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LONDON, SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1919

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

"Our friend sleepeth: he is dead."

When unworthy prejudice and factitious misunderstanding shall have ceased to cloud the reason or obstruct the natural impulse of the heart there is not a single Canadian of whatever race or creed, whether claiming Canada as his native land or as the country of his adoption, who will not feel that in the death of Sir Wilfrid Laurier he has lost a friend. His love for Canada and for Canadians was so transparently and convincingly sincere that it begot in the hearts of all a reciprocal love for the great statesman who gave unsparringly his work and his life to their service. He may have made mistakes; that is human. Only a few short weeks ago he said publicly with an absence of false pride and false humility, with characteristic simplicity: "I know I have made mistakes." But they are few who do not believe in the honesty of his purpose, the singleness of his motive; and there are few indeed who do not think that his public life was as free from blame as that of any public man charged with great responsibilities in this or any other country. He has been the object of as virulent abuse as that meted out to Gladstone, but, like that great statesman's, Laurier's name will go down in history with even political rancor failing to attach a single stain to the personal integrity of his public or private life.

Entering Parliament as a Liberal when Quebec was intensely Conservative in politics, Sir Wilfrid as a young man gave the most signal evidence of those qualities which characterized his whole public life. Courage and persistence and fidelity to conviction were imperatively necessary if he would breast the tide of opinion in his native province which regarded Liberalism in politics as a species of apostasy from the Faith.

It may seem to the younger generation of Canadians an incredibly ludicrous thing that Catholics were held in odium by hierarchy and clergy for presuming to vote against the party with which the Orange order was then as afterwards very closely affiliated. Yet such was the case when Laurier as a young man, with indomitable courage yet with never-failing courtesy, fought the fight for his political convictions.

Elections were set aside by Catholic judges on account of undue clerical influence in favor of the Conservative and against the Liberal candidates. There was a time when the Liberals of Canada called themselves Reformers so great was the odium attaching to the term Liberal in Quebec. A Delegate from Rome was necessary to decide finally that the Liberalism of Canadian politics was not that which was condemned by the Syllabus of Pius IX.

Slowly the political principles which young Laurier championed made their way in his native province; but he was nearing middle age before he succeeded in seriously dividing that stronghold of Conservatism.

The Manitoba School Question was the chief issue in the election of 1896 and Laurier, then Leader of the Liberal party, adopted the solution of conciliation and compromise. Whether or not that was the wisest course does not for the moment concern us. The genesis of Manitoba Separate schools as a question in federal politics is briefly this: The Liberal Government of Manitoba abolished Separate schools though the Manitoba Act of 1870, which constituted Manitoba a province of the Dominion,

afforded precisely the same guarantees for the Separate schools as the British North America Act gives for Separate schools in Ontario. From motives of political prudence the Conservative Government at Ottawa, instead of disallowing the Manitoba School Act as they clearly had the right to do, decided to carry the matter to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Here had Sir Richard Webster had competent knowledge of the case the history of Canadian politics might have been different. But Webster, afterwards Lord Alverstone, was too fully occupied with his own election to master his brief in the school question. Stripped of technicalities it appears that the statement of the case before the Committee determines the limits within which it must be argued. On hearing Sir Richard conclude his presentation of the case for Separate schools the Canadian Council, in shocked surprise at the incomplete and inadequate statement, is said to have briefly commented, "We're done for."

