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## Civic Duty Dealt With By Rev. Dr. Smith In Able Sermon

### Religion Should be Carried to the Polls and Better Civic Government Would Result--Preacher Points Out Defects in Social and Civic Life of City--Bridge-Whist and Pool on a Par.

At St. Paul's Church last night the minister, Rev. Dr. W. H. Smith, preached upon matters which affect Fredericton as a city and touched upon various matters which influence the individual as well as the civic life. His sermon which follows, was heard by a large congregation:

Text, Revelation 21:16, the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

This is John's vision of the City of God. Its great outstanding feature was proportion or harmony. Many regard this as the standard for perfection or completeness in the Kingdom of God. It may with equal justification be regarded as the ideal of redeemed human life in which all the powers are developed in harmonious relations. The principle is the fundamental law of all life. In the growing child the physical life is first in evidence. As life unfolds the mental assumes larger relative importance. Soon the moral and spiritual ideal becomes dominant and the whole life is balanced and developed in beauty and harmony. Any weakening or failure spells disaster or abnormality. This great principle applies equally to a growing civilization. Unless material wealth and social opportunity are kept in their proper place by the moral and spiritual ideal these will assume a prominence which will speedily wreck all our institutions. The history of dead and dying nations furnishes appalling illustrations of this truth. The basal principle gives a standard and which tests our modern cities.

#### THE NEEDED THINGS

1. What is Our Thought of Fredericton as a City? What are the things which should have first consideration?

(a) It should be a clean, wholesome place physically. The danger to life in the city is greater than in the country. In the United States the average death rate in the country is 15 per 1000, in the cities 17 per 1000. As a result over 120,000 per year die in the cities because of the extra unfavourable conditions. Scientific sanitary arrangements reduce the death rate and sickness very materially. Recently in Glasgow one of the worst slum districts was rebuilt and the death rate dropped from 33 to 14 per 1000. If our people are to live and do good thinking and attain the highest efficiency this city must be sanitary. Every house should have sanitary arrangements, good light, pure air and decent surroundings. Every drain should be cleaned, every foul place removed and the place kept clean. Our streets should be constantly cared for and no foul matter allowed to rest. The health officer should not wait until complaints come to him. It should be his business to inspect regularly, constantly, persistently.

#### EDUCATION

(b) It should be made favourable to the education of our young people.

What do we wish our children to become? Surely the best men and women possible in health, morals, ideals and efficiency on their chosen calling. The worst parents will agree with this. There are several factors under the control of the City are worth noting. The public school is of prime importance. This demands the best buildings, finest equipment, most eminent teachers and thorough discipline. Then, the places of amusement, as moving picture shows and theatre, demand careful supervision. In many places these are fruitful sources of iniquity. Further, the attitude of public officials to law enforcement has much to do with the development of character. When places of questionable character are permitted to abound, when traps for the young are tolerated, when in defiance of the law cigarette machines are sold and used, when lotteries and gambling are winked at, when vile literature and indecent pictures are known to be handled the atmosphere is heavily laden with poison. A vigorous administration which refuses absolutely to tolerate any of these pests is a positive force in the education of character. The ideal city will not permit snares for young feet. In addition to the stern repression of iniquity there should be positive constructive plans for the higher life. There should be medical examination in our schools, better playgrounds, and some broader enlistment of patriotic sentiment.

#### INJURIOUS INSTITUTIONS

(c) It should stand immovably for the overthrow of the institutions which are known to ruin our people. I will only mention three. First, there is the saloon, which is our worst social enemy. It lives in an atmosphere heavy with the malaria of social death. It backs up every other vice, ruins its victims and curses future generations. It produces a degenerate class from which our criminals,

paupers, insane and diseased largely come. Its methods, aims and results are well known and any city that is in league with such an institution is in league with death and hell. Tonight it is some drunkard who once innocent goes home a demon. If it were our boy would we vote for it? If not we have not vote for it to send another's boy to death. Then, there is social licentiousness. We are told there is no social vice in this city. If this means there is no licensed or open public houses of prostitution all will argue. But anyone who has anything to do with social problems knows very well there is much in which is a disgrace to the city and a fruitful source of iniquity. Much is overlooked, winked at, or laughed at, which should be dealt with seriously and suppressed. Many suspicions are abroad and these should be at once investigated and all doubt removed. The prevalence of indifference in society is not so much an indication of innocence or absence of evil as an indication of familiarity with common rumor and knowledge which rob life of moral seriousness. Further, there is gambling in various forms. It is illegal and morally serious, because it holds out the hope of an easy way to make money by robbing others. This is encouraged by the vicious custom of society in many fashionable parlor games. The ethics of a game of bridge where gambling prevails and the ethics of a game of pool are one and the same. The ideal city which seriously seeks the highest life of its people will not build up schools to teach truth and manhood and also maintain dens for the pulling down of manhood. Consistency will stand for the higher and also banish the lower.

#### INDUSTRIAL PROBLEM

(d) It should seek to extend its activity so that our people could remain to enrich its life. The recent revival of interest looking toward the increase of power facilities, transportation and industry is a move in the right direction. There is no valid reason why Fredericton should not become a city of 15,000 people within fifteen years. But valuable as is material progress we must not overlook the fact that to be a real blessing it must be accompanied by and be subordinate to the development of true manhood and womanhood. When the commercial or material becomes dominant, an in Rome and other striking examples, it is always the forerunner of decay and death. In order that our material progress may be really helpful to ourselves and others it must be related in God's order to personal faith and service.

