of them. He replied at once that they would vote overwhelmingly to dispense with all such items, but he was fearful the readers who would vote thus would not purchase his paper if so published, so long as his compe-

titors continued as before. He told me there is an unquestionable demand from readers of newspapers for publications devoid of all that is debasing and immoral, and other editors have confirmed this opinion to me. With such conditions existing, it appears we are in need of publishers with the moral courage to turn from material considerations and news of even doubtful moral effect, and to let in the light of pure journalistic idealism.

"It seems to me, as a reader of newspapers, it has been proven there is sufficient news in the field of essential, instructive events, in the unfoldment of which we see the progress of man reflected. True progress cannot be separated from moral and spiritual development. I believe the day of clean journalism and of intelligent, systematic consideration of the constructive, useful news of the day, in the homes and elsewhere, is much nearer than ever before. I am grateful for the very perceptible improvement already apparent in some directions, and wish to congratulate Nebraska editors on their contributions in this respect.

"It is a cause of no little joy to me to have a direct interest in the ideals of a certain daily newspaper whose founder, Mary Baker Eddy, announced its object to be "to injure no man, but to bless all mankind." To the interests of this newspaper, The Christian Monitor, I am sincerely devoted. I love to see the same ideals endorsed and supported by other newspapers. I love to see the proof that there is ample room in the field of legitimate human endeavor for every righteous activity, including the collecting and publishing of news suitable for the edification of all.

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"In closing I desire to express my deep gratitude for the many courtesies extended to me and the Christian Science movement by the newspapermen and women of this state. I have found our editors to be uniformly kind and considerate toward the other fellow and his troubles. Our editors appear to me to be a class of men and women who appreciate a fair share of joys of our experiences here, and who bear their share of the adversities quite uncomplainingly. I hope each and every one of our Nebraska newspaper men and women may continue long to uphold the high ideals of Christianity and our good homes and schools. If the church, the home, the school, and our literature unite refusing to yield to any-

thing to the contrary, we shall sooner realize "on earth, peace, good-will toward men," a victory not accomplished on the battle-fields or in the realm of statecraft, but in the minds and lives of all."

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