

Our Contributors.

MOKE HERESY TRIALS THAT MIGHT TAKE PLACE.

BY RAOXUNIAN

Now that the trial for heresy in doctrine is over, might it not be well while our hand is in to go on and have a few thousand trials for heresy in practice.

There would be no use in bringing cases of this kind before the ordinary Church Courts for two reasons—some of the courts might have to be put on trial themselves, and even if they had not to figure as defendants they have not sufficient time for the business. Might it not be well to divide the western part of the church into ecclesiastical circuits, appoint a judge for each circuit and hold assizes in each Presbytery. We say western section, because Brother Murray might come down upon us if we dared to make any suggestion about the east.

We could name several men who would make excellent circuit judges for the trial of cases in practical heresy, but nominations at the present time would expose the men to a raking fire of needless criticism and we therefore forbear until the scheme is sanctioned by the proper authorities.

Assuming that the Court has opened in a Presbytery, business might go on somewhat in this way. The Presbytery itself might be put on trial first and enquiry made as to how many of its members attend Presbytery meetings with a reasonable degree of regularity, how many go home on the afternoon train whether the business is over or not, how many rise regularly to points of order and make disorder, how many speak over twenty times at each meeting and how many speak all the time and say nothing.

An enquiry might also be made as to the kind and amount of supervision the Presbytery exercises over the congregations within its bounds. Work on this line would have to be done with a powerful microscope.

If the judge has the patience of Job and the wisdom of Solomon and the prospect of living as long as Methuselah he might enquire into the methods by which vacancies are supplied and calls brought out. Without these qualifications work on this branch of the case might do more harm than good.

The Presbytery having been disposed of, the Court might proceed with the trial of the clerical members individually in the matter of preaching and pastoral visitation. Investigation might show that some of the sermons are quite as weak as Prof. Campbell's theology was said to have been and that some of the pastoral visitation is as irregular as his lecture at Queen's. Investigation might also show that some of the brethren dwell together in about the same degree of unity as characterized the first night's debate at Carleton Place. In fact it might transpire that some of the members work against one another as vigorously as D. B. Maclean, Q. C., butted against the Montreal Presbytery.

The trial of the clericals being over, the Court might take up the case of the elders. Some of them would stand the ordeal well. Many elders are grand men, the very bulwark of the Presbyterian church. It might be found, however, that the practice of a few varies as much from the New Testament idea as Prof. Campbell's lecture varied from the Presbyterian Standards.

The managers might then be asked to stand up and tell the Court how they look after the finances of the congregations under their care. Some of them might have to confess that they meet only once or twice in a year and that for the most part they let the finances take care of themselves.

There would be fun when the Court asked congregations to take their turn and state how much per member they gave for the schemes of the church. The fun would come in when the office-bearers divided the money by the membership to find the little quotient. This branch of the case would show that the circuit judges must be experts in the use of figures, men like Dr. Warden and Dr. Torrance for example.

If the judges are appointed for a term of ten years and expect to live that long they might try and ascertain the number of peo-

ple in the Presbyteries who might attend prayer meeting but never do. The amount of practical heresy on this point is perfectly appalling. Compared with it Prof. Campbell's heresy is as a drop of water to the Pacific ocean. It may indeed be that some who shout the loudest for the Professor's scalp never darken the door of their own prayer meeting. Surely prayer is as important as any question of hermeneutics.

There are several living types of practical heresy that ought to be put on trial at once. There, for example, is the man who vociferates about popery while straining every nerve to play the part of pope in his own Presbytery or congregation. Presbyteries have been disturbed for years and congregations well-nigh wrecked by men who denounced popery and acted as popes.

The man who denounces Roman Catholics because they wish to give their children religious instruction in their schools, but never gives his own children any religious instruction, should be tried alongside of the man who damns the Ross Bible but reads no Bible of any kind himself nor asks his children to read one. The man who denounces separate schools while his own children never use the name of their Maker except to feather an oath may be orthodox, but his is not the kind of orthodox that does the church or the family much good.

The man who has been a chronic disturber of all the congregations with which he ever was connected might also be asked to explain his orthodoxy. There are men that strife, scandal, backbiting, and general disturbance follow from one congregation to another as naturally as slime follows a serpent. Men are often disciplined for one isolated act of wrong, but a man may be a nuisance for a life time and nothing be said about it.

