

The Weekly Ontario

Thursday, July 9, 1914

TELLING THE PREACHER WHAT HE MUST DO.

It was a somewhat humorous feature of the recent election campaign to find pious politicians of the type of Bob Gamey and T. Herby Lennox, and religious newspapers of the Jack Canuck variety delivering solemn lectures to clergymen about their duty in the pulpit and outside the pulpit, and about the ethics of the ministerial profession generally.

We thought the election would dispose of these turgid tirades, but that seems only to have unloosed further the floodgates of misrepresentation, abuse, and calumny.

The appeal of the clergy was in this case unsuccessful, therefore they would have us believe we should jump to the conclusion that the appeal was wrong.

In the election of 1905 a similar appeal against "the rotten Ross government" succeeded, therefore it was all right for the ministers to "bring politics into the pulpit," on that occasion.

This most of us are not so old that we do not remember prior to the election of 1905 the activities of Rev. D. C. Hossack, at that time a very gifted pastor in the Presbyterian church at North Toronto. His open letter to Hon. Geo. W. Ross was sent out in plate form and printed in all the conservative newspapers in Ontario. Mr. Hossack's sermons at that time were widely quoted and afforded excellent campaign material for James P. Whitney and his followers. The example set by Mr. Hossack was very generally followed by clergymen of all protestant denominations, anglican, methodist, presbyterian and baptist.

Keeping these facts in view, let us ask ourselves these questions—

If it was right for the ministers to "talk politics" in 1905 why is it wrong in 1914?

Were the ministers in 1905 prompted by any action of their church conferences, assemblies or synods, or were they taking their stand merely upon their own responsibility?

Were the ministers of 1914 carrying out the instructions of their church courts?

Who appoints the laymen that compose one-half the membership of the legislative bodies of the churches?

In the present campaign have the ministers been treated fairly, have their words been correctly quoted or their positions been honestly reported?

Has there been anywhere a straightforward attempt to meet the ministers' arguments, or have the issues been clouded by defamatory appeals to the baser passions of men?

Does a minister upon entering his profession relinquish the right of common citizenship in a free country?

Will anyone explain how a minister could be consistent in view of previously declared opinions and the resolutions of his church and remain silent when this question was brought to an issue?

Does anyone of his own knowledge know of an instance anywhere in which a minister used abusive language towards those who did not agree with him?

Does anyone know of an instance where a clergyman attempted to dictate to the members of his congregation as to how they should vote?

Is this alleged dictation of the pulpit anywhere as real or as pronounced as to the dictation of political heelets to their meekly submissive following?

Who is the more likely to offer disinterested and intelligent comment upon public issues, the clergyman with his wide reading, trained mind, and unbiased judgment, or the ward-boozepeddler who knows almost as much about the questions of the day as a cat knows about astronomy?

These are questions that all intelligent fair-minded men should try to answer, and not to jump at conclusions or to be rushed off their feet just because a lot of mud-heads and whiskey-soaks are shouting off the tops of their heads about "preaching politics," "clerical domination," "political pulpites," and "demagogic clergymen."

Leather-lunged, rubbishy ranting is too much a feature of Ontario politics to-day. It proves nothing beyond the stupid patience and easy gullibility of the befogged partisans who permit and listen to that sort of balderdash.

It is interesting to speculate upon the characteristics of this newly evolved parson of the Gooderham-Gamey-Lennox-Jack Canuck school of theology.

He must be a man without any opinions upon any subject of human concern whatever. Or if he holds opinions he must see that they are carefully suppressed or conveyed to the world through the milk and water medium, harmless alike to invalids, children, and sleek-coated politicians. He must tread carefully and lightly, lest the pussy-footed sound disturb the delicate adjustment of the ward-working machinery. His conscience must be of pure india-

rubber, elastic enough to cover and conceal any quantity of Elizabeth Gold Mines stock without destroying the fiber of the conscience. The pulpit we are told by this school is the place for "worship" and "preachin' the gospel" and not for politics.

Our own impression is that the Supreme Being is more concerned about man's living in the right relationship to his fellowmen than He is about man's worship or adulation.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
But the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all"

wrote the poet, Coleridge, and that little quatrain includes a whole library of theology.

It may be that a minister should close his eyes for fear he should see the work of the drink traffic gathering its grisly harvest of blasted lives. Perhaps he should preserve a cowardly silence when he sees the brightest minds filched from the use designed by the Creator to become the slaves of the licensed bar.

This silent, suave, spineless theology may suit the convenience of smooth politicians, but it is not of the sturdy type that will make the church a real power in this Canadian north land, and Canada a power among the nations of the world.