The decision going in favor of the Manitoba Government a later case was taken before the Privy Council which resulted in the decision that the Catholics of Manitoba had a grievance and that it was within the power of the Federal Government to pass remedial legislation. On this the parties divided. The Liberals had always been the champions of provincial rights. "Not an acre of land, not a stick of timber, not an ounce of mineral in that territory will pass under the control of the little tyrant [Mowatt] at Toronto," declared Sir John Macdonald, during the bitter contest over what is now known as New Ontario. Every stick of timber, every acre of land and every ounce of mineral passed forever under the undisputed control of Ontario as a result of Liberal contention for provincial rights. The Rivers and Streams Bill, the Dominion License Act were other instances of successful resistance to what Liberals regarded as federal encroachments on the constitutional rights of the province. It may be that Liberals have laid too much stress on provincial rights. It is an open question whether a stronger central government would not be more effective in the upbuilding of a Canadian nationality. The fathers of Confederation saw the result of a weak central government in the American Civil War. It took that war, and gradual but continuous usurpation of powers altogether incompatible with the original theory of sovereign states, to establish a federal government in the United States sufficiently strong for national purposes. After a study of all federations the framers of the South African constitution gave to the states powers far more limited than those enjoyed by the Canadian provinces. Here again we are not concerned with the ideal but with the practical and the actual. The Canadian provinces have, and had in 1896, wide powers amongst which was, with certain specified limitations, exclusive control of education. To override a provincial act which the highest court of the Empire had decided was intra vires would be to inject endless contention and strife into the political life of Canada. Apart from what many considered the worthlessness of the Remedial Bill and the alleged insincerity of the Government proposing it—while Sir Charles Tupper pledged himself to stand or fall on the measure, he accepted as his supporters half the candidates of Ontario who publicly pledged themselves to vote against it—we believe it was Sir Wilfrid's honest and conscientious conviction that the only course consistent with Liberal principles and Liberal history was conciliation and compromise and not coercion. But conciliation and compromise were words not found in the lexicon of Archbishop Langevin when the French language was concerned. And it was the French language rather than the Catholic religion that caused the whole Manitoba school difficulty. A compromise offered by the Conservative Government in March, 1896, was promptly rejected by the Archbishop who would consider nothing less than the status quo ante. That the Remedial Bill was supposed to restore. The whole episode of the province came out in a joint mandement supporting the measure. Add to this the fact that despite democratic and liberal professions there is a certain proportion of the Protestant electorate swayed by very undemocratic and illiberal prejudice which invariably

makes itself felt when a Catholic fellow-citizen seeks their suffrages at the polls. However discreditable, the existence of this unreasonable prejudice is undeniable, and to none was it better known than to Sir Wilfrid. Notwithstanding the discouraging outlook he remained steadfast in his fidelity to his political convictions. The outcome astounded both parties. Quebec, long the great stronghold of Conservatism, went overwhelmingly in favor of Laurier and against the bishops. The people of that province had too long been accustomed to identify race and language with religion, if not to subordinate religion to racial and language considerations, to rid themselves at the bidding of even of their bishops of the effects of that teaching. Their almost unanimous support made "un des notres" the Prime Minister of Canada.

All are agreed that his fifteen years as pilot of the ship of state were the most prosperous and progressive since Confederation.

More recent events are too fresh in the memory of all to call for comment. Suffice it to say that we believe that in the contentious measure of conscription Sir Wilfrid was guided by the highest considerations of conscience and patriotism. Indeed it is perhaps here that his characteristic qualities of courage, persistence and fidelity to conviction are most clearly evinced. The one predominant motive of his whole public life, his heart's desire at all times, was to promote union between the two great races, to interpret the English to the French and the French to the English, to upbuild a united Canada. No one better than he knew the probable course the sorry election campaign would take—and actually did take. It seemed to many a grievously pathetic thing that the evening of his long life devoted to the promotion of sympathetic understanding and union should be darkened by the lowering storm clouds of an election campaign which appealed so largely to passion and prejudice and which menaced the edifice of Canadian unity which he had given the best of himself to upbuild.

Doubtless it did cause him keen sorrow and disappointment; but the serenity of his mind, his quiet optimism, his unshakable democratic faith in the common people, made him see the passing of the storm and the sun of good sense and good will shining again, the air perhaps clearer and the earth all the better for the violence of the storm. Dimly seen already even by his opponents, it will become clearer as time goes on that in his last election contest Laurier was true to himself and to his guiding principles, and was even greater in defeat than in the hour of his proudest victories.

Our friend is dead. He has passed before the judgment seat where the rank and dignities and honors of this world are pitifully small except in so far as they carry with them grave responsibilities for which an account must be rendered. He was of the household of the faith; he fought the good fight and kept the faith under conditions which have driven smaller men out of the Church; he finished his course and died a patriot and a Catholic. His life was a concrete refutation of a charge too widely believed. Be it to us, his fellow citizens and brother Catholics, a sacred duty to pray for his soul.

"THE POOR YOU HAVE ALWAYS WITH YOU"

In the course of the report of Dr. Nelson's Bolshevist sermon occurs this paragraph:

"Did Jesus really mean what He said when He declared 'The poor ye have always with you'?" said the speaker, "is a question that Christianity has to answer today. If He did, then we must set ourselves against Jesus, but if we study the Bible we find that it was to Judas, who carried the bag, that the words were addressed after he had asked why the value of the alabaster box of ointment had not been given to the poor."

