

The Stouffville Tribune

Established 1888

Member of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association

Issued every Thursday, at Stouffville, Ontario.
Eight to Twelve Pages Average Circulation 1,500 Copies

Subscription Rates, per year, in advance:
In Canada \$2.00 In U.S.A. \$2.50

A. V. Nolan & Son, Publishers

Notes and Comments

Let's Stick to the English Language.

With every mail bringing in literature from Ottawa, half of which is printed in the French language, one wonders what the government really imagines our official language is. The whole thing is surely an attempt to coddle the French people, for there is no need of French being printed on so much of our literature. Omitted, thousands and thousands of dollars would be saved in one year in printing.

Every month when employers handle those unemployment insurance books they must be amazed to have to figure out the French on them, for half or more of the printed matter is in French.

Frankly we do not like it, and feel that the government in showing the way for a policy that will ultimately lead to a great deal of racial trouble. The official language of Canada is English. Let's stick to it.

The Week of Prayer

The week of prayer ran into a period of bitter cold weather, yet while the attendance was satisfactory, there was always room for many more people at any of the meetings. Despite weather conditions those who did attend were not the so-called "younger set" who might have been expected to turn out regardless of the weather conditions.

It has been suggested that instead of going from church to church on five evenings, it would be just as satisfactory to make use of one church. Once a large building like any of our churches is heated, the heat may be maintained more easily throughout the week, hence there would be a saving of coal, and more comfort for those who attend the week of prayer. This could be arranged by using one church in 1943 and another one in 1944 and so on until the round of churches is gone through. It is only a passing idea, given for what it is worth.

Those who sponsored the week of prayer are to be commended, for it is said that more is wrought by prayer than by anything else, and in war time as in peace time, it is a stimulating thing to find the people of any community uniting in this manner.

Owned in Canada

War with Japan brings into being a minor Canadian trade problem with respect to the goods of Japanese origin still on the shelves of Canadian merchants. A natural public reaction would be a refusal to buy any Japanese goods while the state of war exists, but a moment's reflection shows that this would be of no practical advantage to anyone, and would indeed be a slight impediment to our own cause.

No Japanese goods will enter Canada until the war is ended and the Japanese have already received the benefit of any of their goods that are now in this country. Refusal to buy handkerchiefs of Japanese origin not only does no harm to the Japanese, but it means that some Canadian textile machinery must be devoted to making handkerchiefs instead of materials for the army, navy and air force.

Patriotic ladies who might feel impelled to declare a personal boycott on Japanese goods should pause and ask themselves whether they are also prepared to sacrifice their carefully preserved supply of all-silk stockings, of which the raw material is Japanese. If they will answer the question honestly, they will realize that the impulse to boycott Japanese merchandise already in the country springs from a desire to advertise their patriotism rather than from a desire to win the war.

Farm Labor Crisis

To the average man in the city the Canadian farmer's labor problem is one that concerns itself largely with getting grain and hay under cover. The same city man would probably solve it by giving soldiers and airmen a special ten days' harvesting leave next fall.

Once upon a time under certain types of agriculture, farm work, it is true, was largely concentrated in the late summer and early fall. This explained the historic harvesters' excursions to Western Canada when the young men from the east were offered pleasant and profitable Cook's Tours of the prairie provinces. But those harvester excursions are now obsolete and have been for a good many years.

Today Canadian agriculture to a large degree has become a year-round occupation and one that requires very special skill. This is particularly true of that part of the industry that is now turning out bacon, cheese, processed milk and other special food products for Great Britain. Soldiers on special harvesters' leaves will not help here. What is wanted are men and women that can look after livestock, that know how to milk cows, either mechanically or by hand, know something about balancing feeds, how to sow and cultivate crops as well as harvest them, know how to operate machinery without harm to themselves or loss to their employers.

Above all they must be prepared to work seven days a week and 365 days a year because farming is a natural industry and never yet recognized either man's calendar or his clock. Cows insist on being milked and pigs get just as hungry on Sundays and holidays as any other day.

