

THE WEEKLY ONTARIO.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1919.

A MINISTERS' MEETING

Fresh and beautiful were the proceedings of a certain ministers' meeting recently held in a great city of America.

Present were the leading clergymen from the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Episcopal churches, and between them the frankness and fraternization seemed perfect.

The preliminaries having been disposed of the president announced that the subject of the evening was "Church Policy," and it was intimated that in the discussion of the theme before the meeting the largest liberty would be allowed.

A Methodist clergyman began with an eloquent plea for denominational fellowship and fraternity. He "did not see why the devotees of the various sects could not shake hands across the little rivulets of denominational diversity and be no more divided by mere names."

Following the Methodist came the rector of a large Episcopal church. "I believe," said the rector, "that the churches are at fault. They have erected barriers that have made it unduly difficult for people to get at. If the churches are to draw their membership from all or a majority of the people in the community, they must get on common ground, so that all good men can stand by them and not be shut out."

It was clearly to be seen that the Episcopalian was willing to go not only as far as the Methodist brother had gone, but even farther.

This impression was intensified when the rector reached his climax with the statement: "I can see no reason why there should be Methodist, Episcopalian, Baptist and Presbyterian churches, and I look forward to the day when men of power in the community will have effected a union of the churches with that wonderful skill of combination which is today so apparent everywhere but in church life."

The pith and marrow of the rector's address centred in a story that he told of the little Scotch town in which he was born and reared. In that town, a Scotch Covenanter community, there lived one, Jamie Stewart, who was a stumbling block to all the churches, "not because he was a sinner, but because he was a man of transparent goodness and yet he was outside the church."

The burden of the address was to the effect, that somehow or other, the churches "ought to recognize Jamie Stewart."

Jamie, being a good man, deserved to be recognized, and the fact that he was not recognized showed that there was something wrong with the churches.

And the world is full of Jamie Stewarts—men of rock-ribbed manhood, of splendid character, of unquestionable nobility of spirit and uprightness of life.

The poet Wordsworth, was one day asked if he was a Christian. "Yes," was the poet's reply, "when I am good."

Stick a peg there, so we won't forget it. Jesus was good, and that is enough. Not "goody," but good—plumb with the old eternal rectitude of things—a real true man.

And if the Carpenter's Son should meet Jamie Stewart he would take him by the hand and say to him, "Jamie, the 'ungood' are not ready to recognize thee; but I recognize thee, and as for the rest, let not thy heart be troubled."

If the son of Joseph had been at this ministers' meeting he would have felt solidly at home; and he would have taken hold of the Episcopal rector's hand and said to him with emphasis: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

Think about it for a minute. Truth, love, honesty—can you give them any sectarian label? You cannot.

Nowhere is there such a thing as Christian truth, Jewish love, Mohammedan honesty. These great things are human, not sectarian, and wherever they are found they are the same thing.

A good man is a good man no matter where you may run across him; in the church-

es or outside to them; in America, or Asia, or Africa; Mohammedan, Buddhist, Christian, Jew, Catholic or Protestant.

Bananas grow in Florida under the American flag; in the gem of the Antilles, under the Cuban flag; in Bermuda, under the Cross of St. George; and because of the fact that they are all ripened under the same sun they are equally delightful to the taste.

It ought to be the same with character. We should be sufficiently sensible to give the glad hand to every one whose life is in the right, and who is living for the same things that Jesus and the other choice spirits of the past lived for.

If the churches are wise, they will reach out for the good men and women without their pale and bring them in to work with them for the high ends upon which they are equally agreed.

Jesus did not come to boost sectarianism but to wipe it out, so that it should curse the world no longer. He came to uplift humanity, and anyone who will willing to work with him to that end was welcome to him.

He said one day, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." How fearfully vital is the application of those words to the present world situation! What a work there is before us! The world whole must be reconstructed politically, economically, morally, and we need the assistance of all the good people we can find.

It is no time for wrangling over the narrow creeds of an ignorant and narrow-minded past. Let the dead past bury its dead, and, acting in the "living present"—may we not say the awful present?—Let us act in unison, all good people of every creed and of no creed, pulling together for the victory of humanity over the foes that would degrade and destroy it.