The shocking, the blasphemous irreverence of this reference to our divine Lord is equalled by the colossal self-assurance which coolly states: "then we must set ourselves against Jesus." It seems inconceivable that a professedly Christian minister could so speak of the Saviour if he really believed that Jesus was the Eternal Son of God, omnipotent and omniscient. But shocking irreverence and egregious egotism aside, the speaker here calls attention to an all too frequent misapplication of the quoted words of Christ. The context in which the words were used makes their mean-

ing clear. In the fourteenth chapter of St. Mark we read:

3. And when he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, and was at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard; and breaking the alabaster box, she poured it out upon his head.

4. Now there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5. For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6. But Jesus said: Let her alone, why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon me.

7. For the poor you have always with you; and whenever you will, you may do them good; but me you have not always.

8. She hath done what she could; she is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial.

In the beginning of the chapter St. Mark says: "Now the feast of the passover and of the Azymes was after two days." St. Matthew, also, (xxvi 2) tells that Jesus said to his disciples: "You know that after two days shall be the passover, and the son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified."

The occasion, therefore, was the eve of our blessed Lord's death. To those who complained of the waste He said: "She hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you; and whenever you will, you may do them good; but me you have not always." She is come beforehand to anoint my body for the burial.

It is so perfectly clear that it was in relation to His own impending death and burial that Jesus said: "for the poor you have always with you," that it is difficult to see how any one could distort these words of Christ into a prophecy that there would always, to the end of time, be a poor and needy class amongst the people. Not by way of prophecy but emphasizing the fact that He was about to die and the opportunity of doing "a good work" for Him was limited to a couple of days, our Lord said to the murmurers: "the poor ye have always with you; and whenever you will, you may do them good."

The interpretation of our Lord's words in a prophetic sense as applying to conditions for all time is not only unwarranted but mischievous; and anti-Christian agitators have not been slow to base on this misinterpretation an argument against the Christian religion.

AN APOSTLE OF BOLSHIEVISM

The Reverend S. Banks Nelson, D.D., is a prominent Presbyterian clergyman of Hamilton, Ontario. The vagaries of Protestant pulpiters have become so much a commonplace, matter of course sort of thing that they attract no more than passing attention; and perhaps it is as well, for failure to attract attention is a potent influence in keeping such notoriety-seekers within the limits of sanity; they glimpse the fact that behind the indifference lies contempt.

Still at a time when stiff sentences of fines and imprisonment are meted out to those who have Bolshevistic literature in their possession; when sympathy with Bolshevism is urged as reason and justification for the deportation of those so affected as undesirable raw material for Canadian citizenship; then it becomes pertinent to ask why a reputable minister of the Gospel should be allowed fervently to extol these same Bolshevistic principles with impunity. And this precisely is what the Rev. Dr. Nelson, "one of the most brilliant and effective speakers in Canada," does. The London Free Press thus reports his address here a few weeks ago:

That Presbyterianism and Bolshevism are in principle on a common level and that they have both a common foundation in the Mosaic plan of government by elders was, to the majority of the large audience which met last night in the auditorium of First Presbyterian Church, the rather startling but thought compelling claim put forward by Rev. S. Banks Nelson, D.D., of Hamilton, who was billed to speak on "Providence and Presbyterianism."

The meeting was the closing event of the special meeting of the London Presbytery, which had combined business sessions with a conference on "The Deepening of Spiritual Life," in conjunction with the great forward movement and was attended by a large number of citizens in addition to the ministers and elders of the presbytery.

For one hour and three-quarters Dr. Nelson held his audience

entranced with the, to many, daring of his statements, his eloquence, diction and wit; and many, including Moderator-elect Rev. I. H. McDonald, who presided, were "almost persuaded to an entire change of their judgment of Bolshevism."

That, presumably, is a fair summary of the thesis and trend of argument of this apostle of Bolshevism. At any rate he has found no fault with the published account of his sermon. It will be noted that it was no ordinary occasion and that the sermon, therefore, may be taken as the deliberate and matured conviction of the preacher; a conclusion which is further warranted by the fact that this was not the first time Mr. Nelson emphatically endorsed the Bolshevist movement. And if he "almost persuaded" his brother ministers, including the Moderator elect, what effect would the "brilliant and effective" eloquence of this man have on the equally unbalanced minds of the "undesirable aliens" whom we are doing, imprisoning and deporting for holding or propagating similar opinions?

