

Religion and Life

By Very Rev. George C. Pidgeon, D.D., L.L.D. First Moderator of the United Church of Canada. (Copyright)

As we write, the newspapers are reporting exposures of evils flourishing in certain places in defiance of the law and threats of exposures in places more important still. It is not our intention to deal with particular cases but rather to point out the obligation of religious people to apply their religious principles to practical affairs. In other words, Christians are required to make their religion work.

An example take the career of Rev. J. G. Shearer, DD, the first secretary of the Social Service Council of Canada. In his student days a spiritual revival stirred the colleges of Canada. Groups of students in Toronto, Kingston and Montreal had their whole outlook changed by profound spiritual experiences, and out of their fellowship and activities came some of the most effective evangelistic ministries in our land. Some gave their lives to evangelistic work, others to missions, and still more to spiritual leadership in the courts and congregations of their church.

J. G. Shearer caught the spirit of the movement and discerned from the beginning its practical bearings. As secretary of the Lord's Day Alliance he was instrumental in having the Lord's Day Act passed by the Dominion Parliament in 1906. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church organized its Board of Moral and Social Reform in 1907 and chose Dr. Shearer as its secretary.

From the beginning he connected evangelism with social reform. He believed intensely that Christians were in duty bound to carry their religious principles into their citizenship and to insist on Christian principles being written into the laws of a Christian nation. Hence he led in campaigns against the liquor traffic, the gambling mania, the social evil, and other forms of commercialized vice. He led also in such positive enterprises as the establishment of rescue homes from coast to coast, the organization of the moral forces of the churches in support of principles which they held in common, and in evangelistic efforts in different parts of the country. His efforts in reform were inspired by his spiritual experiences; to have Christ's will done in the land was the inescapable obligation laid on him by Christ's possession of his own soul.

The prophet of Israel spoke for God because God first spoke to him. The results of their spiritual illumination was that they saw the will of God in the facts at their feet. Someone has said of Moses that two facts stand out in his life-story: first, that he led the tribes of Israel out of Egypt to the Promised Land, and second, that this originated in a spiritual experience—a spiritual experience issuing in the emancipation of a race; the start of the greatest religious movement in history.

So from Moses down to John the Baptist, souls kindled by the Spirit of God saw the evils of their time as horrible in God's sight and were inspired to fight against them with a supernatural energy that has changed the course of history. When Jesus saw the worship of His Father's house being corrupted by selfish men, He took the law into His own hands and cleansed the temple. He found the Zealots stirring up a revolt against Roman rule which He foresaw would be fatal, and over against their campaign of fiery hate, He went through all Galilee preaching His Gospel of love without limit.

The men closest to God through the centuries have been the strongest opponents of injustice and impurity in every form. The Wesleyan revival changed men and then changed all their relationships. Social reforms and missionary enterprises in the 19th century were the direct products of spiritual revival.

This is our religious heritage, and it is also our social obligation. We pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Everyone who repeats that petition owes it to God to have that will done as far as his influence reaches.

Take one abuse that stares us in the face—the multiplying of liquor outlets in our City and Province. Back of the action of the board which grants these licenses is the argument thrown at us from every quarter that the increase in these outlets has nothing to do with the increase in the consequent increase of drunkenness which appals us all. Principal G. M. Grant, of Quebec, who was no prohibitionist, once called the licensing system the most stupid system of regulation conceivable. You take a man and exact a heavy license fee, require him to make his premises attractive, and to give services to the public which are not lucrative in themselves, and then expect him to do nothing to extend his business. Why, the state puts him under an urgent necessity to make his business pay, and he cannot lift a finger in that direction without using his personal influence and the influence his position gives him to increase his sales. This cannot but lead to liquor being sold by him who would not otherwise be sold.

Ontario has a long history of experiments with this problem. Under Local Option it was proven in a multitude of cases that men who would drink if a bar were open before them, would not even go round

CENTRAL GUARDIAN

This column is reserved for news of local interest, but advertising of a new nature may be inserted at five cents a word, strictly payable in advance.

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NO NEW CASES — Colder weather seems to have brought definite relief from Poliomyelitis, and it is reported that no new cases have been reported for over a week.

CITY POLICE COURT— At the Stipendiary Magistrate's Court Saturday, a man convicted of illegal possession of liquor under the Temperance Act was fined \$50 and costs or 30 days. It was the only case held at Saturday's Court.

SPRINGFIELD, CRAPAUD PARISHES.— The Induction of Rev. S. J. Armstrong, B. A., L.Th., A. T. J. C. M., will take place at St. Elizabeth's Church, Springfield, on Tuesday evening at 8 P.M.

THE FIRST CONCERT of the Prince of Wales Concert series tonight will be under the distinguished patronage of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Prowse, the Hon. Chief Justice T. A. Campbell, President of the P. W. C. Alumni and Mrs. Campbell, Premier J. W. Jones and Mrs. Jones, and His Worship the Mayor and Mrs. MacDonald.

SONG PUBLISHED — Mrs. Ruhama Schlenker, Frank recollects word Saturday morning of the publication of her song, "Lullaby Prayer", for the Hansen Choral Library by the Charles H. Hansen Music Company, New York. A published copy of the song has been forwarded, with the musical setting by L. Marguerite House, a personal friend of Mrs. Frank. The words and music are copyrighted.

