A LECTURE

By Rev. E. J. Grant Before the Students of the New Brunswick University, Fredericton.

On "The Church in Relation to Political and Social Questions"

A Condensed Report from the St John Sun of Feb. 5th.

The lecturer after expressing his appreciation of the responsibility of his position and his pleasure at seeing that the New Brunswick University recognized the fact that the church stands related to the questions which most vitally affect the well-being of man, said the term "church," as he would use it, stood for the local organizations collectively of the various christain bodies. The church and state, he held, as institutions, are separate and distinct, with their functions at opposite poles. Nothing ought to be more self evident than the fact that the science of economics, the deciding of trade relations and the shaping of naval policies, form no part of the church's business. "If I were speaking of the duty of the state in relation to the church," said Mr. Grant, "I should say that its first duty was to make the divorce absolute, which no doubt it would do, did it but have the courage of its convictions in the matter"

But while holding firmly to the position that to preach the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, and of personal salvation is the supreme business of the church, and while claiming that she is in this way powerfully affecting the state indirectly, Mr. Grant held that she has other relations and other duties which more immediately and more directly affect the state. She owes to the state and to society to see to it that her members shall be upright, honorable, patriotic citizens. And it must be confessed with sadness that many of those who profess to have experienced the renewing power of christianity and have become members of the church are far from being honest citizens. This fact can be accounted for only by supposing either that these men are mistaken in regard to having experienced the saving power of christianity, or else that the church has been criminally negligent in teaching her members their duties and responsibilities as citizens. Among other forms of political immorality that of bribery has become fearfully prevalent in elections in this country, and it is constantly on the increase; it is coming to be a moral pestilence, that threatens the very foundation of responsible government, a loathesome disease that is inoculating with its deadly virus, the veins, arteries and whole nervous system of the body politic. And this crime against the state, for which a man ought to be punished with imprisonment and with disfranchisement for life, is painfully prevalent among church members as well as among others. Not only among the poor and the ignorant members but the well-to-do and intelligent, even the pillars of the church, some of them, have not moral principle enough to withstand a dollar bill that may be had for the simple matter of casting a vote. That men can be guilty of such a crime against the state and still remain in fellowship with the church is a terrible reproach, and simply convicts the church of the charge frequently made, that she is worldly selfish and sadly lacking the spirit of the Master, and the self-sacrificing devotion of the apostles and early christians. In view of such a condition of things one is prepared to appreciate the startling words recently uttered by Rev. Dr. Strong, who says: "Our churches are growing, our missionary operations are extending, our benefactions swelling, and we congratulate ourselves upon our progress, but we have only to continue making the same kind of progress long enough and our destruction is sure." The pulpits of the church are, for the most part, filled by men, who are honest, intelligent sincere, and must be held to be deeply interested in the welfare of the community, and cannot be ignorant of the fact that the church is honeycombed by this terrible evil; but to account for the fact that sermons against it are about as rare as snowflakes in July, I cannot undertake to do.

The church controls no inconsiderable portion of the papers and periodicals which find their way into most of the homes in the land, and are read by perhaps ninety per cent. of the membership of the church; but how often do you find these journals taking hold of this or any other question of political immorality with anything like a vigorous and intelligent grip? Of course the time at my disposal forbids more than a brief reference to any of the great political evils calling for prompt and vigorous action on the part of the church. That the traffic in strong drink is the cause of most of the suffering, poverty and crime in this country is a fact that cannot be denied, that no one pretends to deny. And yet this fearful scourge, so destructive of our national wealth, so fraught with sorrow to our homes, so appalling in its blasting effects upon society; this fearful iniquity, whose throat is an open sepulchre, under whose lips is the poison of asps; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; whose feet are swift to shed blood; in whose ways are destruction and misery, and before whose eyes there is no fear of God, nor regard for man; this destroyer of wealth, of happiness, and of honor; is by the will of the people given a legal standing in this country for the sake of the revenue derived from it, but beyond the passing of feeble and often meaningless resolutions at public meetings the church does nothing to suppress this fearful scourge.

I say that so far as the form and functions of government are concerned, with matters of political economy, fiscal policies and purely trade questions, the church has nothing to do.

