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God is in his heaven,

All's right with the world.

—(BROWNING.)

Never bear more than one kind of

trouble at a time. Some people bear

three kinds—all they have had, all they

have now, and all they expect to have.

—(EDWARD EVERETT HALE.)

London, Tuesday, April 10.

THE LONDON ADVERTISER, with its morning and evening editions, covers the ground. With one exception, it is the ONLY EARLY MORNING DAILY IN ONTARIO, outside of Toronto.

Religious Tolerance.

Powerful Sermon by Rev. W. J. Clark

At the First Presbyterian Church, London.

He States Very Outspokenly His Opinion of the So-Called Protestant Protective Association.

The First Presbyterian Church, London, was crowded on Sunday morning last, when Rev. W. J. Clark, the pastor, spoke on the subject of "Religious Tolerance." In the large audience were to be seen adherents of all religious bodies, including a number of prominent Catholics.

The preacher took as a general text the incident of the Samaritan villagers refusing to receive Jesus because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem, whereupon his disciples, James and John, when they saw this, said: "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them.

Mr. Clark said: I read these verses simply as suggestive of the line of thought which I wish you to follow with me this morning. My subject, as I announced to you last Sabbath morning, is "Religious Tolerance," and it would be well, perhaps, to state plainly what is wished to be understood by the terms. Perhaps the simplest way in which this could be set forth is by taking a specific example. Our Baptist brethren hold that a believer is unscriptural, that the right should be administered only to those who, being of the years of discretion, have experienced the grace of God in conversion and make public profession of their faith. They believe, moreover, that immersion is the only proper mode of baptism. I believe these views to be entirely mistaken, and consider baptism of the children of believers scriptural, and the mode—be it immersion, pouring or sprinkling—a matter of no great moment. But while fully persuaded in my own mind of the correctness of the view of the Presbyterian Church, and while I would be greatly pleased if the Baptist Church as a whole, or individual Baptists, should see their way clear to accept our view of scriptural teaching in regard to this matter, I hold I would not be justified in interfering with the financial, social or political rights of my Baptist brother because we cannot agree upon these points; nor has he any right to interfere with mine on the same ground. If the Baptist Church was engaged in

PLOTTING TO IMMERSE me by force, or to punish me by taking away political privileges because I would not submit to immersion, then I would be justified in resisting such tyranny to the utmost of my power, and so maintaining my own liberty "to know, to argue, to utter according to the dictates of my own conscience," and this I demand with equal force for my fellows. That which is in regard to Baptists is true in regard to Church of England, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Christian Scientist, Mohammedan, Pagan, Greek Church, Buddhist, or any other religious view whatever. I have no right to use any means but that of argument or example to change the opinions of members of any of these sects so long as the religious views held do not lead their advocates to transgress the moral law or interfere with the social, political or religious rights of their fellow-citizens. To make it specific—my Roman Catholic brother may abstain from meat every Friday in the year. I have no right to interfere, but if he seeks to compel me to the same diet, that is another question. He may demand that the clergy shall practice celibacy, and I have no right to object so long as he does not compel me to live a single life. I think this position is clearly understood, and now I would advance several reasons why I steadfastly adhere to this position. I make no pretense of discussing this question exhaustively, but simply appeal to various arguments, the form of which I think no one will have any difficulty in appreciating. It may be said that theoretically this is all very well, but that adherents of a certain form of religion, because of their religious views, do interfere with the rights of their fellow-citizens. In answer I would say that I must be very sure of evidence before I receive it, and I am VERY SLOW TO ACCEPT THE HOT, BITTER CHARGES

of men and women who are notoriously prejudiced and unfit to calmly consider the question. There are several reasons then that I would present to you this morning as to why I seek to practice and advocate religious tolerance. The first of these is that good men have been trained under various religious systems, and intellectual uniformity is not essential to morality. In the Old Testament we have

