

THE CALL TO MR. CAMERON.

The following is the remainder of the address delivered before the Presbytery of Wen Sound, by the Rev. Mr. Cameron, of Chatsworth, in the matter of the call from Woodville congregation:

Then, on the other hand, did I listen to the voice of sentimental feelings, I should have no difficulty in choosing to remain here I am. It is natural to be attached to those where we have lived for 18 years, to be attached to one's neighbors, even, who do not belong to his own church communion, to be attached to the streams, and the woods and to the trees he has planted with his own hands, to be attached to the graveyard where his dead. All this is natural and might have some allowance, but this also I would like to lay aside as of no appreciable weight. This brings the matter, as far as I am concerned, to the sacred region of reason and conscience, and I find a great deal standing on both sides. So much so indeed that I have found this one of the hardest questions that ever came before me.

Of great weight with me as pressing on my conscience are these considerations in favor of the call from Woodville (1) the call was not sought by me. The congregation gave me no warning of what they intended to do, nor did they ask my opinion. I had to hand directly or indirectly in opening his door. I had returned from two months of absence, kindly granted by my congregation, feeling stronger every way, and as buckling on my armour for a few years more hard work for Christ in this county, and among my people, when this call quite unexpectedly reached me. It seemed, and I doubt is, the voice of God to my people and myself, whatever the meaning of that voice may be.

Then (2) the congregation giving this call a congregation whose call is entitled to great weight. They were trained and disciplined by one of the best pastors that has ever been in our church, Mr. John McTavish, they have been always known in our church for their kindness to their pastors in many acts of generosity. They have among them many men of true piety and prayer. The very first name on the call I hold in my hand is John Gunn, one of the elders, a man whom I have always looked upon as one of the foremost laymen in our church, in his knowledge of theology and his Bible.

Then (3) over and above these considerations, there are the arguments to be found in the six reasons for translation submitted by the congregation of Woodville, to the Presbytery. On these I need not enlarge as they are already before the court. All these considerations, Moderator and Brethren, constitute this call to Woodville, a very loud and solemn one.

But there are considerations of very great weight, on the other side and in favor of remaining where I am.

Here is one to begin with, the outer and outer circinnvallations. In the county at large, especially as regards temperance, I feel a deep interest. Our attempt at getting a prohibition established here has ended in a time in disappointment to the friends of morality and good order. A battle has been lost, but not the war; for of the cause of truth and temperance it may be said, as said of the Roman Republic, that though many a battle it never loses the war: *praelium saepe, bellum nunquam*. The seal of the By-Law indeed was not so much a retreat, or defeat, as a refusal to give title on that field, preferring to fight on ground of our own choice. The ground at present is, and will be perhaps for some time to come, the ancient ground of teaching and preaching, the ground of educating men's consciences, and elevating the moral and spiritual life. The cause of temperance on its platform is being well fought at present; and when the next attempt at prohibition will be made, it will be with a different issue on the part I trust.

Then (3) the ministers of this Presbytery constitute a tie to my present position, that would find it difficult to break. Of the old men that bore the burden and heat of the day, when our work extended from Collingwood to Kincaidine, and from Mount Forest to Colby's Bay, Mr. Dewar alone remains. The rest have been called to their eternal home, or are laboring in other congregations. At the new band of younger ministers and the older men have formed here as harmonious a Presbytery as you will find anywhere in our church. I would feel it, Mr. Moderator and Brethren, a very hard trial to separate from this Presbytery; and a greater trial still to separate from the work I have been engaged in for twenty three years organizing congregations, settling ministers, and preaching the Word throughout the county. But these are only subordinate matters.

I come now (3) to the claim my congregation has on me. What is the nature of the claim? Paul speaks of it, as the relation of a father to his family, of a nurse to the children she has the care of. Now this being so, it is not to be expected that a people can feel the same interest in the pastor that he feels in them. "The children do not lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." It is not the people that make sacrifices, as a general rule, but the pastors; but the pastors for the people. This I know to be the case in many of our country congregations in Ontario. My people have been always kind and considerate and their words to-day in their written reasons against the translation and on the lips of their commissioners are much warmer than I deserve. That has great weight with me. If they said they quite were indifferent about my staying, then I could go. But still there is a stronger claim. It is one that is the strongest of all claims. It is this, that many in my congregation are my spiritual children. To many can say "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have become your father through the gospel." Further, many I have been associated in their joys and sorrows, I have married them, baptized their children, and admitted their children to the sacrament of the supper, and buried their dead. I cannot but feel, therefore, a deep interest in my flock. This interest does, as I have already said, not depend on the interest they feel for me, or the sacrifices they have made for me. A father's love to his children is not always measured by his children's love to him. Here again, rather, lies another claim. That I am not clear in my mind that my congregation is in position that they could bear the risk and dangers, the delays and the increased liber-