But I contend that when great moral principles are violated in the conduct of public affairs, when great social wrongs are being perpetrated upon the innocent and helpless members of society, the church not only has a right to be heard, but it becomes her imperative duty to make her influence felt, even to the extent of dictating to governments and to kings what the state shall do and shall not do in regard to such questions. Imagine for a moment the obliteration of the divisions in the church of this country, and think of all the christian people in the land united in one great body, and all determined to put an end to this deadly evil; could not such a body dictate the policy of the state in regard to this traffic?

Well, I submit that however far apart the different christian bodies may choose to be in regard to the matter of interpretation and church polity, there is no reason why they should not all unite against this common foe. They ought to unite; they must unite, if not in the spirit of love and self-sacrifice for the defence of the helpless, then for the less worthy reason of self-defence. It is marvellous that the church should have so long tolerated this most deadly and appalling scourge of society, but the fact is (and we might as well confess it) that even at this hour the rank and file of the church membership are comparatively indifferent in the matter, and if here and there a leader in the church undertakes to grapple with the evil of the saloon, he will find the church disposed to grapple with him. While we have claimed, and do claim, that the church is the grandest institution that exists among men; the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; that she has done, and is doing, incomparably more to uplift and bless the world than any other force known to man; while gladly recognizing and strongly emphasizing this fact, we are at the same time forced to admit that she has failed and is failing to marshal her forces against this most destructive and deadly foe of the race.

Many even of the most prominent men in the church are dominated by selfishness rather than by the spirit of self-sacrifice for the general good. It is of course impossible to eradicate the saloon evil or any other evil from society without antagonizing that element of society that is disposed to do wrong; the boycott in business is the most effective weapon of self-defence in the hands of this class, and it is effective because so many respectable men, prominent in business and for the most part also in the church, have not the moral courage, have not enough of the spirit of self-sacrifice, to stand up against this force, so the few who have, undertaken to lead in this struggle, relying upon the church for support, have learned to their sorrow that the church was not prepared to stand by them. This, I take it, has been the experience of every one who has ever been prominent in a crusade against any of the evils that afflict society.

The church must change her attitude towards the great political evils; she must make it impossible for men who give or take bribes to remain in her communion; she must demand that her pulpits deal more sparingly in theological dogma and in religious platitudes, and betake themselves with greater earnestness to the task of applying the Sermon on the Mount and the teachings of the New Testament generally to the conduct of public affairs. She must require her press to give less space to story telling and more space so inculcating the necessity of religious dealings in all the relations of life. These religious journals have been for too long a time coming into the homes of people with doses of soothing syrup, when they should have come with the surgeon's knife. The time has come when the church must speak out from her pulpits and through her press against the policy of the state in legalizing this iniquitous traffic. She must teach both by precept and example that bribery is a crime; that abject slavery to party is degrading to manhood and prejudicial to the best interests of the state; that to amass wealth for wealth's sake is not the noblest of ambitions; that to outstrip the others in the gaining of place and the grasping of power, does not necessarily mean success in life. The church has too long kept silent while these deadly evils and false conceptions have been insidiously creeping into the fabric of our social, political and national life. I do not wish the cynic to take comfort from any remark of mine in regard to the church; for with all her imperfections she is beloved of God, and of every man whose heart is in sympathy with the purpose of Christ's coming, for the accomplishment of which purpose He brought the church into being.

I claim to be second to none in love for the Church of Christ, and for this reason I am anxious that she should be ever increasingly powerful in her influence against all unrighteousness, and ever increasingly sympathetic towards the wrongs and sufferings of the poor. That the laboring men, especially in the large centres of population, are not as universally in sympathy with the church as is most desirable they should be, must be admitted; that these men make serious charges against the church is well known, and that many of these charges are not without a basis of truth, we might as well frankly confess.

The church has been more or less faithful in preaching Christ as the Saviour of the soul from sin, but it is to be feared she has largely failed in applying the principle of the gospel to the ills of society. She has been earnest in exhorting men to prepare for the kingdom that is to come, but weak in shaping the kingdom of Christ that now is. She has been strong in doctrinal teaching, but weak in practical living; fervent in spirit but not sufficiently diligent in the business of visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and in keeping herself unspotted from the world.