brought before us a nation chosen by God to testify to the truth, and as was essential under existing circumstances, very straight lines were laid down to divide the Jew from surrounding nations, but all the godly were not Hebrews in the strict sense of the word. We have a Melchizedek, a Job, a Jethro, a Rahab, a Ruth, all of whom were blessed by God. In the New Testament the same story is told. We have the centurion in the Gospels, of whom Christ said, "I have not found so great faith—no, not in Israel"; Cornelius, the centurion, in the book of Acts; Lydia and others, who were deprived of special Jewish training and yet godly. And whatever may be said of religions outside the pale of Christian doctrine, the fact remains that amongst almost all peoples professing every variety of religious doctrine, there have been found men loving God and doing good to their fellowmen. If we narrow our circle and draw distinctions between Catholic and Protestant, the same story is told again. Sir Thomas Moore in the reign of Henry VIII., Cardinal Manning in recent years, and many other names that occur to us, are evidence that men may be members of the Roman Catholic communion and at the same time

GOOD CITIZENS AND MORAL MEN.

To come closer home. I have known more than a few Roman Catholics fairly well, and have found them honorable in dealing, kindly in sympathy and strictly moral men. Of course a bitter, prejudiced antagonist may say that all these cases were hypocrites, whitened sepulchres, etc., and may in the madness of his hatred believe what he says; but I prefer not to accept any such absurd and monstrous statement. If these good men have been and are to be found, and if they conscientiously adhere to the peculiar tenets of their faith, how unjust and uncharitable it would be of me to seek to interfere with their political or commercial welfare because forsooth our views do not agree! So long as these views held by my neighbor do not lead him to transgress the law of morals, so long should he be perfectly free to hold such views, and it would be iniquitous in the highest degree for me to interfere or to seek to interfere with his holding them.

2. But a second reason suggests itself in support of religious tolerance, and that is that the natural constitution of mankind is such as to lead us to believe in honest differences of opinion. In the heat of an election you will find many men who for the time being honestly believe that any one who is not disposed to agree with them must necessarily be a dishonest rascal, but ordinarily men are willing to acknowledge that an opinion different from their own in regard to public policy may be held, and held in all honesty. You have often remarked the wonderful variety of nature. Every man differs from his fellows in some degree in his physical make-up, and that which is true of one's body is just as true of the mind. When you went to school you had among your school-fellows one perhaps who had a mathematical mind, another who had a genius for history or poetry. I need not dwell upon this point. There is practically an unlimited number of illustrations and examples to prove this. Is it any wonder, then, that

MEN MAY HONESTLY DIFFER

about methods of worship and forms of church government? That one finds profit in that which appeals to the senses, and another prefers the service simple and unadorned? And the fact that such differences of opinion may exist between the most sincere persons is emphasized by the fact of the great power of early training in giving the bent to one's life. In the majority of cases if you ask a man, Why are you a Presbyterian? he will answer, Because my parents were. Why are you a Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Church of England? The same answer will be given. The religious impressions of childhood are often very deep. The forms which we were accustomed in childhood's years possess a power over us that probably no other can ever have. If this, then, is the case, how unjust and unkind a thing it is to visit vengeance upon a man because he is still influenced by what his father taught him when he learned to pray his prayers, or by the side of the Protestant would not remember that had he been taught the Catholic faith as a child, to-day he would be a Catholic of the Catholics, and on the other side if the bigoted Romanist would remember that had he been taught as his Protestant neighbor, he would have been a Protestant of the Protestants, they would surely see the unfairness and the unkindness of harshly judging one another because of differences in the matter of religious belief. Said Sydney Smith: "Three hundred years ago men burnt and hanged each other for opinions. Time has softened Catholic as well as Protestant; they both required it; though each perceives only his own improvement, and is blind to that of the other."

But a third reason comes to us why we should always seek to cultivate tolerance of our neighbor's religious belief, however mistaken we may believe that to be, is because the opposite of tolerance—persecution—has never yet been successful in its object. The history of humanity contains one and record after another of men, in all honesty of times, seeking to convert their fellows to their own forms of religious belief, and