SIR JAMES AND THE DEMOGOGUES

Sir James Whitney, following his Massey Hall speech and his post-election announcement, is again out in characteristic fashion after the offending "demagogic clergies."

There is one excellent feature about Sir James—he seldom leaves any doubt in the mind as to his meaning. In his statement issued to the newspapers yesterday he reiterates his previous assertion and seeks to prove that there is no analogy between the positions assumed by the clergy in 1914 and in 1905. Sir James in the course of his last statement says—

"It is suggested that previous to 1905 I called for the help of the clergy, and that it is inconsistent of me to object their action now. Let us see. Ballots had been switched, burned and otherwise destroyed. Government maladministration of the liquor law had been undisguised, and general devilment had been abroad with reference to the conduct of the election. There was no question of opinion; the facts were well known and had been proved in open day.

"What was the situation the other day? The evils of the liquor traffic and habit were undisputed, but men differed as to the methods to be used in dealing with it. Every person, clerical and lay, in the Province had an undoubted right to express his opinion on the subject, but our contention, and the opinion of the vast majority of the people, was and is that no clergyman was justified in going into his pulpit and denouncing in violent, intemperate and abusive language, all voters who did not see eye to eye with Mr. Rowell as to the remedy which should be applied."

Sir James in his statement misses the point entirely. He utterly ignores the previously declared position of the churches through their conferences and assemblies and of the individual clergymen through years of preaching.

It is quite true, as Sir James says, that "men differed as to the methods to be used in dealing with the traffic in intoxicating liquors. There are many thousands of earnest, sincere temperance men who do not believe in prohibition as a means of dealing with the drink evil. There is plenty of room for honest difference of opinion here.

But all this is entirely aside from the question at issue. Sir James forgets that the Methodist, the Presbyterian and the Baptist churches have not once, but many times, through conference, assembly, or union, declared in the most unequivocal terms in favor of the abolition of the licensed bar. Practically all the ministers in these three denominations have for years been advocating the same principle, because they recognized the bar as the most potent enemy of their work. In taking this stand they were very generally supported by the laymen of their congregations.

Among these three churches officially, among the clergymen and the most prominent lay workers of these three churches, there was no difference of opinion "as to the methods to be used." The only "method" advocated for years for dealing with the liquor traffic, by these churches and these men, was one of abolition and total extermination.

Since such was the case how could the churches and the clergy remain silent, without acting the coward's part, merely because the policy or principle they had collectively and unanimously advocated was introduced by a liberal?

The "method" was the churches' own method. Sir James Whitney refused, not once but many times, to accept that method. He told them to go on working with local opinion. N. W. Rowell took the churches and the clergymen, and the laymen at their word—that they wanted the bar banished.

"You've heard your servant's prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part which the pastor—and also you in your hearts—fervently prayed, silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: "Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!" That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is completed in those pregnant words.

Many thousands more, it must unfortunately be admitted of professed prohibitionists, found the party coils too tightly wrapped about them. They declared to the world their inconsistency and the emptiness of their professions. They did that very easy thing—they found excuses. "The shops," "the Ontario club," "a grit dudge," "the bilingual schools," "Rowell's insincerity,"—there were dozens of excuses lying all about. But after all was it worth while? You who did that sort of thing, argue the question honestly with yourselves and try to ascertain if you have been quite fair, and if all the excuses really out-weigh the sacrifice of a great principle.

When Sir James speaks of the clergy using "violent, intemperate and abusive" language, he cannot truthfully refer to any considerable body of the ministers. There may have been occasional indiscretions or lack of diplomacy upon the part of the clergymen, but as far as we have been able to ascertain the "violent, intemperate and abusive" language was mostly confined to those making slanderous and untruthful attacks upon the occupants of the pulpit. Sir James should either seek to justify his very general attack upon the ministers, or else withdraw it. As it is, it allows a most uncalled for and unfair imputation to go abroad.

MR. N. W. ROWELL

The one man who has a perfect right to be serene to-day is Mr. N. W. Rowell. He made a great fight; he advocated a good cause. He worked prodigiously throughout the campaign, travelling almost the entire Province, and delivering a series of public speeches surpassed in merit by these of no other public man, past or present, in either political party. For three years he has been the able leader of a small Opposition. With less than a score of men behind him in the Legislature he has divided authority with the Government, and has shaped and forced legislation.

The defeat of election day is not to be ascribed to the general, but to the army. For one thing the allies did not come up in time. Night fell and yet they did not come.