We realise that the church needs to be more practical, but find some difficulty to make suggestions that might be helpful. The struggle is between capital on the one side and labor on the other. What the laborers are contending for is, that they shall be allowed to enter the struggle of life on an equality of opportunity; or in other words, they contend their poverty is not a reason why they should be unjustly treated, or taken advantage of by those who have it in their power to take advantage of them.

The righteousness of the contention is too manifest to need argument. The only thing for the church to consider, is, how she may assist the laborer in securing fair and honest treatment at the hands of employers. The solution of the problem seems to lie in the direction of some measure of co-partnership between employes and employers.

There seems to be no good reason why there should not be formed, in all centres of population, a committee consisting of one or more of the best men, in each church, to meditate between these two contending parties, such a committee as would command the confidence of both. It might not be impracticable for such a body to be vested by the legislature with a limited amount of authority, so much at least as to enable them, if necessary, to ascertain the annual profits of any business concern, and in cases where employes are not receiving a fair share of the profits to use their influence with the employers. If such a suggestion is at all possible, it is easy to see many directions in which such a body of men might be of great service to society. It might easily be in touch, for example, with the public schools, and wherever there is a lad found who has the ability to take and the ambition to secure an education, they might do much to assist such.

Poverty I contend, should not be allowed to stand in the way of worthy and ambitious youths obtaining the fullest development of their mental powers.

One thing at least is clear, the "social problem" is one of great magnitude; it has in recent years come into great prominence in the thinking of all classes; it will not down; it must be solved; the church must be the most powerful factor in its solution, or else the church must see long stand aside and witness such resolutions, such upheavals, such rendings of the whole social structure as have never yet been experienced in the history of the race. The spirit of social revolution is in the air; its forces are already in motion; its mighty tread shakes the foundations of the social fabric; the movement is colossal in dimensions; it is flushed with expectancy; it throbs with the wrongs and sorrows of the centuries. The masses cannot much longer be held in check by the authority of the classes. The only question is whether this revolution, which is inevitable, is to be a peaceable and orderly movement under the leadership of the church, and characterized by the spirit of love and mutual good and co-operation between capital and labor, or whether it is to be dominated by the enemies of the church and characterized by the spirit of mutual hatred and revenge between these two contending forces.

All people will yet come to the feet of the Christ; all nations will yet call Him blessed; but whether or not there are to be upheavals and violent rendings of society before the blessed day of universal peace shall be ushered in depends, I think, on whether or not she can and will rise immediately to meet the emergency now crowding upon her.

What will we do to help the church to realize the fulfillment of the purpose which brought the Son of God to our world, clothed in flesh, to be crucified for our sins?

Many of my hearers are young men who are here for a few years with a view of securing the best possible discipline and development of their mental powers, each one ambitious, no doubt, to make the most of his opportunities of fitting himself for the struggle of life, so soon to be entered upon. Not one of you would deliberately choose to be a failure in that struggle.

I may certainly assume that nothing short of the highest and most enduring success possible to you would satisfy the undergraduate in this university. Your danger lies in a wrong conception of what constitutes the best and most enduring success. Not the one who shall make the highest marks in his course here; not the one who shall attract most attention to himself by the brilliancy of his gifts; not the one who shall be most admired by the world, will be necessarily the most successful in the struggle of life. But rather the one who shall strike heaviest and most persistent blows against wrong; the one who shall strive most nobly and manfully to influence the thought and direct the conduct of his fellows toward the right; the one who shall do most to further the cause of the weak against the strong; the one in whose breast the purest thoughts, the most unselfish motives and the noblest purposes shall find an abiding place, is the one who, whether he shall be known or unknown to fame, will achieve the most desirable and the most enduring success in life.

A PRECIOUS TRUTH FORCIBLY ILLUSTRATED.