The Free Press report continues: That Bolshevism, like Presbyterianism, is based on the equality of all and the leadership of the elders, and that Lenin and Trotsky are Jews, and that they have based the government of Russia on Jewish lines, was argued by Dr. Nelson, who strongly warned his audience that "you may some day laugh at the other side of your mouth if today you are being laughed at today. The day was when the Christians were laughed at. Take care you don't laugh the wrong way." He described at some length the plan of Russian government from the small gathering of farmers to the larger assembly of the town, and thence to the Soviet, which he declared to be the same democratic principle that governed the government of the Presbyterian church. "The Russians," he declared, "may be fools, but they have the right idea."

That the civilization of Europe was the work of the Catholic Church no reputable historian now attempts to deny; that the Reformation was a serious, even a disastrous, break in the orderly development of that civilization is now admitted by many thoughtful non-Catholic students of history; and that what has chiefly made for stability and order up to the present is the conservation of principles and institutions rooted deep in the Catholic centuries is hardly open to question. That the present social upheaval, actual in Russia, menacing elsewhere, is largely due to the loosening hold of religion, and above all to the weakening of the power of the Church to continue her age-long championship of the rights of the people against all forms of tyranny is recognized by such non-Catholic students of history as G. K. Chesterton, and despite his Protestant optimism, plainly indicated by Dr. Gairdner in his historical studies of the Reformation and pre-Reformation periods.

The Rev. Dr. Nelson recognizes in Bolshevism the translation into the political order of the principles of Presbyterianism. He may be right; he certainly should know the spirit and tendencies of the principles of his own sect. Protestantism as a whole in its fundamental principle of private judgment is necessarily subservient to all divinely constituted authority in the teaching of that saving revelation made by God through Jesus Christ. And he remembered that in these revealed truths lies not alone the salvation of the individual but the salvation of Christian society. Wild as Dr. Nelson's views may appear at first sight he may have a deeper insight into the principles which he professes than others who hold them more lightly and with a looser grasp of their logical implications.

There is serious ground for hope that Bolshevism in all its manifestations, actual and prospective, will turn the minds of thoughtful, observant and earnest men to the ordered liberty, both civil and religious, which is possible only when its rightful place is given to authority; that they will come to see that in the Catholic Church which created Christian civilization, and there alone, will civilized society find salvation.

WHY FAITH FLOURISHES ON THE FARM

BY THE GLEANER

Statistics show that there is a much greater leakage among Catholics in cities than in rural districts. In fact if it were not for the leaven from the country, that is being continually infused into the urban mass, the percentage of fallen-aways would be very much greater in our large

centres of population. It is true that a very large number of ought-to-bees may be found in those parts of the country that have not enjoyed the blessing of a resident pastor; but in well organized parishes apostates are comparatively few. It would seem at first sight that the city Catholic has more means of fortifying his faith than his rural brother. He has the church and the Separate school close at hand, the advantage of many special devotions, the opportunity of going frequently to confession and Communion with little attendant fatigue or hardship, the privilege of hearing many eloquent sermons and lectures and of membership in Catholic societies, all of which should give him an advantage over his less favorably situated co-religionist in the country. Nevertheless it is a fact that the unpretentious rural congregation represents a more lively and enlightened faith than the smart city parish. The reason for this, we make bold to state, that the former is better instructed.

You have all met him, the dapper city man, smart, well-groomed, enthusiastic and proud of his affiliation with some Catholic club. He will tell you of the dandy lecture he heard recently, or of the eloquent sermon that Bishop—or Rev. Doctor—preached. But question him as to the subject matter of the discourse, as to the ideas put forth, and he is beautifully vague. The fact is that he carried away not ideas but merely sense perceptions. He was so engrossed with the circumstances of the occasion and the personality, gestures and voice of the speaker that he failed to catch the message intended for him. After all it is not the occasional eloquent sermon or lecture that enlightens the people, but the ordinary course of instructions. Now in cities many are deprived of the latter because it is not given at Mass but in the evening. On account of the large number of Masses there is time in the morning only for the announcements and a brief exhortation. Thus it is that the city man who merely fulfils the grave obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays learns very little about his religion. A perfunctory attendance at Mass without instruction will not preserve the faith.

In the country it is different. The people come to Mass prepared to listen to an instruction—and let it be said right here that there are, as a rule, much better sermons preached in the country parishes than in our cities. The appearance and voice of the priest, in fact all the surroundings are familiar to the audience, so that there is nothing to distract their minds from the truths that are being enunciated. As a consequence the large majority of the congregation acquire a thorough knowledge of their religion. The best proof of this is that vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life, which are the choicest fruits of the spirit of faith, are much more numerous in the country than in our cities.