ALWAYS SUCH EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FAILURES. It matters not how foolish it may be, if those who advocate or hold any particular opinion are persecuted because of their faith, there will be surely stirred up for them many friends and many converts. And while among its professors some of the weaker vessels may be led to retreat, the stronger souls among them will only be established and strengthened in their faith. It is human nature that it should be so. "Jimmie," said a little girl to her younger brother, "you must come down stairs." "Well, Elsie," was the response of the little man, "if I must, I won't." Or as Shakespeare puts it in Falstaff's mouth: "Give you a reason upon compulsion. If reasons were as plenty as blackberries I would give you a man a reason upon compulsion." And I am sure we all sympathize with this worthy human instinct to defy tyranny, of whatever sort it is. Men have tried to force—wild beasts, the fagot and stake, the thumb-screw and loathsome dungeons, and horrors unmentionable, and all have failed of their object. "The ashes of martyrs" have ever been proved to be the "seed of the church." Perhaps no stronger instance in history can be given than that of the early church. Never was spiritual life more vigorous than when tried on every side by fiercest persecutions. And in more modern times no one can read the history of Philip II. of Spain without being impressed with the utter powerlessness of altering men's religious convictions by religious persecutions. In our own day we have seen how the Salvation Army flourished on persecution, and even if it only take the form of political or commercial ostracism it will just as surely fail of its object as the pains and penalties of death and imprisonment have failed in like efforts. So that if I believe a doctrine to be false, or a religious organization imperfect, and I therefore desire its downfall, the last thing I would think of doing would be to seek to visit penalties of any sort upon those who hold it. To do so would be simply to defeat my own purpose. Moreover, almost invariably,

with whatever honesty of purpose such persecution has been entered into, in due time it is

USED FOR UNWORTHY AIMS.

This fact has been proved over and over again. With desire to save the soul even if it be at the expense of the body's suffering, men have been sought to be reclaimed by attaching penalties of so-called heresy, but soon the first object is forgotten, and evil-minded men seek to use this persecution as an engine by which to carry out their own selfish plots and schemes. But the last and chief reason I would advance for the practice of tolerance in religion is because God himself, and I use the language of all reverence, is tolerant. In Matthew, ch. 23, we read: "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." This is only one out of countless passages in the Word of God that teach us the same lesson, and if God, whom we suppose to be dishonored by the false doctrine held by our fellow-men, does not visit his wrath with the thunderbolts of his wrath, what right have we, with our necessarily limited views, to visit with penalty the holder of an erroneous creed? Remember, the summary of a truly godly life is love to God and love to man, and ought that transgresses that law is evil. Now, don't misunderstand me. I would not for a moment undervalue the preciousness and importance of sound doctrine, but the soundest of all doctrine—a fundamental doctrine of our faith—is to

SEEK TO BLESS AND HELP

our fellows. Mr. Clark then proceeded to speak of the particular manifestation of intolerance in the shape of the so-called Protestant Protective Association, which had for some time past been attracting public attention. As to its views and proceedings, he had read what its opponents had written, and he had read its own publications, and was not, therefore, speaking without knowledge. Though the organization had in some respects covered itself with self-incurred suspicion on account of its secrecy of methods, the nature of its real program was not such as to need any but open methods of defense. In all calmness and deliberation, he believed that such a movement, such a spirit, was evil in its tendency, and ought to be strongly, coolly and wisely discountenanced. As an illustration of the exaggeration, to use a very mild term indulged in, Mr. Clark read the following extract from one of the newspaper organs of the movement:

Now the American people sit and fondle dream of peace and security, while the enemy of the Republic is fast encompassing the citadel with her cohorts, and while they wake from their dream until the sound of roaring cannon arouses them from this suicidal indifference. It is not enough that the gleam of the assassin's blade shall flash in their faces, and that the chains that are to forever bind them in servitude, be sounded in their ears; they must be made to see the pillars of their country being undermined, and the structure of freedom tottering and swaying under the Saxon's like assaults. They must be made to see the enemy's words: "New they follow; in ten years they will menace in twenty command." They have feared; they have hesitated; now the command.

"But cannot the power of the ballot save the danger you proclaim?" You ask. I answer, no. "Time was when this was possible. The time has passed. Were the issue more remote there might in this direction be hope. Could we have succeeded in arousing the late patriotism of the American people before the pall of corruption polluted the purity of the ballot, surely our country would have been saved. But it is too late. The American Protective Association and the other noble patriotic organizations, for they are noble, have failed; the enemy would but suggest a fight it out by ballots, but this Rome will not countenance."