MORAL.—Let every man examine himself and see if he is not guilty of some kind of practical heresy.

SAN FRANCISCO AS IT IS.

BY REV. JAMES CAMPBELL, M.A.

There has been a variation in the old monotony of murders, divorces, suicides, intemperance, political, municipal and social corruption, (though these all are increasing with headlong rapidity), in the line of so-called reform, a series of waves or crazes of outbursts of gushing efforts to remedy crying evils by a short cut, or plausible expedients. The cue was given to these movements by the Roman Catholic Archbishop, who sought to make a street leading to a church more tolerable to the worshippers on their way by causing the Chief of Police to enforce an ordinance against open windows of houses of ill repute.

That official and the whole city officials being more thoroughly under the heel of the hierarchy than in any city of the continent outside of Mexico, obeyed. The fiat went forth. A clean sweep was made, scaring the women away to other parts of the city, without reducing the evil one iota. Shortsighted would-be reformers seeing a whole street changed, and not looking elsewhere for the denizens and not considering the "pull" of the dominant church, set agoing a series of splurge movements or make-shift reforms.

(1) A crusade by the W. C. T. U., churches and all sorts of societies and people, against the dives or dance-houses where 2,000 women waiters were employed. After public meetings and agitation through the daily papers, an ordinance was enacted closing these places, results *pro tem.*, hundreds of girls thrown out of employment unfit for any honest work in most cases had it been available; but no work, no home. The gushing reformers were non-plussed. The dive-keeper's money and "pull" however nullified the law, or defied it, and they opened up as usual in full blast. A non partisan boom was started to purify municipal crookedness. The Mayor and two or three aldermen were elected; results, said officers are busy scheming for their own ends, *e. g.*, the mayor to become governor, hence pandering to the worst elements, the liquor men and Romanists, for their aid. Other crazes burst forth of less extent, *e. g.*, a storm of agitation against a side or "ladies' entrance" and rooms which all saloons from the most

tony to the lowest groggery have, as also the corner groceries which all sell liquor, and have rear rooms where ladies may drink. These rooms are simply the substitutes for places of ill-fame. Result, *nil* for good; for *civil*, the public conscience blurred and the evil-doers emboldened, learning their perfect mastery of the situation. Still another push was made against the corruption by the daily press in publishing details of the many murders, divorce scandals, prize-fights, etc. etc., not touching bribery and unblushing confession of it or openly selling their editorial columns. One leading daily frankly advocated this right of a paper. The press itself joined in this crusade, every paper aiming to reform or cleanse every other but itself. Result, the greatest farce of all, the comedy of farces in this reform line! Several lesser reforms have come and gone, as against selling cigarettes to minors, for most boys and many girls as well as young men and women use tobacco.

Still another agitation against the use of opium, morphine, cocaine, etc., by both sexes, and all classes. Daughters of wealthy families were found to be regular visitors to opium joints, toney of course, in Chinatown.

The extent of the use of opium and morphine is appalling. The human wrecks from these drugs in every hospital, prison, inebriate or other refuges, are more deplorable than even from intemperance, and Keely Gold-Cure or other Institutions for the treatment of those able to pay for treatment are numerous and *coining gold*.

To show your readers that this picture is not overdrawn in the line of dark shading in regard to the evils abounding in this city, a clipping is given from the *Occident*, the Presbyterian paper, as conservative and reliable as any on the coast, on such matters:

Last week a young man—it seems impossible to believe him human—brutally murdered his aged father, and one more is added to the already long list of horrible crimes with which San Francisco's history is reeking. There seems to be a premium for all sorts of crime at present. I am no pessimist, and yet it would be difficult to find in the annals of any modern city a blacker record than that presented by the city of San Francisco. The law of God is flagrantly violated in the high places and in low; and the law of man is equally disregarded. We have come to the place where obedience to the decalogue is not to be thought of. Vice and pleasure run riot on the Lord's Day, while a diseased sentiment will save the neck of any man, except he be a Chinaman, who has been convicted of the most outlandish murder. Can any blessing rest upon, can any prosperity attend a city so terribly steeped in sin? I trow not.

