

Rev. Dr. F. L. Orchard, President M. R. E. C. Spoke To Convention

Reverend Gentleman Discussed Practical Religious Questions In An Able Paper at St. Andrew's Church Last Evening

At St. Andrews Presbyterian Church last evening Rev. Dr. F. L. Orchard, the president, delivered the presidential address.

Rev. Dr. Orchard's Theme was "Things New and Old." His address which was heard with interest was as follows:

Things New and Old—No one has ever excelled Jesus in the artistry of words. He was always able to express with graceful ease the great thoughts of His mind and the purposes of His soul in terms that the people understood. The record says, "They heard Him gladly" and "They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." Among His picture phrases let us think of this, "A man who bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old." He was speaking in Nature's great cathedral. He sat by the seaside and multitudes gathered on the shore. One after another those great parables of the kingdom came from His lips: Behold a sower went forth to sow; The Kingdom of Heaven is as a grain of mustard seed; it is like leaven in the meal; like treasure hid in a field; like a man seeking goodly pearls, and like a net cast into the sea. Did you a teacher summon to his aid a greater wealth of clear and beautiful illustrations "Have you understood these things?" He asked His disciples. They answered "Yes." "Well," He adds, "the one who has been so instructed is like a householder who bringeth forth out of his treasury things new and old."

Things new and old from the treasury of the mind is the way then that Jesus describes his own teaching and I like the suggestion of that phrase. Jesus was a sensation in the startling newness of His thoughts and ideals. He cared nothing about traditions and the convention of life as such. He refused to think in old thought channels just because they were old or to act in conventional grooves just because they were conventional. He was not afraid of new thought forms or uncharted ways for those new things were a greater aid in the purpose of His soul. We need never cease to wonder at the Teacher who standing on the shores of the Galilean lake, dared to set aside traditions that were rooted as deeply as the roots of Judaism itself, and say, "It hath been said by those of old time, but lo, I say unto you."

Let us hasten to observe, however, that He did not condemn the old because it was old. He was ever searching in it all for that which was true that it might serve as material for the new structure of His mind. He early learned to love the Scriptures, stored them in his memory, and saturated His life with their teaching. He knew that through those prophets God had spoken to the world of men. He insisted, however, upon putting His own interpretation upon the words and would not be bound by the sayings by which the rabbis had hedged them in. He observes the Sabbath and knew the part it had played in the religious life of His nation. But because traditional teachings were robbing it of its largest worth He cast them aside to give it a content in keeping with His own thought. He honored. He honored the temple. From the time when, twelve years old, He stood within its walls to question the doctors of the law of the day when, approaching the cross, He came to the brow of the Mount of Olives and, seeing its greaming dome, burst into tears, he loved all its associations. But He saw its abuses and did not hesitate to sternly declare His judgment upon it. Thus we see how in His character and in His thought Jesus linked the old and the new and it was fitting for him to say, "A man instructed in my words is like a householder in whose stores are things old and new."

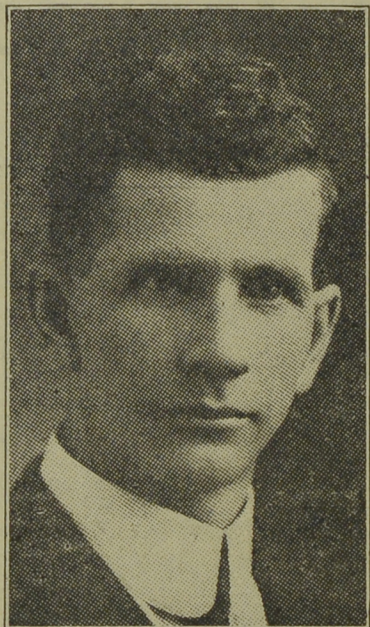
Let us note the way in which this is a principle of life and a law of progress. As one grows older the outlook changes and the philosophy of life itself may be altered many times, but

if these things mark a true progress, for the soul, the lessons of life's experiences will be conserved and the old will speak with eloquent voice in the new. The psalmist's simile for life is a tree—"He shall be like a tree growing by the riverside." Through the agency of its leaves a tree adds a new ring of wood each year to its trunk but all the old rings live and a common life pulses through them all. So our lives gather within themselves the lessons and the wisdom of all the years and in like fashion our civilization is built out of things new and old.

You recall the day when England, under the Stuarts, fell upon evil times and hot-blooded people began to counsel revolution. Fortunately wiser thought prevailed and the abuses were corrected without the overthrow of the constitution and the destruction of English law. She preserved the values of the past and added what the new times required. In France, however, chaotic revolution prevailed and in their zeal for reform they swept so much away that the worth of the centuries was lost. When the roof of our father's home leaks and the foundation timbers begin to decay it is rarely necessary or wise to demolish the whole structure and build again. The wise son will repair the roof and replace the weakened timbers and thus save and improve the whole. Edmund Burke was thinking of the application of this to life when he said that civilization is a compact between the dead, the living and the unborn.

The tendency today to break away from the past is somewhat marked. The world is in a mood to cast aside traditions, to defy conventions, and to blaze new trails. This is happening politically, on an enormous scale, industrially in a way to alarm many and socially and religiously in as great a measure. At the same time the sentiment that binds us to the past was never stronger. We are packing the museums with vivid mementoes of early days; we are furnishing our homes with old things and we are singing songs of the old spinning wheels, and dreaming dreams of the long ago, but of such a combination there should come a finer calibre of life and the world should be making progress toward the far-off goals of God.

