

## "The Priests and the Profits"

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be manifested through His disciples. In a very quiet and unheralded fashion, the Church is once again seeking faith to heal the sick. Once again we ask, is it true that the things which Jesus did, we may do also, "and greater things," because he is with the Father? Faith healing, Spiritual healing, Laying hands on the sick, and even Holy unction are struggling to the light. Is the Church to be found in opposition to them all? Would not Jesus seek out the truth in them, and help to let the true Light shine? The witness of the Church in almost all the ages seems to point to this, that God has never entirely withdrawn Himself from using His Church to minister to the bodies as well as the souls of men.

My brothers, would not the exercise of this ministry be one of the strongest influences drawing the minister to those whom he serves, and also of bringing religion into practical life, and daily use? I think it would.

I have time for only one more suggestion, as a means of tiding over the difficult days through which we are passing, and which if found successful, might be developed as occasion required. The priesthood of the laity is a Scriptural truth, which has seldom received the attention it deserves. In view of the threatened shortage of men, may it not be well to test this truth by using more freely our devout laymen in the services of the Church? Indeed I would venture to go further. If the difficulty of providing clergymen for the parishes increases as it bids fair to do, would it be possible, as a temporary expedient, for which there is Scriptural authority, to select the best man in the congregation who, upon being approved by the Bishop, should be made a perpetual Deacon, continuing his usual avocation. When such an arrangement was made the parish would be placed under the superintendency of some available Priest, who could regularly administer the Sacraments and perform marriages. By this method two things would be accomplished: First, the Church would be in touch through such a Deacon with the people, who would supply the living link which is now missing between the laity and the clergy, secondly, the shortage of clergy would be made good. Apart from this I am sure that we should use our laymen to a greater extent than we do. Here I would ask a question. Why is it necessary to clothe a layman in surplice and cassock if he is to take the service in a church? Many have a decided prejudice against wearing them. Surely outside the chancel rails a prayer desk might be placed at which a man in his ordinary clothes might read the Service and the Sermon.

When Gladstone read the Lessons Sunday by Sunday, and when the Governor-General does the same at the Church near Rideau Hall, it is in their ordinary clothes; I wonder on what principle a layman needs a surplice any more to say the Prayers than to read the Lessons?

I have exceeded the space of time allotted to me, and can only, in a few words, touch upon a subject which cannot be excluded from a paper dealing with the modern presentation of the Gospel; namely, our Christian divisions.

The weaknesses, which we have been considering, have in some measure contributed to the formation of Christian bodies outside and apart from the Historic Church. The causes for which they exist must be removed, and the needs which they meet, so far as they are real, must be satisfied within the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Therefore the spirit of criticism must be replaced, by a spirit of discernment, growing out of an earnest and sympathetic study of those causes, and those needs. So may we present the proof of the Divine Mission of our Saviour, who prayed, "that they all may be one," that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me."

I hope it is evident that throughout this paper, I have conceived the great world war to be the dominant factor in the problems, with which I have tried to deal. These problems have been in existence for many years; the evils which we deplore have weakened the Church and curtailed her influence for a long period prior to this awful disaster. But now the world, in the most spectacular and impressive way, has been shown the weak places in her social and religious life. "The earth and the Heaven have been made to tremble, signifying the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Above the rending of world systems and the crash of the falling Empires, we hear the confident assurance—"They shall perish—But Thou. Oh Christ, remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

THE Rector removed his hat and coat and threw himself down in an easy chair, with a sigh of relief. All afternoon he had been driving through mud and snow calling on his widely-scattered parishioners, and now it was Friday evening and he had yet a sermon for Sunday to prepare. A sermon for a mere handful of people, the same little number who gathered week by week,—what was the good of it all?

His wife bustled about placing hot dishes on the table and when all was ready called him to his supper. He rose wearily and moved to his place, but as he sat down again, he felt too tired to eat; he had no appetite for even the dainty meal his six months' bride had prepared for him.

"What's the matter, Will, you look miserable, are you not well?" she asked anxiously, as he toyed with the food before him. He shook his head and she rose and came round to his chair. "Tell me what's the matter to-night?"

He drew her down to his lap and then answered, "No, I'm not ill, but I'm tired, body and soul, too, tired and discouraged. Nearly twelve months here, Dot, and it's the same old grind day after day, small congregations, long drives, petty quarrels, money worries, and buried here in this dead and forgotten place, it's taking the very life out of me, I need a change for a few days, a fresh inspiration. If I could get to the city, hear a few good sermons, meet some of the men and talk things over with them, I would feel better and more like going on, but it's like eating, unless I get some spiritual and mental food soon I shall starve to death in this place."

His wife stooped down and kissed him. "You are tired out, Will, to-night; eat your supper like a good boy and then after a good night's rest, you will feel better," she said.

"No, it's not mere tiredness," he continued, "It's weariness of spirit, more than anything else. I met Parkham—you know him, the Methodist minister—to-night, he has just returned from a week's conference and is full of new enthusiasm. They had quiet days, Bible study, debates on Church problems, and a week of bringing together the men from all over the circuit. That's what I want, some real rousing up, meeting the men of our own Church, something to put fire and new life into me—for no man living can keep giving out, month after month, and keep his enthusiasm up, unless he has some inspiration and help."