FRANCE PLANS PEACE ARMY

The League of Nations will take some time to effect the disarmament of Europe. France is going ahead with plans for the reorganization of her army on a peace footing. A voluntary army of 150,000 men will be enlisted, and arrangements made for the conscription of annual levies each of which will be kept in training for 12 months—a big reduction on the time served before the war. The utility of the German motion that it took three years to make a soldier has been demonstrated by the war; Britain's soldiers with less than a year's training more than once proved more effective fighting men than the Prussian Guards; towards the close of the war all the belligerents were using men with only a few months' training.

Under France's new scheme of organization all the Cadres will number 100,000 men; this, it is said, will permit of an enormous expansion upon the outbreak of war. Young men with a university degree or professional diploma, will if physically fit, have to qualify as officers in the reserve. More colored troops from French colonies will be conscripted than heretofore.

How many divisions France will maintain has not yet been decided. It is understood that this will depend on a military convention still to be arranged with Great Britain, Belgium, and Poland. Preliminary estimates are that the Belgian army will be 100,000 men on a peace footing, with provision for 800,000 on a war footing. A recent statement by M. Clemenceau says that Poland could place 1,000,000 men in the field—double the number now mobilized, and inadequately equipped. So France's establishment will largely depend on the number of troops Britain will undertake to throw into the field in an emergency.

WORK FOR THE CHURCHES

Some of our thinkers tell us that we shall never have economic peace and stability until Christianity has been restored among the people. But has genuine Christianity ever been more the religion of the people than it is today? Certainly the spirit of co-operation and brotherhood has never before shown itself so strong as in our unions, associations and organizations for mutual help, or in our literature of militant democracy. The church has done its best in the past, and is still doing heroic work for better things, but today it is buttressed by many secular agencies of brotherhood.

Perhaps the church might widen and strengthen its work if it would supplement the traditional lines of effort by more modern and semi-secular activities into any such activities the church knows how to infuse its own particular spirit; it can assimilate them to the more traditional character of its work. Already the churches have interested themselves in a practical way, in various social and economic causes. Why should not the churches take up studies of modern thought also, modern political, social, philosophical and psychological theory? Freak denominations or societies are "beating them" with their expressive slang phrase. Modern mass psychology, twisted, orientalized, sensualized, or variously perverted, are spread among the curious or the

eager to learn by eccentric agencies. Is it not the church's business to provide the people with safe and sane popularizations and criticisms of modern thought on political and social subjects, especially as all political and social thought has its religious implications? Mere denunciation of modernism in toto, or of science and its positions will not satisfy intelligent people any longer. The day for that is past. Science justifies itself to reason by its achievements, its inventions, its promotion of human welfare; it is not mere theorizing, like the "science" and philosophy of long ago, but by its fruits ye know it.

The churches might conceivably work with the universities in an effort to direct the philosophic, ethical and political studies of the people. Many who have felt a want of attraction in the church's time-honored program would be drawn by its competent handling of the more richly complex systems of a modern thought. Could not the churches, in co-operation with colleges and schools, institute evening, Sunday and Saturday afternoon classes in ethics, economics, sociology and politics, inspiring the whole study with the reverent and idealistic spirit of religion? Such books as Bakunin's "God and the State," "The Political Theology" of Mazzini and the "International," William James' "The Will to Believe," "The Varieties of Religious Experience," Josiah Royce's "The Philosophy of Loyalty," P. E. More's "Aristocracy and Justice," Edward Russell's "Pathways to Freedom," D. H. MacGregor's "Evolution of Industry," E. Barker's "Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to Today," J. B. Bury's "History of Freedom of Thought," books by Hobhouse, Webb, Lenin, etc. Are the people up to this sort of thing, it may be asked. At any rate, thousands upon thousands are drifting about under the misdirection of eccentrics and "cranks," whom a reasonable and enthusiastic co-operation of church and college might keep somewhere near to standard and sensible lines of thought.

If it be objected that the church must deal only with the Bible or creeds drawn up in old, unhappy, far-off days, the answer is that the Bible was not embalmed and mummified in the fourth century, but has kept on growing ever since. The epistles of St. Paul to his congregations interpreting the gospel teaching for his time have been followed by successive interpretations of ideal living down to our day, and for modern people really to understand what Christianity means for them, they will do well to study under a wise direction from church and college the epistles of James to the Americans, Tolstol to the Russians, Russell to the English, etc., as referred to above. None of these is perfect, but as attempts at vital interpretation of the human lot, they all call for criticism and application.

