

November 28, 1943
WSM

Good Morning, Friends:

Seldom has a subject been more widely discussed than General Patton's slapping of a shell-shocked soldier in Sicily. Considered from any angle, it is a serious and most unfortunate thing. But, to start with, I would like to read to you General Eisenhower's statement which was laid before Congress ^{on the day before} yesterday:

General Eisenhower is the high commander over there, and it would be hard for me to take issue with his judgment, but I must say that even after his splendid statements, there is some doubt in my mind as to the advisability of leaving General Patton in Command of the American Seventh Army. General Eisenhower has said that he is a great General and a great leader. As to this, I have no knowledge. I had always thought, though, that one of the first essentials of a great general was that he possess a full measure of confidence, respect, and esteem from the men who serve under him.

Looking at this thing strictly from a layman's viewpoint, it just seems to me that the repugnant action of a General slapping a sick soldier, even though he may have thought the soldier ~~was~~ not sick and ~~was~~ shirking his duty, would undermine ^{his} ~~whatever~~ value ~~he may have had~~ as a leader of men. But, there again, how can you or I know just how the men of the Seventh Army feel. General Eisenhower seems to think that the value of his leadership has not been destroyed. ^{He is in better position to know than we are.} Of course, what happens to General Patton as an individual is unimportant in relation to the welfare and fortunes of the armed forces of this nation. If it is best for him to be removed from the United States army, then there should be no hesitancy in doing so. ^{We can know at least one thing: If a private had slapped a general he would have been punished severely.} ~~Although General Eisenhower says, in his statement, that, wherever General Patton appears before his men now, he receives thunderous applause, I do not see how this incident can ultimately fail to undermine his leadership.~~

A charitable point of view would be to say that General Patton was suffering from battle strain and battle nerves, perhaps not in a very dissimilar manner to the soldier whom he slapped. But to take that attitude, one must admit that the general is unstable under sustained battle pressure, and, ^{therefore} ~~of course~~, would be unfit in a crisis.

The father of ^{one of the} ~~the~~ soldier ~~who was~~ outraged by General Patton made a very fine and patriotic statement. Congressman Grant from Indiana, ~~who represents the father of one of the two soldiers assaulted by General~~ ~~Patton~~ read the father's statement to Congress last Wednesday. He said:

Yes, by all means, let's get on with the war. ~~I have always taken the position that we folks at home had to let our military commanders run the army and control military affairs.~~

The Capitol has been electrified by the remarkably quick, though tremendously costly, conquest of the Gilbert Islands. This shows that the navy has fully recovered from the terrific beating it took at Pearl Harbor almost two years ago. It is said that the greatest naval striking force ever assembled preceded the invasion forces. It is rather remarkable that the Japanese would sustain this strategic loss without accepting the challenge of our navy. They are wilely and treacherous, though, and we may expect great punishment to our forces as they penetrate farther into the Pacific.

The House passed a tax bill during the week and also passed a bill prohibiting the payment of subsidies on food products. Both bills now go to the Senate.

Secretary Morgenthau will go before the Senate Finance Committee and ask that the tax bill be increased to raise ten billion dollars, in addition to present taxes, instead of the two billion which the bill that passed the House would raise. I do not always agree with Secretary Morgenthau, but, in this case, I think he is certainly right in insisting that we pay a bigger portion of the war bill while the people here at home, generally speaking, are making more money than ever before in their lives.

His recommendation will fail in the Senate, though, as it did in the House.

The anti-subsidy bill will likely pass the Senate by a large majority as it did the House. And, as I said last Sunday morning, we have every reason to believe that it will be vetoed by the President. The votes ^{Taken} on the question in the House indicate that the Congress will not pass the bill over the President's veto. So, the subsidy program is likely to continue ~~for a few months~~ at least. *for a few months.*

A conference between President Roosevelt, Primeminister Churchill, Marshall Stalin, and Generalissimo Chiang Chi Chek is openly discussed, not only in Washinbton but by the press and ~~over the~~ radio around the world. World-shaking and world-shaping decisions are undoubtedly being made. I wish that every Christian in the world would, on this Lord's day, pray that God give to ^{our} ~~the~~ leaders of ~~free men~~ wisdom and guidance.