His wife rose and went back to her place at the table, "but you've had a very hopeful year, for your first year in the ministry, besides, a couple of the men from your college year came down and also the Bishop two months ago, when he came to confirm the little class you prepared," she answered. "The visit of your friends and the Bishop should keep you in touch with things."

He smiled as he looked across at her worried little face. "The Bishop! a lot of inspiration in his visit. He landed in at one o'clock, conducted the Confirmation service at three o'clock, and was away shortly after five. It was nothing but rush. What do we see of our Bishops? The only thing I ever see or hear of him, is a hurried visit if I have a class and a letter to remind me, 'Dear Sir, your apportionment is overdue, please attend to this matter at once.' Mind you, Dot, I don't blame the Bishop, for he is a fine man, and is being worked to death, but we ask too much of him. Look at the size of even the smallest diocese in Kalarie; the Bishop can't see or visit a parish more than once a year and as for getting in touch with his people, he simply hasn't the time. They have to be financial, business, organizing head of everything. In the Early Church, the Apostles asked the Church to appoint men to look after the ministrations of the tables. We ask their successors to not only do this but largely raise the supplies as well. What do our Laity know of their Father in God, a tired looking man, all in robes, who appears in the midst of them, perhaps once a year, and as for spiritual help, how many of us younger clergy would think of taking our trials, difficulties and problems to him?"

"But, Will," his wife interrupted him, "what are Bishops for, isn't it to help and minister to their people? We call him, Father in God!"

"That's what they are supposed to be, Dot, but they haven't time. Look at the size of the dioceses in Kalarie, even the smallest; our Bishops should see more of the clergy and the people under them,

but they can't. We need smaller dioceses, a new method of conducting the financial business of the diocese, so that our Bishops, like those of old, can devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The Church doesn't want to see a successful business man at its head so much as a spiritual leader. One is sorry for the Church that expects so much from them, for the Bishops who are all overworked and overdriven, and more sorry for clergy and people, 'the hungry sheep who too often look up and are not fed.'"

Before his wife could answer there came a knock at the door and the Rector rose and opened it. "Good night, Mr. Burson, the mail came in as I was leaving the station, so I brought your's along with me," and the speaker, a neighbouring farmer, handed several letters to the clergyman. "Good night, parson," and he disappeared as the Rector shouted his thanks after him.

Returning to the table, his wife and he were soon busy in reading the very welcome letters that had come. Suddenly as he read over one of them, he gave an exclamation of pleasure, and his wife looked up from her letter to see his face shining and the look of weariness gone.

"What's the news, dear?" she asked.

"Why, the best in the world, the very thing I said I wanted. A change and some inspiration is coming. This is a notice of the coming Synod to be held next month. Isn't that fine? Just think, Dot, my first Synod, to meet all the men, to hear the stirring talks, to enjoy the services at the Cathedral, hear splendid sermons from our big men, the debates, the discussion of our problems, a few days of spiritual and intellectual uplift, to get in the midst of men from all over the Synod who meet to pray and plan and help one another, oh, Dot, it's going to be grand."

For the rest of the evening they talked of nothing else, and during the weeks that followed, the coming Synod was the one theme of conversation. It was his first year after ordination and this would be his first Synod, and he looked forward to a time of blessing and inspiration. Fancy painted rosy pictures of this assembling of the priests of the Church under the head shepherd, a time of revival and pentecost.

One morning in May, he left for the city, his wife with him, to spend the three days there with friends. As the train moved forward both the young people grew more and more excited, the change, the rest and the looked-for Synod all helped to fill every minute with pleasure. When the train stopped at the first station beyond his parish he hurried out on the platform and there met a couple of the clergy of the district who were just boarding the train.

"Hello, Hinks, going up to Synod?" he cried as he shook hands with them, and leading the way, led them back where his wife was seated.

"Oh, yes, it's a habit I've got into, but why, the Lord only knows, as it's the dearest, duldest three days I spend in the year," Hinks replied.

"Dearest—dullest!" he looked at him in surprise. "The Synod, you mean, you are joking, are you not?" Burson asked.

"Joking, not by a jugful, as you'll soon find out. This is your first visit, isn't it? Why, I often say that if there was another flood, I'd ask the Bishop to at once call a Synod, as we would all be dry enough there." He paused a moment as he saw the look of surprise and disappointment on the younger man's face. "Still I must not be too hard on it. I remember my first Synod, but, you will find things out for yourself. Anyway, it's a good chance to meet the boys; one can stand even the 'Canon's report,' as the Dean says, 'for that.'"

The men began to talk on other subjects and Burson soon forgot Hinks' words. After all, he was only a wet blanket; the Synod would not be as he described it.

When the train reached the city, the clergy left them to hurry to their hosts and Burson calling a taxi drove to the friend's where he intended to stay. He had the afternoon and evening free so that after luncheon, they went shopping, looking up acquaintances in town and enjoying themselves. Next morning the Synod was to open and Burson made his way to the Cathedral for the opening service at eleven o'clock. As the service began he looked about the great building and was amazed to find only a handful of clergy present. In the restfulness of the quiet Cathedral and the beauty of the Holy Communion he forgot all about this and other things. To his disappointment there was no sermon and he wondered why, but thought possibly it was because of the fewness of those present. When the service had finished and he made his way outside to the Cathedral Hall, his surprise returned tenfold, to find a large number of the clergy gathered in little groups, chatting, and many of them smoking in the open

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