Among many reforms necessary to the reformation of a heathen state of things, two, at least, strike one as being of paramount importance: (1) the reform of the bar and (2) the reform of the bench. So long as men can be found ready, for the sake of cheap notoriety, to use every available means to liberate the law-breaker, and so long as judges on the bench will trifle with the penalty due the lawless, it is idle to talk of peace and good government. To particularize: the terrible foot-pad evil will be settled when a few more foot-pads have been sentenced to the penitentiary for twenty years—not till then. An esteemed judge has begun the good work. This method applied to the treatment of other crimes will hasten the day when San Francisco may hold up her head. In the meantime, it were well that the cry of the Baptist were rung out from pulpit and platform. "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

And to give a more vivid and real insight into the bogus reforms, etc., a selection is given from a secular weekly, closely in touch with the masses, which has also the courage of its convictions:

"San Francisco, this 'Golden City' of ours, the pride of 'God's own country' (Jim Corbett's), is a wonderful city for waves. There is nearly always some kind of wave passing across it; sometimes it is a cold wave, sometimes a hot wave, sometimes a (fake) political or judicial purifying wave, sometimes a (fake) morality or dive-closing wave, sometimes a (fake) female press purifying wave. Some time ago it was a midwinter take wave, and just now we have two waves

at one time. The first one is a mild one, a (fake) infantile anti-cigarette wave, started by the newspapers to increase their circulation. This wave has mostly affected the schools, and I understand that even our future women have been enlisted in the movement, in order to convert any skulking cigarette-smoking urchin they may encounter on their way about the city, but if any young missionaries be found they will speedily be discouraged in their foolish and unbecoming (not at all noble) efforts, as the cigarette-smoking boy will probably give a short and forcible answer to their honeyed words and blandishments.

The other wave that is passing over San Francisco just at present is an immense charity wave; so immense is it that it permeates almost every individual who has learned to speak, and so intensely is it felt that on account of a lot of maudlin, snivelling, sentimental gush written up by some of our newspapers, San Francisco's heart has swelled to such a dangerous size (publicly) by a feeling of its own goodness and kindness and benevolence, that it may break entirely in a few weeks from now, and then we shall have another kind of wave in this wave-stricken city—perhaps of destruction, crime and revolt.

This charity wave has been subject to fluctuations since it commenced some months ago. It commenced with soup-houses and bunk-houses on the sandlot, of which, by the way, I have been made to understand an exhibit is to be made at the Midwinter Fair, in order to let inquisitive people know what the much lauded climate, conditions and resources of California, together with the indomitable energy of its prominent citizens, are able to produce. This lasted for a while, and was enlivened with a considerable amount of kicking and growling, both on the part of the dispensers of charity and the recipients of the commodity, because during one part of the movement the hard-up unemployed were given work to do and paid in soup-tickets.

The sandlot colony went bankrupt. The sandlot philanthropy was pronounced a failure, partly because the colonists refused to be paid in soup-tickets as an equivalent for United States gold coin, partly, we were told, because the sandlot business attracted lazy vagrants, who hurried in from all parts of the country in order to grow fat and live an indolent life on the lot where some of our Western Ciceros and Demosthenes had worked so hard.

After this we had a brief spell without any public charity, during which the streets were overrun with beggars. It grew so bad that even I, a scrub of a sailor, was appealed to for help four times in less than half an hour one day up town—I, who am also one of the so-called great army of unemployed (an undeserving member, though). When it commenced to be the fashion to demand money, instead of asking for it, it struck some bright head or heads that there must be quite a number of deserving hard up unemployed in San Francisco after all, and soon a pitiful howl went out from our newspapers in behalf of the deserving poor.

The 'golden' city had no money, it seems, so that it couldn't employ, or rather it couldn't pay, anybody to do any work for it; therefore, a citizens' relief committee was formed and a lot of deserving unemployed men were given work in Golden Gate Park at \$1 a day. And then the fun commenced.

The citizens of San Francisco "responded nobly to the appeal for aid," and, of course, we beat every city in the Union in that direction as in every other. There were so many applicants for work, however, that they could not all be employed, but it did not take long to get out of that dilemma. In the first place, we could not be expected to keep the people who arrived here broke before our grand Midwinter Fair was opened; they had to take a back stand. A little study also decided that a fellow who has enticed a woman to marry him is more deserving than one who has not, and as a last precaution certificates of good character, long local residence, abject poverty and a good-sized family were required, signed by some solid citizen, in order to procure the holders a chance to sell a dollar's worth of labor in the park.

The weeding out was accomplished. The deserving unemployed were found at last, and the deserving poor were "elated and joyful."