There are other things which we desire in the city, such as pure and undefiled religion, personal integrity and social sympathy which do not come directly within the sphere of our civic responsibility. It is worth while filling out the picture in order to see what type of civilization would prevail should our ideal be realized. Would it be worthy of our better judgment? Would it be worthy of our Lord and Master?

#### ARE WE SATISFIED?

II. Does Fredericton Satisfy Our Thought of the Ideal City?

There are two ways of studying this question. (a) Does it actually fulfil our thought of what a city should be? Possibly the ideals of some are so low that they are quite satisfied and would not be willing to make an effort to improve on present conditions. These are hopelessly lost in their own selfishness. To those who have confidence in the possibilities of human life the answer must be an emphatic, No. I do not know any city that fulfils my ideal. Nothing short of perfection of man personally and socially can satisfy. "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." This is the destiny of life. The problem is too vast to be solved in one year, generation of age. Old offenders may disappear but new ones take their place if possible. Sin, vice and selfishness do not flee away under any rule all at once. They will be rolled back only when the Kingdom of God comes in. We hear people saying they are discouraged and disappointed because in one year or two years a city government does not clean up all the moral and physical filth. What do they expect? That in such a short time they could undo the vicious habits of generations? The first thing we need to learn is that this question of good civic government is a tremendous question demanding great care, wisdom, patience and judgment. No man is perfect and no civic government is perfect. The best find mistakes in their work. Elect a good civic government every year for a generation, back them up even if they are not perfect, give them your best counsel, sympathy and co-operation and then compare the result with

the wretched, hesitating, criticizing, fickle habit and policy which has existed for years. Our wretched shifting methods and indifference has given us a system about as unsatisfactory as possible. This is a large work, and demands large ideals, faith, patience and courage.

#### NOT A SUCCESS

(b) Does it satisfy ideally? Does it appeal to our people as a thing worth working for, praying for, sacrificing for? Is it the great ambition of our people to have this city in actual life the expression of the best? Have the people taken their stand on this platform and are they ready to see their purpose realized even at large sacrifices? I fear this is where we are failing. There is a lack of civic consciousness, a lack of the sense of social obligation and responsibility. We have heard a great deal about the rights of citizens but only faintly about the duties of citizens. Individualism has become so developed that the social conscience is not strong enough to weld the people into one aggressive power for civic redemption. The power is in the hands of the people, but the people have not felt the over-mastering call to use that power for civic betterment with unvarying constancy and self-sacrificing consecration. We can scarcely say that as a city we have yet made a success of self-government.

#### THE REASON

III. Why is the Civic Consciousness Dull and Inoperative? There are no doubt many contributing factors, some of which are far removed from the public gaze. There are also some things so evident that their full significance may not be appreciated. Three facts deserve special attention.

(a) The low ideal of many Christian people. We may in our hasty moments blame the ungodly for the stains upon our civic life, but in this we are overlooking the fact that the enemies of Fredericton could never win a victory without the active support of those whose profession identifies them with the Church of God. The Master demands loyalty to the truth and a readiness to serve even unto death if necessary. All Christians admit the principle but in the actual working of civic affairs it is sadly cast aside. Many who pray "Thy Kingdom Come" vote for the enemies of that Kingdom because of some personal jealousy, old rivalry, or business competition toward the representatives of good government. Others will vote for the enemy rather than lose business or offend an old friend. Others because they are afraid to take an open stand for principle. The low ideals of Christian people practically give sufficient strength to the enemy to elect him in many a hard fought struggle. Surely our Lord expects his people to carry their religion to the polls and to declare our allegiance openly. He expects us to do His will even if we must suffer all things for His sake. What a tremendous revolution would come to this city if all who name His name would stand together against the foe of purity, truth and righteousness. But further, there is a surprising lack of interest taken by many Christian people in the civic problem. Give them or let them have a good time, a pleasant evening in the club, a dance of a bridge party and they are satisfied. The fact that the city may have much of tragedy, many ruined homes and dissipated people does not in any way disturb their ease. The selfishness of many Christian people is killing the vision of what the city should be.

#### BAD CITIZENSHIP

(b) The bad citizenship of good men is another reason. Why is it so hard to get good, influential, wealthy men to do civic duty? It is of course not a pleasant duty. Any man who tries to do his duty will make enemies who will slander and hate him. They did it to Jesus and to every honest man since. The main reason is they are too busy. What does this mean? That they want all the time for their private business and are un-

(Continued on page seven)

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**BIG PURSE SUBSCRIBED FOR WRESTLING MATCH**

(Canadian Press)  
New York, Feb. 25--Polish residents of Greater New York have subscribed a purse of \$20,000 in gold for a wrestling match in this city between Zyzbeco and Frank Gotch.

**SALE OF CIGARETTES TO BE PROHIBITED**

Salt Lake City, Utah, Feb. 25--A bill prohibiting the manufacture and sale of cigarettes passed the lower house of the legislature yesterday. Friends of the bill say it will pass the senate.

A teaspoonful of warm honey taken every twenty minutes has a surprising effect on catarrh. Honey should always be kept handy, as it is invaluable in cases of illness caused by catching cold.

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