We would make a particular application of this general thought. It is pertinent then to recall that one hundred and fifty four years ago Robert Raikes gathered a group of ragged and disorderly children from "Sooty Alley" near his printing establishment in the city of Gloucester, and endeavoured during the freer hours of Sunday to teach them something of the rudiments of life. That was the beginning of what the world knows as the Sunday School. The story is told of a philosopher who once presented a plan to his emperor and when the emperor shook his head he went away. "But why did you not stay and argue your case?" they asked. "I never argue," he replied, "with a man who has ten thousand soldiers at his call." Granted, but there is something still more important. Do not argue with one who has truth upon his side. Do not argue with Galileo. He is the only one who believes that the Sun is a centre and the earth is moving around it. But Galileo is right and the world will go over to his side. Do not argue with Columbus. He is the only man who believes there is a continent hidden below the western horizon line. But Columbus is right and all the world will yet be on his side. Robert Raikes had few supporters, many critics and much determined opposition but a valid principle had lodged itself within his mind—"Vice is preventable. Begin with the child." Because that thought is right it was bound to survive and the institution he started in such a modest way was destined to become one of the great agencies in the history of Christian things. There are today fifty million pupils and



REV. DR. F. L. ORCHARD
Who Delivered His Address Last Evening on "The New and the Old."

teachers in the Sunday Schools of the world.

Half a century ago organized Sunday School work was commenced in the Maritime Provinces. Fifty years is a very brief time in the terms of all history or even a small part of the century and a half since the experiment of Robert Raikes, but in terms of human achievement, changing thought and social progress it is a very long time indeed. Sunday Schools like other human institutions have changed with the changes of the years and so I proposed as my theme tonight "The Old and The New in Sunday School Work."

Robert Raikes began with the basic thought "Vice is preventable—Begin with the child." He believed that God intended people to grow into the stature of moral manhood and that character was the highest product of the world. When news of the death of Abraham Lincoln startled the nations, Tolstoi in Russia said, "He was a Christ in miniature." That was bold language but it was nevertheless Scriptural. When Christ speaks in that great manifest of His Kingdom that we call the Sermon on the Mount, we are somewhat dazed as we follow the mounting moral implications of His words, until they come at length to that dizzy height "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." We believe that character can be attained in this life that the character of Christ is the great pattern for it all.

We believe also that childhood is a strategic time in that great character shaping process. The great Designer of human life has placed a few years at its beginning when the soul is very plastic, when thought grooves are being made, when habits are being formed, when wider attitudes are being crystallized and that in all ways are big with the ultimate destinies of life. I have often quoted the simple yet significant words of Margaret Slattery in a little war-time book called "The Second Line of Defense. Speaking of teachers in relationship to their pupils she said: "They are six weeks old, they have no ideals. They are six years old, there is hope. They are sixteen, our task is nearly done. They are twenty, whether we will or not our fundamental work is finished. We have given 'the set for the life,' we have transmitted ideals."

We believe too that life in those years can enjoy the natural companionship of God and that the character forming process needs the redeeming touch of a personal Saviour. That religious experience is the crowning factor in all that can help to make life new and strong and beautiful. A poet caught something of its truth when he wrote:

"I saw Him once, He stood a moment there,

He spoke one word which laid his spirit bare.

He grasped my hand, then passed beyond by ken

But what I was I shall not be again."

In our effort to achieve these things through the agency of the Sunday School we need all that the experience of the years has taught and all that science and research have placed at our disposal. We care nothing for

tradition because it is tradition or for convention, because it is convention. We want the best way of achieving the ends in a great divinely appointed task and we would be like the householder who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old.

We will avail ourselves of all that the psychologists have learned of the laws of human growth and development. We will have regard for the primary nature of the religious instincts of the soul and study the ways in which they are wont to awaken. We will make ourselves intelligent about the co-ordination of the physical and the spiritual and the unity of all the different phases of a life. We will seek lessons that are graded to the needs of the pupils irrespective of the sentiment for uniformity. We will set the goal of teachers trained for their delicate and important tasks. We will seek a physical equipment and a general environment that will afford us the greatest aid. We will in short, bring to these old tasks all the new things that will help in their achievement.

And now, how far have we already gone in it all. If you could compare a school in one of our progressive present day churches with a school of fifty years ago when we were commencing to come together in these Conventions for Counsel and conference in our common task. I am sure you would find a gratifying change. But goals are always comparative. Toronto is West of Fredericton, but East of Winnipeg. Despite what we have done we are yet far from the ideal in our Sunday school efforts. Dr. Faunce said, when he was president of Brown University, that the Sunday School was the christian institution in which there was the greatest spread between the ideal and the actual. If it is so, and I am afraid his observation was not without supporting fact, it need not continue to be so.

I read recently a sermon upon "old mills that Have Ceased to Grind." The text was Jeremiah's word, "I will take from them the sound of the millstones." The heading was sufficient to start a train of thoughts which is not inappropriate to our purpose here. The sites of the old watermills are among the most appealing landmarks of the countryside. They have for the most part ceased to grind. Man has learned a cheaper and better way of meeting his need for bread. Great stream driven plants received golden rivers of wheat, converging through the elevators to their hoppers and produce thousands of barrels of flour a day which are shipped to every town and hamlet of the land. But even if the old creaking mills are still, since you and I were young, we love them for their associations as Mr. Johnson loved the one of which he sang to Maggie and, in their day, they furnished an experience out of which grew the mills that now feed the nations. In the same spirit we pay our tribute to Robert Raikes and the thousands of others who have helped to make Sunday School history. We honor those who have had a part in these fifty years of organized Sunday School work in the Maritimes, but with that appreciation let me couple an appeal to all who share the heritage of their labors today to help make the school of the church a more efficient and effective agency in the affairs of the Kingdom of God. In the finest sense let us be like the householder who brings forth from his treasure things new and old.

CHIMES

Brief, on a flying night,
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt—O hark!
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark

Sudden the cold airs swing.
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.
—ALICE MEYNELL.

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