

The Weekly Ontario

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W. H. Morton, J. O. Herity, Business Manager, Editor-in-Chief.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1915.

THE PREACHER AND THE CHURCH.

Mr. J. W. Johnson M.P.P., has upon several occasions of late been severely reprimanding the preachers of Belleville in public addresses because of their alleged indifference to the national cause and their lack of patriotic initiative and endeavor in this time of supreme effort to preserve civilisation and christian ideals.

We agree with Mr. Johnson that it would be most reprehensible for our clergy to maintain a cowardly or apathetic silence when so much that is dear to the nation and to the church is at stake. But we fear that Mr. Johnson has been drawing hasty conclusions and speaking without knowledge. If he were but to read the announcements of subjects for the sermons in the Saturday issues of our daily papers, he would at once ascertain that there is rarely a Sunday passes over in any of the churches but in one or more of the sermons the speaker discourses upon patriotic themes. Some of the best public addresses we have heard since the beginning of the war have been delivered by the pastor of Bridge Street church and the rector of Christ Church. Two ministers who, recently left the city were notably active in work along this line. We refer to Rev. A. R. Sanderson and Rev. W. G. Clarke.

We are not aware that any clergyman in Belleville has refused at any time an invitation to address a meeting for patriotic purposes. And it would scarcely be reasonable to expect the preacher to thrust himself forward where he had not been asked to take part in the program.

Mr. Johnson has we believe touched upon a principle of clerical conduct that is perfectly sound. We ought to hear from our ministers far more frequently than we do upon the live questions of the day and especially where a moral issue is involved.

With no desire to revive a somewhat acrimonious controversy we would however remind Mr. Johnson that when our preachers attempted to do this very thing in the election campaign of June 1914, they were plainly told that it was dangerous to discuss anything more modern than Noah's ship-building experience or the Israelitish pilgrimage. The pulpites were threatened, bamboozled and bully-ragged for butting in to the sacred realm of provincial politics, while every bleary-eyed bar-booster was delivering omniscient lectures on proper ministerial conduct and the decadence of the twentieth century pulpit.

It requires no courage whatever to get up in public in Ontario and berate the Germans and discuss the various issues of the war, for in this there is almost absolute unanimity among our citizenship. But, it did require real backbone and bravery for the ministers to come out in 1914 and publicly express opinions contrary to those advocated by one of our great political parties.

We consider that Mr. Johnson was wrong in castigating the clergy for their attitude in that election. We think he is right in expecting from them much interest and activity along patriotic lines just now, because the war involves not only national but deep moral issues as well.

To adopt an expression from the theatrical world, the churches have not for some time past been "playing to good business." A census of church attendance in Belleville would probably reveal that on the average not twenty-five per cent. of our population is to be found at the various places of worship at any of the regular morning or evening services. A census might also further reveal that fully half our population rarely if ever are found within church walls.

Then if, without any desire to appear cynical, we begin to analyse motives, and omit from the count those who attend church for business purposes, or because it is socially the proper thing to do, or to display or examine millinery—if we counted only those who were there strictly from interest in the service itself, the percentage might be still further reduced. The mechanical and work-a-day part of our citizenship would we fear be very largely conspicuous by its absence.

And yet our churches are all beautifully

finished, the services are made attractive by excellent and costly musical embellishments; the local ministers are all men of culture, wide experience, good speaking ability, earnest, sincere hard-working, and men who lead exemplary lives.

Why does the message they deliver not appeal to a greater number and more profoundly influence the community in which they so earnestly labor?

Last winter Dr. Gordon, the apostle of Christian Citizenship, came to Belleville and in less than a week, hundreds were being turned away from the largest church auditorium in the city because there was no more room inside. How did Dr. Gordon bring about this result? It is easy to say he was a sensationalist and had a certain gift of oratory. But night after night there were many staid business and professional men in regular attendance to whom sensationalism and the tricks of the orator would have no appeal.

Looking beneath the surface you would find that the real reason for Dr. Gordon's success was centered round the fact that he lived in the year 1915.

Theologians have been so given to burrowing in the dead past or standing in awe-inspired contemplation of the future that the present has been ignored or forgotten. In this they have receded very far indeed from the plain teaching of the Man of Nazareth.

We read with great interest the reports of the debate in the Anglican General Synod of Canada in which some of the most scholarly men of the Church of England argued upon the propriety of retaining in the revised Book of Common Prayer what are known as the "minatory clauses" of the Athanasian Creed. The minatory clauses are, in brief, a statement that eternal punishment is the lot of the person who does not believe all the various articles of this man-made confession of faith.