Then again faith comes by hearing, "and how shall they hear," says St. Paul, "without a preacher, and how shall they preach unless they be sent." In the cities people, whose pastor may not be celebrated as an orator, often run to this church or to that to hear some preacher of repute who has not been sent to preach to them but to the people belonging to the particular church in which he is speaking. Such persons gain little information because to gain such is not the primary motive of their presence at the sermon. In the country those who have not an automobile have little opportunity of hearing other than the man who has been sent to teach them, and to whose words there is consequently attached a special grace of enlightenment.

The chief reason, however, why there is such an exuberance of faith on the farm is that the country Catholic is a reader not of the daily press but of Catholic literature. This statement, we admit, is not as true of the generation of today as of that of yesterday, since rural mail delivery brings the secular paper daily to the farmer's door. It is true nevertheless that the Catholic paper is read by a much larger percentage of the people in the country than in the city. The distractions that invade the winter evenings and the summer twilights of the urban Catholic are alien to the country home. Hence there is more leisure for serious study, there is more chance to develop the mind which communes closer with nature and which sees things in a truer per-

spective because it is not blunted and obscured by the round of distractions that the whirligig of city life evolves.

A striking illustration of what we have said is afforded by the Maritime Provinces. Down by the sea the Catholic population is mostly rural or confined to small towns. What is the record of Catholicity there? A larger percentage of readers than in any other part of the Dominion, a newspaper that is not a mere recorder of events but an orthodox and well-informed guide to a progressive spirit of Catholicity, a University that upholds the best traditions of Catholic scholarship, a large and evergrowing list of public men who are holding many of the chief offices of trust in Church and State throughout Canada, and a generosity in mission work that spells an intelligent realization of the obligation that faith imposes. In a word faith flourishes there because the people are well instructed.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY GENERAL CONSENT of all classes Canada has lost her first Citizen in the death of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Like Washington it may be truthfully said of him that, notwithstanding conflicting ideas in a time of great trial and stress, he was "first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." It is well known that, concerning his policy in regard to the War, he was content to leave the final verdict to the jury of history. Time is the great solvent of all things earthly, and to its final adjudication Sir Wilfrid Laurier may well have looked forward with confidence.

ONLY BY the casting vote of the chairman did the Toronto Board of Education decide that the modicum of justice should be meted out to the only Catholic teacher under its jurisdiction. Which is a reminder to the rest of Canada that Toronto is not only the chief educational centre of the Dominion but is a beacon light of civilization to the world at large. With the spirit of chivalry as historically understood, the Capital of Ontario may be said to fairly reek.

BY NO means the least interesting portion of Bishop Fallon's inspiring Toronto address on "Education" was the recital of his meeting at Oxford with the Catholic daughter of Hon. George Brown. The Globe in George Brown's day was the rallying point for everything that was inimical not only to Separate schools, but to the growth and spiritual welfare of the Catholic population. The "Covenanting old Chap," as Sir John A. Macdonald was wont to call him, found no greater pleasure than in fomenting opposition to the Church, and in circumscribing her liberties. Pope-baiting was almost his daily bread. That a daughter of his, therefore, and not only, as the Bishop related, a daughter, but six grandchildren into the bargain, should now be numbered among the Church's loyal and zealous children, is certainly something like a nemesis. That, however, is the fate that has overtaken many of the Faith's most violent antagonists, yet it is a lesson which the world is very slow to learn. That, in reporting the Bishop's lecture all the Toronto papers, the Globe included, should have ignored this interesting episode is surely as significant as it is characteristic.

THE WEEKLY Bulletin of the Canadian Department of Trade and Commerce publishes some interesting statistics regarding the population of the Australian Commonwealth. In 1800, but seventeen years after the first settlement, the population, exclusive of aborigines, was but 5,217. The first million was reached in 1858, the second in 1897, the third in 1899, and the fourth in 1916. Before the War it was estimated that the five million point would be reached in 1914 or 1915, but the departure of troops and the cessation of immigration caused by the great conflict in Europe put back this period to the present time. In September, 1918, it was officially announced that the five million mark had been passed, and it is now confidently predicted that the next census (1921) there will be in the antipodean Commonwealth close upon 5,500,000 persons. This is exclusive of the native population, concerning which there are no figures to hand.

AUSTRALIA is a land of immense possibilities. A veritable terra incognita little more than a century ago, it has, like our own Canada, blossomed into a nation during the