ality, that is involved in a vacancy, especially if it is long. My people know nothing about this; they have never been vacant. There are peculiarities about the Chatsworth congregation that no one knows better than the pastor. I sometimes think a vacancy might do them good; that a new voice in the pulpit would arouse them; but it might issue in the other way. At the present moment we are prospering, our congregation large, a good few seeking the way to Zion, prospects of getting consolidated, and harmony is all our work. But let a strange hand take hold of the reins, or no hand at all, and I would not answer for the consequences, as things are at present. If the Presbytery says "We will take that responsibility," then a great load would be taken off my mind. I would find it easier to move.

There is only one other matter and it is one that weighs considerably with me. Some 15 years ago I injured my throat, not by loud preaching, for that has never been a habit of mine; but by too continuous work when there were few ministers in the county. At length I had to quit work for six months. Again last summer it laid an arrest on all week day preaching, and at the direction of the doctors I took two months rest. I am now much better; but the weakness in the throat still remains. I have consulted my physician and while he says nothing on the merits of the case, he says decidedly that there might be a risk in attempting three heavy services each Sabbath in a larger church than my present one. Change of locality might favor me; but there might be a risk of breaking down in two or three years. This also is entitled to some weight, and in giving it weight I am consulting the interest of the Woodville congregation. I know that congregation is proverbially generous, and I understand they are prepared to risk all this; but is it right to inflict the risk on them? My past services for twenty-three years among the Chatsworth congregation in gathering them together, organizing their sessions and Deacons' courts, helping them in building church and manse, and raising the communion roll from 13 to its present number of being close on 250, my working for years on a salary that was and is small and used to be very irregularly paid, the fact further that in their work I suffered the injury that will always limit my usefulness as a speaker, all these things give me a claim on the forbearance of my present congregation, should I fail to do full work at times, which I could not have on a new congregation, however, willing they were to extend the forbearance. Weighing all these things in the balances of the sanctuary, I come to this conclusion that though at times the scales appear evenly poised, and for a few days to incline towards my leaving my present charge, yet in the face of the written reasons and commissioners' pleadings, from Chatsworth, I am inclined to remain a while longer at my post, if the Presbytery so order it. I am strengthened in this resolution by the belief to which I am inclined, that as a rule the pastoral office is a permanent one, changes to be only in exceptional cases. I am strengthened also by the consideration that though a wide door, and an inviting door, a door that I wish I was free to enter in is opened before me, yet it does not appear that the door is shut behind me. There is a call from strangers to go away, but from the same number of people on the ground of several years knowledge, there is a call to remain. And lastly I am strengthened in my decision by the consideration that it is always safest in competing claims on one's service to choose the part that demands the greatest personal sacrifice. One thing is sure that of this mind was our Master, and that where two roads met he chose the road of sacrifice and suffering.

I thank you Moderator and Brethren for having listened so patiently. I am now in your hands, and so are these congregations. If you say I should go to Woodville, I must strive to obey, and seek help to do my work there; if you should decide on my remaining, I am willing to remain.

Books fifty cent pieces are in circulation in Lindsay.

PETERBOROUGH market fees sold for \$1,317 this year.

The water in the river under the bridge in Huntsville is 1001 feet above the sea level being 267 feet higher than the level of Lake Nipissing.

The annual drill of the Canadian Militia, this year, will in all probability be at Niagara, where a Military Camp will be formed, and the Militia inspected by the Governor-General and the Princess Louise.

At a meeting of the Liberal Conservative Association, held at Cannington on Monday, Mr. W. H. Gibbs was re-nominated as the candidate for the Commons. The selection of a candidate for the Local House has been postponed.

The Bobcaygeon Independent says the season now nearly over has on the whole been good for lumber operations, and the deep snow has been rather favourable than otherwise. The snow came before the frost, and the swamps have been bad drawing owing to their not being frozen. The quantity of logs taken out will be much greater than usual.

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The subscribers while grateful to a discerning public for the liberal patronage bestowed on them in the past, beg to announce that on and after the first day of January, 1879, their books will be closed and positively no credit given—excepting as per special arrangement—believing that the true National Policy consists in the adoption and carrying out by individuals of the "Pay as you go" system. Having tried the credit system to our hearts' content, we pronounce it an unmitigated evil—as it affects buyer and seller, especially the latter.

Our Mr. Campbell has returned from Montreal, where he made special purchases of general Dry Goods, Clay Tartan Dress Goods, &c., together with a choice lot of Fruits and General Groceries, which buyers should inspect before purchasing, as hard pan prices will be quoted for cash.

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