Again, let us add, that was not the fault of Mr. Rowell. Any liberal who may have been disposed in the route to direct blame towards the leader ought to bear in mind the fact that if all the temperance people of the Province did not rally to his support yesterday it was not through fault of his, but because the trifling of Liberal leaders in the past with the temperance issue weakened the force of Mr. Rowell's advocacy and enabled his enemies to gain a hearing when they declared that he, too, would trifle with it.

It is quite evident that Liberals who are not temperance men voted against their party, in large numbers, and it is equally evident that temperance men who are not Liberals did not come to the party in large numbers. It was not the leader, but the party, that was distrusted by the great bulk of those who are usually its opponents and who were invited to join with it on the temperance issue.

Mr. Rowell has come back with a slightly increased support in the Legislature. He has made the acquaintance of the people all over the Province, he is the ablest man in the party, he is young in years, and success is for him certain—Toronto Daily Star.

"THE WAR PRAYER"

When we pray for ourselves do we always see what effect the granting of our prayer will produce upon others? How hard it is for us to see more than one side! It remained for Mark Twain, gentle humorist that he was, to show us ourselves as we too often are.

In his article he tells of the young recruits about to march away to war, and of the final assembly in the church, where the minister prayed for victory to the nation's armies. As the prayer closes a white-robed stranger enters moves up the aisle and take the preacher's place then, after some moments of impressive silence he begins:

"I come from the throne—bearing a message from Almighty God! . . . He has heard the prayer of his servant, your shepherd, and will grant it if such be your desire after I his messenger shall have explained to you its import—that is to say, its full import. For it is like unto many of the prayers of men in that it asks for more than he who utters it is aware of—except he pause and think.

"God's servant and yours has prayed his prayer. Has he paused and taken thought? Is it one prayer? No it is two—one uttered the other not. Both have reached the ear of Him who heareth all supplications, the spoken and the unspoken. . . .

"You've heard your servant's prayer—the uttered part of it. I am commissioned of God to put into words the other part of it—that part

which the pastor—and also you in your hearts—fervently prayed, silently. And ignorantly and unthinkingly? God grant that it was so! You heard these words: "Grant us the victory, O Lord our God!" That is sufficient. The whole of the uttered prayer is completed in those pregnant words.

"Upon the listening spirit of God the prayer felt also the unspoken part of the prayer He commanded me to put it into words. Listen!

"O Lord our Father, our young patriots, idols of our hearts, go forth to battle—be Thou near them! With them—in spirit—we also go forth from the sweet peace of our beloved firesides to smite the foe.

"O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the wound'd writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sport of the sun-flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn in travail, imploring thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—for our sakes, who adore thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask of One who is the Spirit of love and who is the ever faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset, and seek his aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and thine shall be the praise and glory now and ever. Amen."

"(After a pause.) 'Ye have prayed it; if ye still desire it, speak!—the messenger of the Most High waits.'"

Wealth in such quantities that its owner has to have armed guards during the day and sleep in an armored bedroom is burdensome rather than pleasurable. Yet while wealthy now to this point, and with not a grasp for more. Maybe when he gets on the other side he will reform, and not want more than his legitimate share.

Last summer, when the hot winds blew and wilted things on every hand, and when the sun in skies of blue, shone down and blistered all the land, we mortals raised a bitter wail, and cried, "In this there is no sense, for all our cherished crops will fail! Oh, drouth disastrous, get thee hence!" Had any moral high-brow guys attempted to convince us then that back of all was purpose wise, we should have jeered and jeered again. But now that theory is fulfilled, for we're informed ten thousand score Ben Davis apple trees were killed, by that fierce drought, to bear no more. Ben Davis trees are standing dead throughout this glad and fertile land, and we regret the things we said because we did not understand. So let's be patient after this when trouble dogs us, close behind, for sorrow's but a cloak of bliss and threatening clouds are silver-lined.

An American exchange printed the following editorial the other day, and it is so directly to the point that it is worthy of reproduction here:

"The most potent factors in the building up the city at the expense of the country are the mail order houses.

"The mail order houses are themselves built up and sustained wholly by the small town and the country.

"The mail order house does not depend on the support of the community in which it is located—because it meets the competition of the department and other stores that advertise. It meets little or no competition in the small town and country merchants do not advertise, while the mail order house does—both by newspaper and catalogue.

"Last year one mail order house did more than \$90,000,000 worth of business—an average of a dollar for each man, woman and child in the United States—and nearly all of it came from the small town and country—money sent away from home town never to return.

"None of the \$90,000,000 came from big cities, because mail order 'bargains' have no attraction for city people—they read so much of 'bargains' in the city papers.