Sunday School Lesson

January 18
JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS
Golden Text—Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased —Luke 3:22
The Lesson as a Whole

The testimony of John the Baptist was all-important because the Scriptures of the prophets had declared definitely that the coming or appearance of the Messiah was to be preceded by that of the messenger, who was to go before His face to prepare the hearts of the people to receive their King. The forerunner was to come as an Elijah to restore all things—to bring the remnant in Israel back to God and to herald the approaching advent of the Redeemer-King. John came in exact fulfillment of these predictions, as set forth in Isaiah 40, and Malachi 4. His was a preparatory ministry of most searching character. He began with a trumpet call to repentance. He separated the waiting remnant from the unreal mass by a baptism for the remission of sins. It was not that baptism in itself procured remission, but it was the confession, on the part of those who with honest hearts and exercised consciences submitted to it, that they were sinners who deserved to die, but who were counting on the mercy of God to be extended to them, through Him whom John proclaimed as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Verse by Verse
Luke 3:1—"The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar." Luke is very specific as to dates, which would be well known to the people of his own times. By placing the various rulers in the way he did, he would enable interested persons to verify his records so as to satisfy inquiring minds.

Verse 2—"Annas and Caiaphas being the high priest." The hereditary high-priesthood of the law of Moses had been displaced by an arbitrary ruling of the Roman authorities, who sold the priesthood to the highest and most satisfactory bidder. Annas was the head of a Sadducean family, who managed to get himself appointed as high priest and later had his son-in-law Caiaphas installed in the same office.

Verse 3—"All the country about Jordan." This would include a territory some fifty miles in length and possibly ten or more miles in breadth. It is now known as El Ghor. Here John came, proclaiming "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." He called upon men to face their true condition before God and to acknowledge, by baptism, that they were in need of forgiveness (Luke 7:29). The waters of baptism could not purify their souls, but they were pointed by John to One who could—the Lamb of God.

Verse 4—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." This quotation from Isaiah 40:3-5 witnesses to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament the word for "Lord" is really "Jehovah," whose way John came to prepare. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is therefore the Jesus of the New.

Verse 5—"Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low." The language of the prophet is highly poetical and implies that all must come to one common level before God, as confessed sinners who seek to do works meet for repentance. Thus "the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways . . . made smooth." When men are honest before God, a way is prepared for their blessing.

Verse 6—"All flesh shall see the salvation of God." The universality of the offer of salvation is here set forth. The One heralded by John was coming to fulfill the promise made to Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Verse 15—"The people were in expectation." For centuries Israel had been waiting for the promised Deliverer, and the people and their leaders knew that the time of His appearing must be near. Naturally, many wondered if John could be He. They debated in their hearts as to "whether he were the Christ, or not."

Verse 16—"One mightier than I cometh." John disclaimed any such thought as that he might be the Messiah. He was simply one sent to prepare His way. He contrasts his baptism with water with the greater baptism that was yet to come. "He," he exclaimed, "shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." This He did when on Pentecost "He . . . shed forth this" (Acts 2:33), as Peter declared, in giving the Holy Spirit in manifest power. The baptism in fire is by some understood to refer to the cleansing, purifying efficacy of the Spirit, but others see an intimate connection between this and the verse following, and understand it to be the baptism of judgment awaiting the wicked.

Verse 17—"Whose fan is in his hand," referring to the ancient method of winnowing, whereby the chaff was separated from the wheat.

"KEEP THE SMOKES COMING"

November 27, 1941

Dear Bert,
I received your parcel today. It was intact and everything will be used and eaten as food like we get at home. I wish to thank the soldiers' Comfort Fund for the parcel. It is almost impossible to get a decent meal except at the mess. So we will use the food we can from parcels from overseas to make up a real Christmas feast.

I now have my assistant crew member. He is a radio observer and can steer me by aid of a machine wherever I need to go even in cloud. The course is hard and many men are washed out as unsuitable. Today I took a test to see if I could stand 40,000 feet altitude without getting cramps. If I had failed I would have been sent home again but I was okay. A man tried to go without oxygen and he was a minute and 10 seconds before he passed out. I saw a whirlwind, a new twin engine fighter, the fastest thing on wings, but uncontrollable at high altitudes. We have had a lot of fog lately and flying has been bad. Many aeroplanes come in and land here when they get lost so I see all kinds. Although little publicity is given to Canadian squadrons I can assure you that there are many and they have made records. One 406 holds the record for night fighters. Canadians have established a reputation in this war similar to that of the last war, when the going gets tough they will be there to fight and win the victory.

I could tell of daring experiences of men and their work but the censor would cut it out, so I won't, but might I say in closing, thanks to everyone who contributed towards the very welcome Christmas parcels. Sincerely,
Alfred Thomas.

P.S. I will go into an active fighting squadron late next month. I will try for a Canadian squadron.

