

Our Contributors.

FROM BOTH PARTIES.

A large number of people want to be on such terms with God and worldly persons as to receive substantial favors from both parties. They study to be pious enough to win and hold God's good pleasure, so that they can have his help in times of special need, and they also aim to obtain substantial advantages from those who are enemies of God.

We see an example of this kind in the prophet Balaam. He was anxious to be favored with the good-will of God, so that he might be protected from harm and have prosperity, and yet he also desired to derive from King Balak, the opponent of God, the liberal sums of money which he offered him to curse Israel. Rev. A. C. Dixon says: "Balak wished him to curse Israel, and Balaam seemed anxious to gratify him. God told him, however, not to go with Balak, but so persistent was Balak in his entreaty that Balaam went a second time to ask God's permission. God let him have his own way, though he was angry with him for it." He further says: "Balaam would like to induce God to allow him to do wrong. He prays, not so much in order to learn God's will as to induce God to do his will. He offers sacrifice with the purpose of changing God's mind. He is afraid to disobey, while he listens with longing to the siren song of Balak's promise of reward. Like all such self-centred characters, Balaam went down in gloom." This is an awful condition to be in. One must be very blind if he thinks that he can retain God's favor, and at the same time be on most cordial terms with the enemies of God. There are tens of thousands of people, belonging to Christian churches, who are as blind as that. They attend church services somewhat frequently, give some money for pastoral support, imagining that thereby they have God on their side; they also keep on delightful terms with the openly ungodly, entering into compacts with them for profit without regard to moral principle. Such ones will at last leave this world for eternal darkness.—C. H. Wetherbee.

CANADIAN JOURNALISM.

An article in *The Westminster* (Presbyterian), of Toronto, on the "Degeneration of Canadian Journalism," is so clear and strong and just that it deserves the widest possible circulation.

The press is one of the greatest blessings and one of the greatest curses of modern civilization. It is a power making for righteousness second only to the pulpit; it is a power making for corruption second to almost no other agency afflicting society. It inspires to all that is beautifullest in the arts of heaven; it seduces to all that is hatefullest in the arts of hell. In the United States a few papers like the *New York Evening Post* save the daily press from swift judgment, as Lot saved for a while degenerate Sodom. In Canada the moral tone of journalism is conspicuously higher than it is in the United States, but here, too, the forces

are at work which make for the hell of the yellow journal.

The stupid game—it would be stupid were it only a game—at which newspapers play among themselves, biting and devouring one another, might be regarded as dangerous, but only dangerous play, were it not that the habit of sniping at one another becomes fixed, and the weapons are turned upon exposed and defenceless men in public and private life. A newspaper man has in his own paper the opportunities of defence before that section of the public for whose praise or blame he has most reverence, but to a man who has no self-defence a vindictive and conscienceless press is a thing to be feared even more than to be hated. The almost unrestricted liberty accorded to the press of Canada has been taken advantage of by dishonest and evil-minded men, and has been turned into unbridled license. The prostitution of a great privilege to personal or party ends is the darkening curse of Christian journalism.

The significant thing, and the thing, too, in which there is tragedy, is that newspapers of the most incurable mendacity are edited by men who in private life and personal relations are honorable, courteous and kind. They seem to have a dual personality, the one a gentleman, the other a foot-pad. At the club, or in the street, they would be first to resent a breach of the code of honor, but in their journalistic relations they violate every law of decency and evince only the remotest regard for truth and righteousness the law of libel allows. The peril of it is in the cynicism that eats like a canker at the heart of journalism, and its tragedy is that the descent to Avernus is easy; that in the long run the goodness to Dr. Jekyll degenerates irredeemably into the hatefulness of Mr. Hyde.

The crime against the profession of journalism which unreliable and dishonest newspapers commit is more serious than many newspaper men suppose. It is a blow at the first essentials of newspaper work. A false statement or an unjust judgment deliberately published and unatoned for, discounts enormously in the mind of the public the journal that publishes it, and brings even honest and faithful service under suspicion. Some of our newspapers have earned the right of being disbelieved until their statements are independently verified. No public journal can afford to bear the reputation of untruthfulness or of cowardice, but such an evil reputation is the Nemesis of a newspaper's crime every time the public comes to know that it has published a hurtful falsehood which it fails to apologize for or to withdraw. And in the lost reputation of one of its members journalism of every kind is made to suffer loss.

This feature of degenerate journalism, its falseness and its cowardice, is a menace to the country's weal, in that

it makes self-respecting men reluctant to enter public life, and makes it impossible for the best men to give their best work to the service of the public. There are men of the finest capacity and most incorruptible integrity in public life in Canada to-day, in both political parties, who have been the unshielded targets of newspaper vituperation, and who have been discredited and undone had they been less steadfast or less invulnerable, or had not their traducers quite so recklessly overshoot their mark. Men of intelligence and honor and fineness of feeling shrink from the humiliation of a municipal or political campaign, and as a result the number of competent men willing to enter the councils of their city or country is dangerously small. For this the abandoned and reckless public journals are directly responsible.

"Leave politics alone," is the sinister advice *The Westminster* and other religious journals receive from the most ravenous plunderers in the political arena every time it approves the good or rebukes the bad in the public service of either party. Would it not bring about a political millennium in Canada were this whole brood of newspaper harpies and harriers themselves driven forever from the field of politics? They and their ilk have done more than all other agencies combined to befoul and embitter and poison the public life of Canada. Until the standard of ethics is as just, and the code of honor as high, in journalism as in private life, or in the street or at the club, public life in Canada will continue to be a cruel and dangerous thing; and unless the lampooner and the liar are cast out of respectable newspaper circles, the curse will not be lifted, nor will the degenerate tendencies of Canadian newspaper work be arrested or turned again.

Something New in Municipal Law.

In the charter granted by the Provincial Parliament last session, creating Valleyfield, Que., a city, a unique clause appears, which prohibits any person connected with the liquor traffic from ever sitting as a member of the city council. Of course, such a radical measure in the interests of temperance, especially in a province where temperance sentiment is not strong, was not carried through without strenuous and concerted opposition, but its advocacy was also vigilant and vigorous, and carried the day. To Mr. F. X. Dupuis, member for Chateauguay, and a tried and true temperance worker, it is said, belongs the chief credit for initiating and carrying through this progressive feature in the new city's government. The action serves to show the advance in temperance sentiment to be seen all over the land; it also enforces the lesson that temperance workers need to learn—that there are many and various ways of dealing the drink evil and its advocates a blow.—*Chris. Guardian*.

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