

Ritter's "Moravian Church in Philadelphia." A grand-nephew of the latter sent me a letter describing a visit to Toby Hirte's shop, when one of the Ritter brothers pulled out of a glass jar what he thought was a pear, and sucked at it, only to find himself presently tugging at the tail of a preserved mouse, instead of the stem of the fruit.

This letter said: "Mr. Hirte's room was in the second story of Mr. Conrad

Gerhard's house, second door from the northwest corner of Second and Race Streets."

And so at last I had traced the elusive Toby to his lair.

I sent the story of the hunt to Mr. Kipling, who wrote me: "Thank you very much for your note and the cuttings, and especially for that most interesting letter from Lebanon by Tobias Hirte. It is always a pleasure to me to

hear more of the history of my friend, and it is right for your city's sake that he should be remembered."

Those who visit Philadelphia for the coming Sesquicentennial in 1926 will find that, as Kipling says in telling Toby's story:

The things that truly last when men
and times have passed,
They are all in Pennsylvania this
morning!

A FIGHT FOR A FREE PULPIT

A NARRATIVE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

BY AN EPISCOPAL CLERGYMAN

WHEN I came to my present parish, I found a church of the type almost universal twenty-five years before, and still flourishing too widely. There was splendid music at the services and an atmosphere of peaceful enjoyment. It was, as many of the congregation delighted to say, "a nice little family church." The "old-fashioned Gospel" was preached, and lived up to pretty well, I take it, by the congregation.

In the meantime a great city, for years tight in the clutches of a crooked political gang notorious throughout America, fostered evil in all its ugly phases, and, through its better citizens, cried aloud for emancipation. Slowly social workers began to take up their tasks of guidance and healing. And now and again they turned to the churches for help, too often in vain.

What would Jesus have said to these contented people called by his name?

I tried to tell them, as best I could, what I thought he would have said. I pointed out the concrete needs of those at their doors. I found that many of the congregation knew nothing of the social movements of the day, and cared less. When I used the word "social," they thought I was talking either about people who figured in the society columns or about Socialism.

Many of those who did understand were not slow to register their disapproval of such sermons as I preached which treated of social justice. The wife of the president of the street railway company left the parish in indignation, complaining that in a sermon I had sided with the strikers in a recent walk-out on their lines when her life and her husband's life were in danger, and that "I might just as well have mentioned her husband by name as to say what I did say." As a matter of fact, while my sympathies were entirely with the strikers, as were those of the city at large, the citizens of which were walking to work to help "the cause," I had made no mention of the strike in the pulpit. I had, instead, preached a general sermon on the cause of labor.

But there was another point of contention in the parish besides the ser-

mons. It had seemed to me that there was no movement giving more promise of being helpful toward democracy than the open forum movement spreading rapidly throughout America. So we inaugurated in the parish house on Sunday nights an open forum. We announced a list of speakers representing a large range of social problems. From the first the meetings seemed to meet a real need in the city. Men and women of all creeds, and none, listened to various speakers with whom they agreed or disagreed, got excited and calmed down, and stayed to mingle with one another and get acquainted. Social workers were grateful for the opportunity to promote social education.

The friendly feeling among those who attended was illustrated by two young Russian Jews who came to me one Sunday night and said: "We want to tell you that we feel more at home here than anywhere else in this city."

But the attitude of the majority of our own parishioners was different. Most of them stayed away—which has been the experience, apparently, of other churches which have introduced forums. I was impressed with the fact that few members of the vestry came.

One Monday morning, after we had had a plea for Socialism by one of the leading Socialists of the city, a wealthy member of the vestry went to his fellow-members flourishing a clipping from a paper which had carried a report of the meeting. "This is what we are coming to," he cried; "Socialism."

However, there seemed to be no *organized* opposition to the things we were trying to accomplish. So I thought. But I was made to realize that the ground for optimism was somewhat sandy.

One evening a vestryman who was a staunch believer in our newer policies telephoned to me. "You may be interested to know," he said, "that there has been a secret meeting of your vestry. You are to be asked to get out quietly."

I at once decided on a course of action. The congregation had a right to know that their vestry had departed from the church's custom of holding vestry meetings with the rector presiding. They had a right to know of the secret meeting,

and of what their vestry had decided to do. I was sure that the majority would sanction neither the method nor the decision.