BRITISH LABOR LEGISLATION

Lloyd George's Government propose to introduce into the House of Commons a bill dealing with the relations of capital and labor which contains some interesting provisions. The chief are:

The extension of the payment of all war bonuses until September 30 next.

The setting up of an Industrial Court on the lines of the present Interim Court of Arbitration, the members to be appointed by the Government and to represent the State, employers, and the trade unions.

The operative period for awards made by the court to be four months.

The legal enforcement of the awards on any parties concerned.

The making illegal of all strikes and lock-outs against an award.

Officials and executives of unions—in the case of a strike—and of employers' associations—in the case of lock-outs—to be amenable to the law.

Financial penalties to be levied on funds of unions or employers' associations against which a breach of the provisions had been proved.

It is reported that there will be strong opposition to the bill from the labor unions, but the government apparently believe that public opinion would justify its passage. It follows the Australian precedent of compulsory arbitration in all industries, but the fact that the awards are only to be legally binding for four months is a new feature. Unless the government intervenes at the end of every four months and insists on the Court of Arbitration making new awards lockouts or strikes would still be possible. The principle of the right of public intervention in labor disputes is, however, a long way and it will compel employers to take a lesson to all the fat, the lean, the short the tall.—By Walt Mason.

ences which may go a long way to promote a better understanding of mutual rights and responsibilities, and thus make for industrial peace.

With Parliament to act as speaker for the U.F.O., have developed a fine sense of the fitness of things.

From fighting Huns to Mosquitos is a change, but this apparently is a new job for aeroplanes. In B. C. aeroplanes are used to map out swampy regions and other breeding places by means of photographs taken from overhead.

France's traditional fear of dictators, royal or otherwise, will keep Clemenceau out of the presidency, but at that he is today the uncrowned king of the French.

According to the Insurance Companies carelessness is the principal cause of fires. That is a broad statement. All fires, not kindled with incendiary intent, are supposed to be controlled for a definite purpose; there is no doubt carelessness somewhere if the fire passes from control. The high proportion of fires in Canada may be partly due to careless handling of fire or potential fire, partly to careless construction of houses, and partly to the fact that carelessness with fire in wooden houses is much more dangerous than in buildings of brick or stone. Canadian losses by fire are enormous, if figures supplied from the insurance sources are reliable. In 1918 Canada's per capita fire loss was reported at \$4.00; the United States at \$2.26; Russia 97 cents; France 74 cents; England 64 cents; Norway 55 cents; Italy 53 cents; Sweden 42 cents; Germany 28 cents; Switzerland 13 cents. These figures indicate a high rate of insurance for Canada compared with other countries—and there is also a higher burden of taxation for fire protection.

A DISCOVERY

You talk about excitement and the luxuries of life. I guess I've tried most everything from pistols, gloves and knife. I'd like to stop and tell you, only time and space forbid. The fun I've had just staying home and playing with the kids.

The boys and we were playing horse, we turned our happy home in less than thirty seconds to a howling hippodrome. For real entertainment the laughs they hand you out. Beat any burlesque show that's had the nerve to book a route.

And there's something serious in it when you get to thinking too. How you were once like them and they may grow up just like you. You watch the laughter in their eyes till sleep weighs down their lids. And thank the good Lord for the chance of playing with the kids.

AMBITION

Ambition's needed in your game if you would win success or fame. The gent without it seems a clod, content his treadmill way to plod, while men who have the splendid spur fill all the air with smoke and fur. Ambition, when it's safe and sane, controlled by wisdom's curb and rein, is necessary to the guy who hopes to reach the places high. But if you say, "I'll never stop until I reach the gleaming top, regardless always of the rights of other hopeful striving wights," perhaps you'll reach the top and then discover you're abhorred of men. I'd build mud fences all my days before I'd tread the higher ways, and hear some delegates exclaim: "He never played an honest game. To push himself to higher rank he'd rob his granny's savings bank. To gain a foot on other men, he'd swipe his mother's setting hen. His thoughts are always of himself; to gain renown or gather pelf he'd push a cripple from the road, or touch a poet for his ode." In Holland there's a lonely skate who hoped to be supremely great; the rights of men he laughed to scorn, and trod upon the nearest corn. What mattered it if legions died, so he increased his pomp and pride? And now he sits in shadows grey and swats cockroaches all the day. His short the tall.—By Walt Mason.