Some time since, as I was stepping into the train at Newcastle, a gentleman came up to me and said he was going my way, and if I did not object he would take his seat in the same compartment, as he had been wanting to see me. I was very glad to have his company. He was good enough to say that he had met with a story a little while before which he thought might serve me. A friend of his living some few miles from Newcastle was walking along a railway siding going from the main line to a colliery, when he looked down upon a roughly-built cottage, and noticed that the daylight showed through the loose tiles on the roof. He wondered if anybody could be living in a place that looked so cheerless, and coming around to the front he found an old woman and her grown up daughter. At once he said within himself that he would see the place made more comfortable before the winter came, and then hurried on his way. But the good purpose was forgotten, and he never thought of the place again until one morning, some few weeks after, he drew up his blind, and looked out to find some two or three inches of snow on the ground. At once his heart smote him for his forgetfulness. He had that day to go to Newcastle, and it occurred to him that at any rate a pair of blankets would do something towards adding to the comfort of the couple. He reached the house with the big brown paper parcel, and thought he would have the pleasure of taking them himself. As he passed the window the old woman was looking out, and he held up the parcel, thinking she would understand that he was bringing something for her. But she only frowned angrily and shook her head. He opened the door, when the old woman bade him begone; she did not want to buy any of his goods, she said, and slammed the door against him. "Why," he said, "she thinks I want to sell them! No wonder she is so vexed, needing them so badly. I must make her understand that it is a gift." He opened the door and got in. More fiercely than ever she bade him begone. He saw that she was stone deaf, and her daughter was not at home. What could he do? To leave the parcel would only be to have it flung after him in the snow.

"I will show her what it is," he said to himself; perhaps she will understand then," and he untied the parcel.

But the sight of the warm blankets only made her more conscious of her need and her poverty, and she turned away indignantly: "Why don't you go away? I have told you I don't want them."

What could he do? He took one out and held it up full length and breadth, and smiled and nodded his head, but it seemed only like the insinuating wiles of some resolute peddler, and aggravated her the more.

"Why don't you go away when I tell you," she cried.

Then yet another effort suggested itself. Taking the blanket he threw it right around her and burst into a hearty laugh.

Then the meaning of it all flashed upon her. Looking up, almost afraid to ask the question, she asked, "For me?" He nodded his head and smiled.

"A gift?" she asked again, her hope growing bolder. Again he nodded his head.

"A gift for me!" she repeated to herself. She stroked it with her hands and felt the warmth of it, then laughed and cried for very joy; and grasped his hands and thanked him with all her heart, whilst the tears streamed down her wrinkled cheeks.

Alas that our blessed Master should have such trouble to force his gifts upon us! Alas that we are so deaf, so blind to his great love! I will give you rest, saith he. Take it. Wrap it about you. Rest in it with adoring gratitude. A gift—a gift for me!—Mark Guy Pearse.

FAITH IN HUMAN NATURE.

Let us never lose faith in human nature, no matter how often we are deceived. Do not let the deceptions destroy confidence in the real honest, goodness, generosity, humanity, and friendship that exist in the world. I have lost twenty-five per cent. of all I have ever made in lending money and indorsing notes; and have incurred generally the enmity of those I have helped because I did not keep it up. But every once in a while there was somebody who did return in such full measure the credit for the help that was rendered, that faith was kept alive and the beauty and the goodness of our human nature were made evident. I have had appointed about a thousand men to employment which gave them support and a chance to climb to positions of greater responsibility and trust if they had the inclination and ability. About nine out of ten of them threw stones at me because I did not do better for them, and yet there are a hundred or so who, by the exercise of their own ability, their own grasp of the situation, have gone on to the accomplishment of such high ambitions and successes, and have appreciated in so many ways the help extended to them by helping others, that again my faith in human nature remains undiminished.—Chauncey M. Depew.

THE CORNER-STONE OF CHARACTER.

Over half a century has passed since a young man left his country home to make his own way in the world, with no capital but his mother's training, and her parting words were, as she pressed a Bible to his heart, "My son, you will be known by the company you keep, and this book—well read—will lead you into such companionships as will make life a blessing to yourself and others." It has been well said that mothers make the men of this world, and the saints of the next—and this demonstrates that "love is the greatest thing in the world," as it insures a heaven here, as the preface to one that will last forever.