On the following Sunday, therefore, I tried to sum up in my sermon what I had been trying to teach since I had been in the parish, and what my ideals for the parish had been concerning the point at issue, social Christianity. I tried to express in my own words what is the conviction of hundreds of men in our pulpits to-day. In closing, I said:

"There is a momentous conflict going on in the Church. It is going on in this parish and in many others. It is the conflict between the so-called 'old-fashioned Gospel' and the so-called 'social Gospel.' The first was long supposed to represent exclusively the teaching of Jesus. The second, which includes what was true in the first, has impressed itself upon us, after many years of patient investigation of the records by scholars, as a more exact interpretation of the teaching and life of the Master. The old had to do with the salvation of the individual. The new has to do also with the salvation of society. The cause of Jesus Christ stands at the crossroads. I believe that the issue is to be decided in favor of the Christianity which, we now know, Jesus preached. In spite of two thousand years of a Church often misunderstanding its own mission, a Church too often misinterpreting the words of the Master—in spite of this, Christianity is coming into its own. This 'new Christianity' is not the kind of religion on which we have been reared. Neither is it the kind to leave us contented and soothed. It is the kind that strikes at the very root of many of our social relationships. The Christianity which is going to conquer the world is the Christianity for which Jesus died—the Christianity that dares to believe in the universal Fatherhood of God and in the universal brotherhood of man, with all that such belief implies. And that is the kind of religion for which this parish should stand."

At the close of the sermon I briefly presented some of the facts having to do with my relationship with the vestry since I had been in the parish. I spoke

of the contract which I had made with that body when I accepted the call, a contract which definitely and somewhat elaborately stated that I should have "complete freedom in the pulpit," and, furthermore, that the vestry would support "every attempt on the part of the rector to extend the kingdom of God in this community." I spoke also of the secret meeting. "You have a right," I said, "to be honestly represented by your vestry. If you agree with me, you should elect, at the annual meeting two weeks from to-morrow night, a group of men who will represent your ideals of freedom, and who will abide by their contracts. I am quite willing to abide by your decision as expressed at that meeting."

It would be difficult to exaggerate the effect of the revelation. Men who do things in secret in the church dislike, as elsewhere, to have their actions dragged into the daylight. Vestrymen and their wives passed me in the vestibule after service without the usual greetings. Little groups gathered in the nave to indulge in whispered conversations.

Two days later the wife of one of the vestrymen came to see me. She was at a loss to understand "how I could have insulted the members of my vestry right in church, publicly, where they had no chance to talk back!"

"No vestry could ever have been more loyal to their rector than your vestry has been to you," she concluded. "But I came to tell you that if you and your followers succeed in electing a vestry that will support you and your policies, my husband and I will leave the church."

Such was the brand of the vestry's "loyalty"!

Four days before the annual parish meeting a final session of the vestry was called which was not secret. I was urged to attend. And it was an interesting evening. As the vestrymen came in there were no greetings between us. One or two painfully shook hands with me; a few mumbled some words; most of the men sat down in silent dignity.

An attorney, a member of the vestry, acted as spokesman. His fellow-vestrymen sat in gloomy silence as he expressed their common amazement at the "impropriety of a minister of the Gospel" in saying what I had said "from the chancel." Several times the speaker insisted that I had said certain things that Sunday which I did not say. I replied each time: "I made no such statement. Here is a copy of all that I said as reported by a court stenographer."

"I don't care what your copy says," replied the lawyer. "We know what you said."

After an extended presentation of "the mind of the vestry" we reached the astonishing proposition, which was stated as follows by the lawyer: "We want to be perfectly fair about this matter. If you will resign, your resignation to take effect the last day of this month, we will make you a present of three months' salary."

It was suggested that the matter be put in the form of a resolution. One after the other the vestrymen voted "Aye" on that resolution until nine had so registered their will (but one so voted with the qualifying statement that he would remain and support me if I stayed in the parish). It was the tenth alone, another lawyer, the man who had told me of the secret meeting, who voted "No."

"Now, sir," said the "prosecuting attorney," "you must see that you have made a bad situation by your impulsive statement from the chancel. We had no idea of making a public matter of this thing. We were coming to you quietly in a few weeks, as gentlemen, to tell you of our action."

I wondered why he wasn't frank enough to add "to make our offer." But when pulpits are to be bought and sold there are some phrases recognized by the tradesmen, apparently, as not in good taste.

To the question asking "for the last time" whether I would resign, I replied by saying that I had left the matter in the hands of the congregation, and would, as I had stated, abide by their decision, to be reached at the annual meeting.

"What will you gain by staying?" the lawyer asked. "Don't you see that you will injure your whole future in the ministry? Don't you see that you will split the church? You won't gain anything by trying to follow 'The Inside of the Cup.' The author of that book didn't give any solution for the problem of the church that tries to be modern."

I hadn't thought of "The Inside of the Cup" as having any bearing on our problem. But I began to wonder whether Mr. Churchill hadn't hit many an Episcopal vestryman harder than he knew.

The annual meeting, a few nights later, proved to be an event entirely unique to every one who came. Even the reporters of the morning papers found here a "story" that moved them out of their usual nonchalance towards church affairs. From my vantage-point as chairman—a position imposed upon me by the canons of the Church—I saw that the tradition of perfunctory annual meetings with few attending had been broken. Every seat in the parish house was filled.

After an hour of routine business, the attorney for the prosecution took his place beside my chair. It was nine o'clock. I mention the time because it was fifteen minutes of eleven when he sat down!