"In a recent speech, Governor Hodges of Kansas told the business men of Kansas City that the best way to compete with the mail order house is by systematic, honest extensive advertising. And he laid down a rule that if every merchant would spend as much, in proportion, of his profits in honest advertising as the mail order houses do, they would have little trouble with the mail order business. "Advertise extensively, and then live up to your advertising," the governor says, "and you will not be troubled with mail order houses. You know you have the goods the people want. Tell them about them."

"The merchant who follows this advice does not fear the mail order house, but courts it as a trade stimulator."

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson II.—Third Quarter, For July 12, 1914.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Mark x, 32-45. Memory Verses, 43-45—Golden Text, Mark x, 45—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

The first part of this lesson concerning His death and resurrection is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, but the second part, concerning the request of James and John and their mother, in Matthew and Mark only. The words "in the way" of verses 17, 32, 52; xl, 8; Acts ix, 2, 17, 27, and elsewhere, while they may generally mean nothing more than on the road, are suggestive of Ps. l, 6; cxli, 1; John xiv, 6, and make one think of the way of peace, the way of the Lord (Luke vi, 10-11, 4), and of what it really means, to follow Him in the way.

This is the third time that He speaks plainly of His sufferings and death and resurrection; but, although His words seem so plain to us, they understood none of these things (Luke xviii, 34), because they knew not the Scriptures concerning His death and resurrection (John xi, 5), having their own thoughts about the kingdom, just as many today know nothing of the second coming of Christ, the distinction between the church of the present age and the kingdom of the next age and the ages to come, because they will not take heed to what is written in the prophets concerning the Son of Man and the kingdom to be set up at His coming in glory to judge the nations and to reign in righteousness (Isa. xxxii, 1, 17; xxxiv, 8; xxxv, 4, 10), but persist in thinking that the kingdom is within us and that all that the great work of redemption is for is to deliver people from hell and get them to heaven.

This is the age of a kingdom postponed because of a rejected Christ and of gathering out from all nations a people to reign with Him, but who must be content now to suffer with Him, live separate from this present evil age, not conformed to it, but so manifesting in it the meekness, lowliness and love of Christ that we shall show something of His life in these mortal bodies and win people to Him. The Holy Spirit has been given especially in this age to testify of a crucified, risen and ascended Christ, who is waiting at the Father's right hand until the number of His elect, waiting, suffering ones, shall have been completed, when He will take us to Himself, reward us for services, appoint our places in His kingdom and bring us back with Him to reign (Acts xvi, 33-38; Thess. iv, 16-18; Col. iii, 4; Rev. v, 9, 10). This is no time for a believer to be seeking great things for himself or his church or his denomination or society or in any way to make himself a name, but with all meekness and meekness and long suffering and patience walk worthy of Him who has called us into His kingdom and glory (Eph. iv, 1, 2; Col. i, 10, 11; I Thess. ii, 12), who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (verse 45).

Even Jeremiah in his day said to his scribe Baruch, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not" (Jer. xiv, 5). As it is a case of self or God and cannot be both, we must persist in attaining to the fullness of the experience of "Not I, but Christ who liveth in me." "Not I, but the grace of God;" "In newness of life, dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" "Delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh;" "Risen with Christ and setting our affection on things above" (Gal. ii, 20; Cor. xv, 10; Rom. vi, 4, 11; II Cor. iv, 10, 11; Col. iii, 1-4).

Neither James nor John nor their mother seemed to understand when they came seeking preferment in the kingdom, and it did seem so out of place when He had just been speaking of His own sufferings and death. Even on the last night, at the passover, as he spoke of one of them betraying Him, they were striving as to which of them should be the greatest, giving Him occasion to say, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke xxi, 21-27). No teacher of man was ever so lonely, misunderstood or unappreciated. There is such a depth of meaning in His words, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. xi, 27). "I live by the Father" (John vi, 57). He spoke of the cup given Him to drink and the baptism of suffering which awaited Him, and asked if they could share it, and they thought that their devotion to Him was such that they could share anything with Him, even to dying with Him, as Peter said (John xiii, 37). They did not understand. How could they when they were so dull as not to receive His plain words about His dying? And when he was arrested that last night and was about to be bound and led away as a prisoner Peter would have delivered Him by his sword if he could.

Oh, how little we understand of what it means to follow Him, to manifest His life, to bear the burden of the meek and lowly One, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered He threatened not, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps (I Pet. ii, 21-23). When people sing, "Surely the captain may depend on me," "Fada, each earthly joy," "Thou, O Christ, art all I want," and other similar words they do not often consider what they are saying, nor to whom they are saying these words, nor how it would be if the last came.

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