A true mother's love is the cornerstone of character building.

Nothing can take its place. It can safely be assumed that all the men whose names will live forever—here as well as yonder—were the sons of christian mothers who gave the key note to the music of their lives, long before the stern duties were performed that made them famous. Young men, never forget that character is the only thing you can carry with you out of this world, and that it is the only thing that cannot be bought and sold in the markets.

If a mother's love has been abused and her teachings unheeded in the past, the company you keep will reveal it, not only to yourself but to all your companions, and the sooner you honor her memory in your character building, the sooner the Son of God will be ready to adopt you into his family.—Young Men's Era.

HOW TO REACH THE PEOPLE.

The wonder is that the people go to some churches at all. I was in one lately where there was a little talk by the pastor about a revival. Sitting on a back seat I comprehended the reason of failure at a glance. Young men were there—the members of the church passed them in the aisles without recognition. There was no cordiality, no hearty handshake and "God bless you!" The pastor himself did not set the example. Oh, what is the use of talking about a revival in such a church? There's a more cordial welcome for those young men at any one of the four gates of hell than in that church. They will be welcome at the dance, welcome at the theatre, welcome at the card-table, welcome at the rum-shop. Cordiality everywhere but in the church of God! There are churches in this land, thank God, where a young man cannot show himself, without a dozen cordial hand grasps and a dozen "God bless you!" falling on his ear.

When such cold, worldly, heartless churches have wailed out, "Why don't the people come to church?" until they die out altogether, some "little one of God will become a thousand" who has learned the lesson, "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit," saith the Lord. Let us begin anew. Go for every sinner you see. Get them to Christ. Keep the prayer meeting hot. Make it a refuge for sinners seeking salvation. Stop your wailing! Lift that shout of victory like Jehoshaphat's army, even before the battle comes on!—Chaplain McCabe, in Zion's Herald.

Evil, once manfully fronted, ceases to be evil; there is generous battle-hope in place of dead, passive misery; the evil itself has become a kind of good.—Carlyle.

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No sound, no echo; no fuel, no fire.

A sanctified heart is vastly better than a silver tongue.

Christ is only to be seen in His own light.

Many seek salvation who never seek the Saviour.

You need to be strong to cope with the strong.

Many rob God who fear to rob man.

It needs an eternity to unravel the enigmas of time

The name of Jesus may be familiar to the lip while the spirit of Jesus is a stranger to the heart

Though lacking a perfect creed or a perfect character we may have a perfect Christ.

O witnesses for God and right,
Yield not to doubt or sorrow;
The truths which men deny today
Shall sway the world tomorrow.

Turners Falls, Mass.

Literary Note.

The *Missionary Review of the World* for February contains some very noteworthy articles on the people and missions of the Chinese Empire. Dr. W. P. Mears contributes a most valuable paper on "The Religious History of China"—a history which offers a terrible warning and object lesson to Christendom. "The Taoist Religion," about which comparatively little is known by most Christians, is briefly but ably described by Andrew T. Sibbald. Dr. W. A. P. Martin, President Emeritus of Peking University, contributes a paper on "The Empress Dowager of China," and Dr Gracey one upon "The Result to Missions in China of the Chino-Japan War." The illustrated article this month is another narrative of one of "The Miracles of Missions" from the pen of Dr. Pierson, the Editor-in-Chief. He graphically describes the wonderful story of Dr. McKay's work in Formosa, Japan's newly acquired possession. Other articles of special interest in this issue of the *Review* on "Brazilian Notes" by Dr. Geo. W. Chamberlain, and "The Development of Conscience among Native Christians" by H. Marzoiff. This number also contains Dr. Leonard's carefully prepared "Tables of Statistics of the Missionary Societies of Europe." Published monthly by Funk & Wagnalls Co., 30 Lafayette Place, New York. $2.50 a year.

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It is time that a little more stress was laid on simple honesty. It is not every man who can be a great saint or a mighty preacher. But every man can be faithful in his work.—J. F. Clarke.

Dr. H. F. Merrill.

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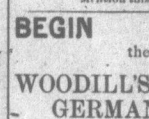

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