

Separate Schools in the North West.

Sermon Preached in Christ Church Omamee, on Sunday, Feb 26th, 1905, by the Rector, Rev. J. H. Teney.

MATT. XV. 13.—But He answered and said, "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."

The words of our text must be taken in their broadest possible application. To say that they refer to matters commonly called religious, is to reduce the government of God to a very narrow circle. If even the very hairs of our head are numbered, if not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father's notice, then how minute and far-reaching in its details must be that control, that is guiding the destiny of the human race.

God's eyes see all things, and though the tares may be permitted to grow with the wheat, though the sun shines on the evil as well as on the good, though the rain falls upon the unjust and just alike, yet no circumstance demanding readjustment escapes divine observation.

But the factor that frequently stands in the way of the early accomplishment of God's purposes, and the readjustment of man, is the impatience of man. The mills of God offend grind slowly, and man by endeavoring to force God's hand delays the fulfillment of all righteousness and the complete establishment of God's kingdom.

It is true, that for the fulfillment of His purposes, God has taken man into partnership with Himself, and given him the command, "Go forth and replenish the earth and subdue it." To share with God the blessings of creation, to be joint-heirs with the Eternal Son of the glories of Redemption, for such great ends was man created, and no conception of that great work, into which God has taken man as His partner, is worthy of his high calling that is not as Catholic as humanity. It is God's desire that all the families of the earth be blessed.

But man's share in His true purposes is often a very unworthy one because of the short-sightedness of his policy, the narrowness of his vision, or the unbelief of his heart. Man's first great lesson in becoming a suitable and worthy partner in divine purposes is to learn to have abject faith in God. To be possessed of this victory and peace, to be destitute of it, uncertainty and unrest.

How often has man found himself in that extremity in which he could only "stand and wait." Impatient, it is true, and unbelieving and rebellious, yet unable to turn either to the right hand or to the left. At the shore of the Red Sea, Israel is bidden to "Stand still and see the Salvation of God."

Again in a later age, when beset by the mighty Sennacherib, the strength of Israel was to "sit still" while the Lord "sent among his fat ones leanness and killed under his glory a burning fire." To ascertain the divine will, and to trust divine developments and divine protection, ever call forth the supreme effort of faith. Not in action so much as in waiting does God test our confidence in Him.

And yet in action too, faith often attains a rich and rare development. "Go forward" is Israel's command when the divided waters of the Red Sea invited their advance. "Go in this way," have I not said, "this was God's word to one of the greatest judges of Israel, when He commissioned him to save His people in one of the darkest periods of their history. And God's word reveals the triumph of faith in action.

But how few, indeed, are the instances among the many that might be obtained in the story of mankind, in which man has been a co-worker with God, whether actively or passively, in which he has, by his impatience, not only exhibited a lack of faith in God, but adopted some ill-considered course which has protracted the bestowal of some blessing, realized only after much unnecessary suffering and toil and sin. Rebekah, fearing failure of the Lord's promise to bless her favorite son, resorts to a guilty subterfuge to force the hand of God. Sarah, impatient for an heir to the promise, resorts to an offence against morality that admits of no justification. But the lonely means to get your answer as to what religion means to those who advocate and demand a system of Separate Schools. Who would ever think of taking France or Spain as an example after which to build a great national life. The one has no God and the other no heart.

That system of religion too invites suspicion that seeks to dogmatize to the young and plastic mind. Strong meat is not for babies, and no babe reaches a healthy maturity that does not receive food adapted to its years. Strong meat is for men and only a mind capable of reasoning should receive dogma, and it is a cowardly and iniquitous thing to seek to narcotize with dogma a young and plastic mind, until it is incapable of knowing God as it is His desire to be known. God has given us three great agencies by which we should seek and know Him—the Church, the Bible, and reason. Each agency has its extreme advocates and the extreme advocate of any one alone is an enemy of mankind. To accept either the Church or the Bible without the exercise of reason, is to tie up in a napkin one of God's most precious talents. And the religious teacher that pushes reason aside, and demands of his pupils an acceptance of either Church or Bible, in which reason has had no part, is not a teacher in the true sense of the word. Neither

is he a true teacher who seeks through reason alone to lead sinful man to God. Only by the mutually interdependent support given the one to the other can God be known as a sinful being needs to know Him. The Bible contains the revelation, the Church is its keeper and interpreter, but without the exercise of reason God cannot be known as He is,—with face of love, bearing and radiant in Christ.

Nor is this all. If the dream of universal empire be cherished in the mind of Rome, how potent such an educational system as separate schools to further that end. And if this charge be not without foundation, then the true patriot must see that in the proposed legislation is involved a grave danger to his country. And from a national standpoint this is the most serious aspect of the case, for the resources of statesmanship may be exhausted before a peaceful solution of the problem is reached.

And to many, doubtless, the thought comes at the present juncture, "What shall we do?" That the measure should meet the fate it deserves at the hands of Canada's representatives is scarcely to be expected. Any representations made to the prime minister and his colleagues to reconsider the measure, would likely be treated with contempt. To argue that it is a violation of provincial rights, that it is a betrayal of public confidence, that it is a base and shameless departure from the attitude of the premier when in opposition, will be of little avail. Canada has placed herself in the hands and is to day at the mercy of the Province of Quebec.