ticket station on the Southwestern Railway. Coming into the great city today, amid the grimy houses which seem to congregate around every big railway terminal, it is difficult to realize that less than a century ago Vauxhall was a clean little suburban village through which the coaches galloped as they cleared the outskirts of the town, while just a century before that Mr. "Spectator" visited the gardens with Sir Roger himself, and heard the good knight compare them to a couple by his house in Worcestershire, which was itself "an aviary of fightingales." All of which, though it may have some bearing on the name of Fawkes, has no more to do than Sir Roger's wit with the Gunpowder Plot.

But, indeed, there are more extraordinary things than Falke de Breauté's manor of Vaux bound up with the great plot. Is there not, for example, Dr. Dee's mirror? Dr. John Dee was a man after King James' own heart, an astrologer possessed of a magic mirror; and in this mirror tradition insists there was one day reflected the cellar under the Parliament House, the barrels of gunpowder, and Guido himself, and so the whole murder came out. Tradition is, on any terms, a most uncomfortable thing, but tradition embalmed in the Book of Common Prayer is well-nigh inexpugnable. Now, it so happens that, after the discovery of the plot, a service in commemoration of it was inserted in the Prayer Book; indeed, did not the judges themselves go to church in state; heretofore on the famous anniversary, and did not good Bishop Sanderson, in one of his sermons before them, express the pious hope that, "God grant that we nor ours ever live to see November the fifth forgotten, or the solemnity of it silenced."

But to return to Dr. Dee, his mirror, and the Book of Common Prayer. In the year 1737 his Most Religious Majesty George the Second being King in England, one Baskett, his printer, did issue an edition of the Prayer Book, wherein combined with the Gunpowder Service was an engraving of the mirror, reflecting the Houses of Parliament by night and a man carrying a dark lantern. Above this on the right, was the eye of Providence illuminating the mirror with a ray of light; and, below, the legs and hoofs of the devil in flight. There you have the whole wonderful story; but, alas! the day! and despite good Bishop Sanderson, just two and a half centuries after the worthy Guido was set upon and bound by Sir Thomas Knevit and his men, coming out of his cellar beneath the House, convocation removed the service from the Prayer Book; and this in spite of the fact that generations of small boys in masks concealed in Tophet, had for centuries of fifth's perambulated the streets incessantly imploring all whom they met to

"Please to remember The fifth of November, The gunpowder treason and plot." The great day of the "Guy" was probably some half century ago. Then it was the empy of the notorious criminal of the hour or that of the unpopular politician, dressed in the most outrageous masquerade, was carried through the streets until in the evening it was set on top of the local bonfire and disappeared in smoke and flame. Long after London's thousand "Guys" had disappeared from its streets the celebration was continued with unabated enthusiasm elsewhere. Its Ultima Thule was the town of Lewes, in Sussex. Here, after the rest of England, forging Bishop Sanderson, had forgotten also "the fifth," and "Guy" continued to hold high carnival, and the huge bonfire, on the Downs at night, became one of the local sights. One interregnum in all those centuries there appears to have been. It was when James the Second was King, and Mr. Evelyn records solemnly in his diary under the date of "Nov. 5" that, "It being an extraordinary wet morning, I did not go to church, to my very great sorrow it being the first Gunpowder Conspiracy anniversary that had been kept now these 30 years under a prince of the Roman religion. Bonfires were forbidden on this day; what does this portend? What it portended the great diarist was not to learn. Four years later he records, on the same anniversary, "The Bishop of St. Asaph's Lord Almoner preached before the King and Queen" the occasion, he adds, "being the anniversary of the birth of the late King Charles the Second." and his landing at Tor Bay this day." James had slipped away on a wet day, the night of his at Whitehall, and his place was taken in his stead—Christian Monitor.

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