The Jesuitical conspirators who connect their schemes that are to subvert the Republic have given out their proclamation of war, and the American people must now meet the issue. The "vast horde" mentioned by the historical legends are thoroughly drilled, superbly equipped, completely armed and effective as upon the Republic. They are not to be won by a declaration of war. His policy is to incite riots and mobs in the large centers, and when these are pretty well advanced she will proclaim to the world, "Religious liberty is assailed by the Protestants, and in the name of the Republic the army and navy of the nation at her back will march to the rescue of America, and these pretenses, to rally the hosts of America, and these densely populated centers will easily be swung into a line by reason of superior police authority while the cry of the Catholics as Catholics, and the cry of the Catholics will open their storerooms and every paper will be under arms "at the click of the trigger."

The bulk of the statements contained in the extract were evident nonsense; yet they

UNSETTLED THE WEAK-MINDED; and he wanted to say that the man who applied the incendiary's torch to his neighbor's house was less criminal than I who could write and print such incendiary rubbish, calculated as it was to rouse the passions of the ignorant, and to lead the Christians, who should be friends and co-workers for the well-being of the community, and he wanted to say further that to expect the statements he had quoted to be accepted as an insult to the intelligence of intelligent people. Mr. Clark said he would like to refer also to some of the statements recently made by certain leaders. One inspiring statement was that of the Roman Catholic where every member of the countries in which they live, that is, broadly, disloyal; and certain forged documents held to show this had recently to be denounced by the combined Protestant ministers of Columbus, Ohio. It might be that theoretically the view of Roman Catholics was that the Pope stood above earthly kings, though some old-time Presbyterian manifestoes have been pretty lively reading; but in the practical, not theoretical, conduct of life, the records showed that whether in the civil war the United States, or in fighting British battles throughout the world, and elsewhere, Catholics and Protestants stood side by side, and alike did their duty as manly men and loyal citizens. No other speaker had made a reckless and wholesale charge against the Roman Catholic priesthood of leading immoral lives. No doubt there might be black sheep in every flock, but what could be more scandalous, more dastardly than, because of the misdeeds of a few, to stigmatize a whole body of Presbyterians and even Presbyterian ministers had been known to bring discredit on their denominations, yet how indignant we should be were loathsome charges of the sort referred to brought wholesale against Presbyterians! They should all rather say what good they could of each other, remembering Count Tolstoi's true saying, that

while violence, whether of word or deed, is but a sign of weakness, as was illustrated by recent and unfortunate occurrences in some of the Western States. What they were bound to do as Christians, of whatever name, was to manifest the spirit of the Master—yes, even if it were not reciprocated, even if it had to be one-sided. If the members of what was termed the Protestant Protective Association—and he had no doubt many of them were honest and well-meaning, even if mistaken—if they believed they had something better than that possessed by the Roman Catholics, the way to manifest it was in their lives, so that men could take knowledge of them. Those who do God's will, exclaimed Mr. Clark, are all children of our Father in heaven, and he had sufficient hope in the mercy of the Eternal Father, to picture to himself that if God in his mercy permitted him (the speaker) to tread the streets of the New

LOVE BEGETS LOVE. in history can be given than that of the early church. Never was spiritual life more vigorous than when tried on every side by fiercest persecutions. And in more modern times no one can read the history of Philip II. of Spain without being impressed with the utter powerlessness of altering men's religious convictions by religious persecutions. In our own day we have seen how the Salvation Army flourished on persecution, and even if it only take the form of political or commercial ostracism it will just as surely fail of its object as the pains and penalties of death and imprisonment have failed in like efforts. So that if I believe a doctrine to be false, or a religious organization imperfect, and I therefore desire its downfall, the last thing I would think of doing would be to seek to visit penalties of any sort upon those who hold it. To do so would be simply to defeat my own purpose. Moreover, almost invariably,

usalem, he would meet there many with whom he had not in various things seen eye while in this world. In conclusion Mr. Clark said he did not know whether at he had considered it his duty to say it had become the subject of newspaper or other remark, but he intended to take no part in such controversies, but would simply go on with his ordinary tasks and raise the even tenor of his way.

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