What seemed to us the most remarkable feature about the entire controversy, which extended over several days, was the fact that not one of the learned debaters had the courage to express his belief in the doctrine of eternal torment, although he fought for its retention as a part of the established creed for his people.

It would be interesting to ascertain just where the other churches and the clergy of other denominations stand in regard to this same article of the creed which affirms a belief in the doctrine of everlasting punishment.

It has been many years since we have heard what used to be called a "hell-fire sermon." The minister no longer attempts to frighten his auditors into leading a better life by realistic descriptions of the torments endured by the lost, or by picturing the rewards of the faithful. It gradually dawned upon them that the religious life, that was religious only because of fear or cupidity, possessed no virtue whatever.

There are no doubt many who still profess to hold to the doctrine of eternal torment, and many more who actually do think they believe in it. But it is beyond question that there is now little real popular belief in such a dogma, otherwise we would see a vast difference in the individual conduct where such true belief existed. The believer would spend much of his time in earnestly imploring and beseeching his loved ones to avoid the wrath to come by also professing belief.

It is a debatable question whether the clergy who no longer believe in the doctrine of eternal torment, and who now conveniently ignore the subject, ought to come out in their true colors and tell the people exactly where they stand. Our own impression is that dissimulation and pretence should have no place either in theology or in the pulpit. The church would it seems to us gain immensely in prestige by candor and straightforward methods.

As we stated above we consider that the church lives too much for the past and for the future and too little for the present. In that way it misses becoming the moving, vital force that it should be. Twelve hundred recently abandoned churches in the state of Kansas tell us that declining church attendance inevitably leads.

We would like to see that doctrine about future punishment expunged from the statement of creed of all our churches, and something substituted about present punishment. It might be expressed in this way—"We are not punished FOR our sins, but BY our sins." This is quite as scriptural and much more reasonable than what is contained in the Athanasian Creed.

Do our ministers and theologians teach and emphasize that sin is punished inevitably, absolutely, relentlessly in the present world? If so we have never heard the teaching promulgated with any prominence. Yet the scriptural warrant for such teaching is far more extensive and clear than for the disputed translations

in regard to everlasting torment.

A man cannot deviate in the slightest from the eternal laws of truth, virtue and rectitude, and not be punished to just the extent of his deviation, any more than he can violate the laws of health with impunity and not suffer in physical vigor.

We have merely stated the law in outline which can be proved with infinite elaboration and detail. But here we have disclosed a field that is almost untrodden by our clergymen and preachers. And that we believe is why the influence of the church is not greater than it is today. It is not as much as it should be a present and vital force in the lives of men. If it were, the ten churches of Belleville would be far too small to contain the crowds who would resort to them for spiritual strengthening and guidance.

With Mr. Johnson we believe the clergy of Belleville should be taking a foremost position in this patriotic movement. But their activities should not begin and end with the war and its allied issues. Upon every public question where there is a moral consideration prominent we should have the benefit of their counsel and advice. Their special training, habits of study and devotion to the loftier ideals make the clergy valuable guides and safe counsellors in the ever present and eternal conflict between evil and righteousness.

KEEPING THE FAITH.

In these dark days of "scraps of paper" and national dishonor, history will some day record as one of the very brightest spots, the story of Belgium's national integrity. Brave little Belgium has won undying fame as a bulwark of democratic civilization. Her people were prepared to die rather than be false to her national engagements. Belgium has kept faith with the Powers which guaranteed her freedom and her national existence. She is worthy to be free.

When Belgium refused to barter away her national honor to the insolent Prussians who had engaged to defend it, she put civilization under a debt of honor to her which must be discharged to the full. Belgium kept the faith. On their part, the Allies will keep the faith, and Belgium will one day be restored to her national possessions, her honor bright and unsullied, her people proud and unafraid. No nation can give back the lives of her gallant children who died that their country might live. Her only recompense for their loss will be the knowledge that they did not die in vain. Whatever reparation can be made for the material damage done her will be exacted to the full from the dishonored Hun. Belgium will take an honored place among the nations of the earth and posterity will not forget that she risked death rather than tarnish her honor.

What of Bulgaria? All that she has, and is, she owes to Russia and Great Britain. To Russian arms and the good-will of Great Britain she owes her freedom from the Turks. The clarion voice of a British Liberal—Gladstone—aroused a nation to action, rescued a people from massacre and pointed the way to make a Province a Nation. If Bulgaria joins the Central Powers in their war against democracy, if her people yield to an alien King, and with almost unparalleled baseness enter the lists against those who made them what they are—a free people—they are not worthy of freedom. Another dark chapter of national dishonor will have been written and Bulgaria will have earned the epithet "unspeakable" which Gladstone coined for her oppressor, the Turk.