Nov. 30, 1941

Mr. Bert Lichorish,
It is always a thrill to know that the people at home have not forgotten the trans-Atlantic wanderers. When it takes such a concrete form as the parcel just arrived, it is very acceptable. I can almost see each item being removed from its haven on the shelves on the familiar stores on Main street. Allow me to congratulate you on your assortment. Wishing your organization every success and also the compliments of the season. I am, sincerely yours,
Neil Smith

Dear Sir,

Well I just received your Christmas parcel and it certainly is good of you people for what you are doing for the boys. It sure cheers a fellow up to get something from home as we now get only 6 hours off out of 72. So you see we don't have much time to ourselves. I haven't met any of the other fellows yet, but if I get a chance I certainly will. It would be nice to get talking over old times together, but that will have to be later on. By the time we get our washing done and our kit straightened away there's not much time left. We will be able to get off at Christmas and so eat off a plate instead of our mess tins. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas. Hope to be back to spend the next one with you. Best of luck.
Cpl. H. S. Cook.

England, Dec. 2, 1941.

Dear Sir,
Just a few lines to let you know that I received your parcel and everything was perfect. I certainly could not have wished for anything better. Pass on my thanks to all those who made it possible. A thankful friend,
Fred Castle.

Dec. 16, 1941

Hello Bert,
Many thanks for the cigarettes you

The wheat depicts the repentant portion of the people who He will gather . . . into His garner." That is, they will be chosen for Himself. Whereas "The chaff (the unrepentant) he will burn up with unquenchable fire" (R.V.) This pictures the judgment to be meted out to those who reject the message of the Kingdom.

Verse 21—"Jesus also being baptized." We know from other Scriptures (Matt. 3:13-15) how perplexed John was about this as Jesus had no sins of which to repent, until the Lord made it clear that in baptism He was but pledging Himself to fulfill all righteousness.

Verse 22—"Thou art my beloved Son." Like a gentle dove, in some visible way, the spirit of God was seen descending and abiding upon Jesus, and the Father's voice was heard from the opened heavens, declaring, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased," or as it might be rendered, "in whom I have found all my delight." Thus at the very time when Jesus offered Himself in Baptism, to be numbered with transgressors and to hear the sin of many (Isa. 53: 12) God His Father attested His delight in His Son and witnessed to the personal purity and holiness of Jesus.

sent me. They are one of the best gifts a fellow can receive in this country at the present time. I guess you fellows knew that from last time. There have not been very many air raids here of late but one never knows when they will come over. Where I am it rains most of the time and when it isn't raining we have fog, but you know that's England. Thumbs up,
Harold Lewis.

Dear Sir,
Just a few lines to thank you for the parcel which I received on Nov. 25th while I was on leave with my wife. She also wishes to thank you. All the things you sent are rationed over here. I hope things are fine in Stouffville. Ask George Myland to remember me to his son Albert and tell him I'm married now. I hope you all have a nice Christmas. Thumbs up.
Oliver Larkin.

Nov. 27, 1941

Dear Comrades,
Just a few lines to thank you for the Christmas parcel which I received from your organization. It won't be much of a Christmas over here this year as everything is rationed so low that people cannot get enough food for much of a spread. But they are not starving by any means. It's just a measure of precaution. Air-raids are now almost a thing of the past. Just the odd reconnaissance plane comes over around the coast and is stopped by our AA posts and night fighters.

I am now in my winter quarters on the south coast overlooking the channel, a very comfortable billet it is at that. Not central heated of course, as there are very few houses heated that way over here.

Will close for now, hoping all are in the best of health and thanks again for the Christmas parcel.
Sgt. Morley Pugh

December 12, 1941

Thanking you for the cigarettes, also nice gift parcel. Best wishes to all the folks in Stouffville.
Fred Madill.

Received smokes okay. Thanks to the Comfort Fund and all who make it possible. Cheerio.
Price Pugh

Dec. 12, 1941

Dear Comrades,
Thank you for the smokes. Lately the ones you send are the only ones coming through. I do appreciate the things sent to me by all the local clubs. Guess I'll go back to work and I wish all of you the best of luck. Yours truly,
Gordon Lehman.

WHAT DOES THE CITY STORE DO FOR YOU?

Small town stores cannot possibly carry the variety in stock that large city departmental stores do, but if our local stores were not given sufficient business to carry on, we would soon realize their convenience to us. They are the bigger taxpayers whose expenditures make the private citizens' property of value by civic upkeep. They are the people from whom every favour is asked. When donations are wanted it is the local business man who is called upon; when civic improvements are made he is the man who helps foot the bill; and, unfortunately, when credit is wanted he is the man to whom you go. Yet, day after day, dollar upon dollar is spent in Toronto stores.

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