And now let us ask what has led us into this wilderness and is it possible to be delivered? The causes we believe are mainly two-fold—party adherence and religious apathy. That Separate Schools will be co-existent with the life of the State we do not for one moment believe. That they will exist for a long time and become more and more aggressive and exacting is our firm conviction. And this will continue until Protestantism is purged of its sins. That party affection may be alienated is evidenced by the result of the late provincial elections in Ontario. But what about the other cause mentioned, which is after all the real cause. Will Protestantism ever be anything more than a name, anything more than non-Roman to multitudes within its ranks? Will the time ever come when these same multitudes will show by their passion for the truth, by their zeal and self-denial for the faith, by their daily living a positive creed what Protestantism really is? He is no strength to Protestantism who is a Protestant merely because he is not an adherent of the Church of Rome. He is Protestantism's greatest enemy who calling himself a Protestant, yet lives a life that denies the faith. To be a Protestant means to have and to live a creed of positive truth. And there is no other power but the power this life imparts that will keep in check every national and religious danger.

While, then, we may not now be able to prevent the passing of the proposed legislation we are by no means disarmed. While it is our privilege to use every constitutional means available to try to prevent this national calamity, we have another means that cannot fail—the regeneration of those whose only religion is hatred of Rome. Then, and not till then, will our Roman Catholic fellow citizens feel the grandeur of that religion, to whose claims they will not now listen, and the glory of that freedom to which they have not yet attained.

And in this great work what splendid allies we have in the ever-advancing strides of human intelligence and the liberalizing tendencies of the age. With ever-increasing radiance the search light of scientific investigation is illuminating the pathway of man, groping in the darkness after truth, exploding old-time theories and emancipating the mind from ignorance and fear. Biblical scholarship and research are clearing away the mists of superstition, and wondrous conceptions of God and of religion are taking possession of the human mind.

And all these circumstances, my friends, point to the same conclusion, "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." All these things are our allies in making this country that we love, the garden of the Lord, and in banishing forever from our shores everything inimical to the best interests of our people.

But let us be cautious. Let us do nothing that would retard the movement. Yes, let us do something, let us be something that will hasten that great and glorious day. Let us be earnest; let us be self-denying; let us be faithful. Let us do our part and God will His. But unless we are in earnest, unless we really love what we profess, God will not take us into partnership in this great work. That the desired end will be accomplished of no doubt. "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." And Time that greatest of all solvents, that greatest of all tests, beneath whose influence the most pretentious schemes the most promising structures fade away if built upon the sand,—Time alone will reveal those agencies yet to be employed by God, to establish the words of our text,—"Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."

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HONORED BY INFERENCE. The death of Mr. John Birney, which took place on Thursday, Feb. 23rd, removes one of the earliest settlers of the Township of Emily. He, with his mother, one brother and four sisters, came to this country from the County of Fermanagh, Ireland, in the year 1841 and settled on what is now known as the Orange Line of Emily, but at that time was only a blazed mark in the forest. He resided there continuously until the time of his death. His brother was Adam Birney, who died about 30 years ago, and his sisters were Mrs. Wm. Spence, Mrs. John Bailey, and Elizabeth unmarried who have all preceded him to the spirit world, and Ellen, who is the only one left of the family, and with whom he lived all his life. He never married and in religion was a Methodist, and in politics was a Conservative. He could tell many interesting anecdotes of the old pioneer days when people used to take their wheat to Port Hope on their backs and carry back their flour. The funeral to the Emily Cemetery on Saturday, Feb. 25th, was largely attended. The sympathy of the community is extended to Miss Birney.

The funeral of the late Wm. A. Sutherland was largely attended. The deceased was born about three miles west of Omamee, and lived here until a couple of years previous to going to Toronto, and was much respected and enjoyed the confidence of all who knew him. He was a consistent member of Presbyterian Church, and an Independent in politics, preferring to vote for the man instead of party. He leaves a widow to mourn his loss. Remember the Basket Social in Bethel School on Friday evening, March 17th. Gents bring your ladies, and ladies bring baskets. An excellent program will be rendered. Admission 15c. Proceeds for public school library. Those who buy baskets will have their admission fee refunded. Comm.—J. Sherin, G. Carew, H. Ruth, S. Switzer, G. Fowler, G. Mills, and M. McCarrill. Mrs. Cameron, of Port Hope, is a guest at the home of Mr. J. J. Lamb.

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WHAT THE GIRLS WILL WEAR According to Marian Kent, who writes on fashions for young girls, in the March New Idea Magazine the dainty dresses for this spring and summer are to be made of silk finished mohair, lansdowne, batiste and collyne, besides the soft silks and the sheer fabrics. Hand-work in its charming simplicity still supersedes elaborate trimmings, and "very many dainty frocks are made entirely of material, utterly devoid of trimming and depending solely for decoration on the exquisite workmanship in the form of hand-run trucks, shirring, fagoting, piping, etc." Yokes, cut round or square are to be used a great deal, and the "drop yoke," as well as berthas and epaulets, will keep the broad shouldered effect still prominent. The skirts are to be still full, according to the prevalent '1830' ideas in cloths. Everything that can be done to a sleeve will be in fashion, and puffs, shirrings and ruffles will hinder the very rapid arrival of the leg o' mutton, which is again coming to view.

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