Better for Bulgaria to keep the faith, to live with honor than to die in dishonor, for surely does she commit national suicide—win or lose—if she is false to the friends who made her a Nation.

"And their hosts shall be dust in that day, And their seed without power."

The latest published lists of Prussia's casualties, up to Sept. 28, brings the total loss of that kingdom to 1,916,148 for thirteen months of war; over 147,000 a month. To this, when considering Germany, must be added the Saxon, Bavarian and Wurtemberg losses, the naval losses of Prussian officers and non-commissioned officers in the Turkish service. Germany has, therefore, lost well over 3,000,000 men. Another year will swell her casualty list to quite twice as much. The percentage of her wounded who recover has been given by her surgeons as between 50 and 60 per cent. At the outbreak of the war her total available fighting men was stated by her own experts to be 9,000,000. She is therefore within sight of the day when reserves in men can no longer be counted on in adequate numbers. This has always been foreseen by her General Staff, but Germany counted on her strategy to overcome the difference before she had to face the question of odds against her. Her strategy has failed. Every battle costly in men she fights now brings her ultimate disaster more sharply into view, and increases the odds against her.

While the governments of all the belligerent countries have shown a not unnatural desire to conceal, or at any rate to minimize, enemy suc-

cesses, the vagaries of the Berlin authorities in this respect have outrivalled anything which the governments of the Allies have been guilty of. As in so many other things, so here, has Berlin over-reached itself. The London Times has caught it issuing a denial of a Russian victory seven hours before the report in question has been issued by Petrograd.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of Sept. 8 last the Wolff Agency, now the chief German news (?) distributor, issued a denial of an official Petrograd telegram, which, however, was not actually issued by the Russian authorities until 11 o'clock the same day. The Berlin despatch referred to the Russian victory near Tarnopol, in Galicia, in which, according to the Petrograd official statement issued later the same day, the Russians captured 8,200 prisoners and 30 guns.

In denying the unissued Petrograd despatch Berlin was really announcing to the whole of Europe the Russian successes seven hours ahead of the official Russian despatch upon the victory. Berlin, however, failed to get the figures quite right. Its figure of 30 guns taken was correct, but it put the prisoners at 150 instead of 8,200.

In New Zealand the members of the Government have personally led the way in the recruiting campaign, with results which have won the admiration of the Empire. The Westminster Gazette prints a letter from a correspondent who tells how the Government seized the occasion of a British naval victory to kindle patriotic ardor and bring in a stream of volunteers. Immediately after the news of Admiral Sturdee's victory at the Falklands last December reached the Dominion, the New Zealand Cabinet was convened, and decided, by way of celebrating the event, that every member of the Government, should leave that night for an independent industrial centre and address a recruiting meeting on the morrow. "The effect of this simultaneous appeal was tremendous; the results of it have recently been demonstrated in Gallipoli." It is a pity that similar action has not been taken in Canada. The success of the recruiting campaign organized and conducted by private enterprise abundantly shows that all the manhood of the country wanted was a lead, and had that come earlier, in the form of a spoken appeal from the men charged with the responsibility of government we should be much further advanced than we are today.

In the Echo de Paris, M. Rene Bazin, the well known French author, concludes a series of articles dealing with his recent visit to England. "The British are a curious people," he says, "and much closer to us than most of us are accustomed to think, both on account of the number of their families of Celtic origin and the age of their civilization, not to mention the quality of the British mind, which for a long time collided with ours, but nevertheless always held it in esteem."

"The old chivalry of England is still alive. In words, in deeds, and in honor, it reawakes at critical hours in new beings who do not even know its name."

"Another thing which is growing in England, as with us, and even more than with us, is a detestation of Germany, contempt for whose brutality and hatred warrants the determination to keep an unworthy and dangerous enemy at a distance, even after the conclusion of peace."

"Everywhere in England there is a feeling of friendship for France. I have said this before, but it is a subject so pleasant to dwell upon." The Entente Cordiale is a real and living thing.

THE LITTLE CARPET TACK.

A little tack was in the way,
Oh, sad and sorry juncture,
I did not see it where it lay
And so I got a puncture.

The language that I thought of then,
Was harsh; I don't defend it.
I faced my task, as other men
And undertook to mend it.

I labored in the burning sun
With iron rods and wrenches,
I toiled as Britisher or Hun
In Europe's cruel trenches.

"It is an easy thing to do,"
I read that in the folder;
I shortly wore the grimy hue
That typifies a molder.

I broke two finger nails and tore
Much pigment from my knuckles,
I'd never fixed a tire before,
It was not time for chuckles.