PERSONALS

Mrs. Horace Ling, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Allan MacDonald, have returned to their home in New Glasgow, after spending the past two weeks in North Carleton, guests of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Wright and family.

A block for liquor when opportunity was taken out of their path. When the bars were closed in West Toronto, liquor was obtainable at a few minutes car ride in three directions, but within six months after that measure went into effect dealers in the necessities of life reported a sharp upswing in their sales, and particularly in cash payments. The automobile has made a difference; but it has not changed the principle that with open doors for drinking at every corner men will patronize them who would not go out of their way to get liquor.

Last week we spoke of the call to advance; here is one path of progress. Cromwell matched the spirit of the Cavalier with the religious zeal of the Puritan, and he drove his enemies from the field. The love of money will drive men to great effort and the liquor traffic and other dealings in the weaknesses of men offer large gains. What people will do for gain must be matched by what Christians will do for the love of God and love of men. The time has come for a march forward against evils established in our social customs and in our laws.

IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of Gunner Laughlin E. Stewart, High Bank, killed in action on S. S. Beaverford, November 5th, 1940. Sweet memories will linger forever.

Time cannot change them, it's ever true. Years that may come cannot sever Our loving remembrance of you.

Ever remembered by his father, mother, brothers and sisters.

Card Of Thanks

Mr. Cyric Gallant and Family wishes to thank their neighbours and friends who so kindly helped them in their sad bereavement.

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Thoughts For Our Time

By His Eminence Cardinal McGuigan (Copyright)

We have become so accustomed to the paradoxes which exist in the world of international affairs that we tend to disregard their full significance. This was particularly evident a short while ago when United Nations Day was celebrated. On that occasion all the modern devices of propaganda were used to make people "United Nations conscious." At the same time, however, the daily papers were carrying announcements of war and preparations for war. It is difficult to stimulate enthusiasm for the idea of United Nations and at the same time to be preparing for war among what are, in fact, the Ununited nations.

While the success of the United Nations forces in Korea has been looked upon as a symbol of hope nevertheless there is every evidence that the world scene has not greatly changed. As a consequence the war machines of the western powers are being reactivated at a rapid pace and people are being gradually conditioned toward the possibilities of a war, the like of which history has never recorded. There is no hesitancy on the part of the leaders in telling us that we are now engaged upon a struggle for the preservation of civilization itself. With the discovery of the atom bomb and its more awful successor, the hydrogen bomb, the issue is that of survival, to which all other issues are secondary.

At this point it is only natural to ask how this had all come about. What has happened to the post-war plans? It is but a short time since we heard such phrases as "After the war the world will be reordered. After the war men will get due recognition of their basic rights. After the war an era of peace will begin." The war did end and an era of reconstruction commenced but, before the wounds of war have been actually healed, men are once again threatened with the terrors of a world war and this time with the threat of annihilation.

Are we to conclude that all the plans for peace, including the United Nations Organization, were but idle dreams and that peace among nations is an impossibility? Obviously not. For the Christian knows that Christ came to this earth to bring peace to men of good-will and if only man would put his will in accord with God, then war will not be a normal phase of history.

We have reached the present critical point in international affairs, not because the United Nations Organization is a fantasy, nor because men too soon forgot the evils of war, but rather because there is little effort to attend to the one thing that really matters: the root cause of war. It is not a simple question of reducing the military might of Germany, or in time, of Russia, but rather of getting to the moral roots of the problem. It is not a question of our will, but of God's will. But, because we have been betraying our Christian ideals for so long a time, we are unable in a crisis to invoke those principles and so attack the problems that confront us. As a result we seek refuge behind the fragile facade of armed strength.

It is of extreme importance at this moment as our country enters into a period of warlike activity, to remember that the strongest army and the most deadly weapons cannot bring peace. They may be instrumental in staving off a terrible war but we will not thereby have victory. Moreover, if another world war should envelop us and if in the long run we are able to trample upon the iron horse of Communism, even then we will not have peace.

Too long we have thought of peace as a mere absence of conflict, as a time when no great sacrifices were required of anyone. We have been wrong. To win lasting peace is even more difficult than to win a war, for it will require a constant sacrifice. The state of mind that is habitual on the eye of war—the state of being ready to sacrifice anything to avoid war—is the proper state of mind in which to end a war and build up the peace. But this calls for a reversal of our ideas. Because for us the return to normalcy means the return to selfishness—the cause of all wars. The price of peace is sacrifice, and either we must pay this price or we are doomed.

The problem before us is much more fundamental than that of the United Nations organization, since true peace is not the mathematical result of a balance of forces. In its last and deepest meaning it is the acceptance of moral principles. This means the acceptance of God whom man has so long forsaken. In a word, the first requisite for peace is nothing else than the sacrifice of man's will for the will of God. "Unless the Lord build the house he labor in vain that build it."

The way back to God is the way of worship and when we begin to turn all that we do and are into worship, the false self within us will die. We shall forget to be selfish and grasping and we shall want to serve the world. Love of others is the fulfilment of the love of God. It is the only road to peace.

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