

Here Is A Letter From The Rev. Dr. Elderdice In Which Nine Mild Words Are Used To "Deplore" The Hanging And Burning Of A Man By A Mob In Salisbury, And About 600 Words Are Devoted To Vehement Criticism Of Ministers, Professors And Editors Who Have Condemned The Lynching In Unequivocal Terms

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Permit me to express my indignation and contempt at the Federal Council's report on the Salisbury lynching, as prepared and submitted by Prof. Broadus Mitchell, which appeared so conspicuously in your paper this morning. I think it is high time for the fair-minded citizens of this State, and especially of Baltimore city, to call a halt on the unwarranted insults which have been heaped on the good people of the Eastern Shore since the lynching of the murderer Williams.

The lynching itself is to be deplored, of course, but the circumstances which brought it about are to be deplored even more. And the stirring up of intersectional bitterness by Baltimore ministers and newspaper writers after it occurred is to be deplored most of all. We expect no better of Mencken, of course, and I suppose we should expect no better of *The Sun*, which has it in for any section that does not fall in with its wet, open-Sunday, race-track gambling policy. But when ministers of the Gospel, who eloquently preach of "tolerance" and "brotherhood" the year around, go out of their way to cast aspersions on the Christian churches and ministers of Salisbury because of something for which they were in no way responsible, one is led to wonder just what they understand by such terms. If that is their idea of "tolerance" and "brotherhood" I want none of it.

I appreciate the efforts of the Federal Council of Churches to stamp out lynchings in this country. But I resent the sending out as an official pronouncement this report of Professor Mitchell, with its reflections on one of the finest sections of our country. I resent his statement that "the churches [in Salisbury] have neglected the application of religion to life." I know something of the churches in Salisbury and I know something of at least some of the ministers of Salisbury, and I challenge him to prove this assertion. And while I am on the subject I challenge the Baltimore minister who made a similar statement from his pulpit to prove it, or else apologize to his brother ministers in Salisbury. If a lynching in Salisbury proves that "the churches have neglected the application of religion to life," then what do the crimes committed every day of the year in Baltimore prove concerning the churches and ministers of that city?

I resent also Professor Mitchell's statement that "the Eastern Shore is isolated geographically, and has become backward in its mental and spiritual development." To those who really know the Eastern Shore, who are acquainted with its innate charm and culture and are familiar with its marvelous development in the last twenty-five years, such statements as this would be utterly absurd if they were not so manifestly malicious. If the Eastern Shore, with its wonderful roads and the finest inland waterways in the world, is isolated, it is a glorious isolation, which any community on earth might covet. The fine-spirited, friendly, hospitable, open-hearted folk of the East-

ern Shore are "backward in their mental and spiritual development," then may we all be set back to the place where a proper readjustment of relative values may be made.

To speak of the thriving little city of Salisbury, in particular, with its two railroads, beautiful navigable river and network of fine roads running in every direction, and its industries, together with the spirit of its citizens back of it all; to speak of such a town in such a location as "isolated" and "backward" is silly. Some day Salisbury may be the capital of a fine new State.

But let us remember this: That such reckless and unwarranted statements as Professor Mitchell, Mencken, Dr. Ainslie and *The Sun* have been making about the Eastern Shore in the last few weeks are creating a spiritual gulf between these two sections of this great State far wider and deeper than that which is created by the sparkling waters of the lovely Chesapeake.

[REV.] CHAS. M. ELDERDICE.
Westminster, Jan. 25, 1932.