To get the tire back on again
I had to pound and thump it,
Nor was my work completed then,
"Twas still my chore to pump it.

"Twas just one little carpet tack,
But, oh, the time it lost me,
And, oh, the weary aching back,
And oh, the pain it cost me!

Other Editors' Opinions

WAR AND PEACE.

Henry Ford says he has ten million dollars to spend if necessary to persuade this country that peace is always the best plan.

Henry does not seem to realize that several times ten million dollars is being spent every day, and has been spent every day for fourteen months, to persuade mankind that peace is the best plan and that excess in preparation for war is about as dangerous as no preparation at all.

Have patience, Henry. This is a war against war. Folks who survive it are going to be gun-shy for some time. You have done a great deal to make life attractive. That is your great service to peace, because the pleasant life is the less people want to die. But war, Henry, brings a much greater lesson than that the lesson of self-sacrifice. Nobody is much good who has not in him some idea, some ideal, that he cares more for than he does for life, even though it is life alleviated by the Ford motor. You help to make life pleasant but war, Henry, helps to make it noble and if it is not noble it does not matter a damn, Henry, whether it is pleasant or not. That is the old lesson of Calvary repeated at Mons and Ypres and Liege and Namur. Whether there are more people in the world or less, whether they are fat or lean, whether there are Fords or oxen makes no vital difference, but whether men shall be willing to die for what they believe in makes all the difference between a pigsty and Paradise. Not by bread alone, Henry, shall men live.—New York Life.

BRITAIN'S INCREASING POWER.

Premier Asquith made some statements in Parliament yesterday which are the reverse of encouraging regarding Germany. He said that Lloyd George had established twenty shell factories, and that eight more were in process of construction; that 715 factories with 800,000 workmen were under the control of the war department; and that nearly 3,000,000 men had enlisted in the British army and navy since the beginning of the war.

These facts show how little British power has been used as yet in the stupendous conflict. England can say the truth that she has hardly commenced to fight. It is a credit to her that she was so wretchedly unprepared, not that she was so slow to recognize the true nature of the war, but no one can discount the enormous power which she has developed.

It ought not to be long before that strength begins to show on the battlefield. Probably it is showing already if one could lift the impenetrable veil which hangs over the Dardanelles. Asquith stated, further, that British troops have taken over considerable sections of trenches formerly held by the French.

If England had been as strong a year ago last month as she is today probably Germany would never have struck at all.—Chicago Journal.

THE "EX" CRITICISED.

Toronto's big patriotic National Exhibition came to a close Saturday Sept. 11 and the directors are well pleased with the attendance of 844,000 or 136,000 shy of the million big drive but pretty good for 12 days. The entertainment program was very weak in grand stand attractions and the notorious midway was largely a delusion and a snare. The live stock department was splendidly representative of the rural stables, the grand parade of prize winning animals on Friday afternoon being the premier scene of the exhibition. Manufacturers, especially automobile and musical instrument firms, made their usual comprehensive and attractive displays. The military features probably drew many visitors and the directors praise Toronto citizens and newspapers for helping to make the exhibition the success it was. The editors of country papers got a free lunch and 50 cents worth of passes so there's nothing more coming to them. Railway companies cut off reduced rates on the last three days which made greatly against country attendance. If the country people are to visit the Fair, the railways must give them cheap rates as an additional attraction. Farnes have had a hard season's harvesting to contend with which also accounts for their small numbers at the Canadian National. Let us all hope that their troubles next year will be lighter.—Bowmanville Statesman.

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HORSES

Class A.—Heavy
Brood Mare with foal
only judged)—C. W.
C. Ketcheson and Sons
Foal of 1915—C. W.
C. Ketcheson and Sons
Colt, 1 year old—
H. a Maynes.
Colt, 3 year old—C.
H. W. Hannah, D. W.
Span Horses in har
2800 or over—K. M. S.
gerty, W. C. Ketcheson
Class B.—Agriculture
Foal of 1915—D. W.
Colt, 1 year old—H.
W. C. Ketcheson and
Hay, Jr.
Colt, 2 years old—G.
H. W. Hannah, D. W.
Colt, 3 year old—C.
H. W. Hannah, Elisha
Pair Horses in Har
Tucker, A. F. Grills.
Class C.—General
Brood Mare with foal
only judged)—W. C.
Sons, H. W. Hannah, D.
Foal of 1915—W. C.
Sons, Jas. Lake, Jr., D.
Colt, 1 year old—G.
D. W. Fargery.
Colt, 2 year old—G.
Jas. Fargery, C. U. Hea
Colt, 3 year old—J.
Richardson, C. U. Hea
Single Horse in ha