As he was closing a woman in the front row jumped to her feet. No longer able to repress her amazement at the remarkable address, she cried out: "But, sir, what is it you have against the rector?" The effect was magic. Out of the tension a ripple of laughter spread over the gathering. The attorney, vainly struggling to regain his composure, sat down. His attempt to defend the secret action of the vestry by maligning the rector on petty issues had succeeded

only in making votes for a progressive policy.

During the next fifteen minutes the vestryman who had voted a solitary "No" on the resolution asking for my resignation presented the other side of the case. Then the voting began.

What is ordinarily a perfunctory proceeding was now a thing surcharged with feverish tension. Voters were scanned by the members of the old vestry. Two or three were challenged. I appointed two tellers who, I knew, were quite honest and impartial gentlemen. However, I gave the old vestry an opportunity of appointing two more, if they so desired—an opportunity which was seized with amusing speed.

The counting of the ballots meant a painful wait. Some time after midnight the reporters began to worry over the probability of "not making the last edition." "Why didn't some one hit that lawyer?" one of them asked, his patience gone. "He talked two hours without saying anything."

The people were growing tired. Here and there heads were nodding wearily, but only a few had left.

It was one o'clock when the tellers returned with their report. No jury ever filed into a court-room amid greater suspense. One of the tellers began writing the names of the vestry candidates on a blackboard, with the number of votes each had received. People stood on their toes and in chairs, craning their necks to see the result. When it was discovered that a new vestry had been elected which would support a forward-looking programme for the parish, there was profound quiet.

Suddenly the voice of the old senior warden broke the stillness. "I intend to protest this election," he cried, his throat rasping.

But most of us were feeling, I think, that an inspiring victory had been won for the freedom of the pulpit and the social Gospel.

What has been the result to date?

We have a vestry of men who know that the Christian Church to-day has a task on its hands that is exhilarating in its complexity, who believe that Jesus came preaching the kingdom, and that the Church rests under a fundamental obligation to spread the spirit of that kingdom in its community and throughout the world; that wherever there is a need that the Church can meet there rests upon the Church an obligation to meet that need; that the pulpit should be free, and that no layman or group of laymen, moneyed or otherwise, should be allowed to muzzle it; that the Church should express the spirit of democracy in its purest form; who believe, therefore, that the Church is for the workingman as well as for the capitalist; that it is better for a church to suffer from want of money than for want of the spirit of Jesus; who believe, with Rauschenbusch, that the Church should lose its life, if need be, to save it.

The supporters of the old vestry left the parish and withdrew their financial

support, amounting to two-thirds of the annual budget. But their announced hope of "starving out the rector" has not been realized. Instead there is a congregation of devoted people showing a wholesome growth—people who believe in the ideals noted above, and who are willing to work for those ideals.

Out of my experience here set down I have come to believe more staunchly than ever before, not only that the freedom of the pulpit, with all that the phrase connotes in the way of parish activities, ought to be maintained at all cost, but that it can be maintained. The necessity of fostering this high end has never in the history of the Christian Church

been more pressing than at this present moment of transition from the "save-me-from-hell" Gospel to the Gospel of the kingdom as preached by Jesus. Social justice does not sum up the whole Gospel, but surely the failure of individualism to issue in just social relationships has come close to wrecking the propaganda of the Christian Church, and in the minds of multitudes has already made the Church worthy only of the scrap-heap.

A man who stands firmly for the truth will win the support of every man and woman who is open-minded. For years I have been convinced that too many men in our churches gave up just

at the time when they should have begun to fight. Often surrender is caused by fear, I think, of "hurting people's feelings." As I have read the life of Jesus I have never seen that he harbored any similar fear. There was nothing "soft" about his kind of Christianity. Perfectly tender and ever considerate, he was none the less totally lacking in that sentimentality which fears to speak the truth for the people's good, even on occasions when he was the dinner guest of those people. If his Church is to live to-day, its pulpits must be manned by men who speak the truth though it wound, temporarily, those who have shown them every personal kindness.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE MAYOR'S JOB

BY GEORGE S. BUCK

FORMERLY MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BUFFALO

"UNEASY lies the head that wears a crown" applies with just as much force to the mayor of a big city to-day as it did to the sovereign when royalty was a going concern. Of course the public has in rough outline an appreciation of the problems confronting a mayor charged with the duty of preserving law and order in a great municipality. There are, however, certain phases in the meeting of the mayor's responsibilities of which the public can have no idea, and there are some experiences of a personal character which are amusing, and it is with the hope that these features of a term of office may prove of interest to the reader that I venture upon this brief sketch.

The first shock which comes to a man after he is elected mayor of a large city is to discover that whatever he does or says has publicity value and his privacy is gone. The reporters watch his office door as a cat watches a mouse-hole. If a person of any importance in the community comes to see him, the caller no sooner leaves than the representatives of the press at once appear, asking what the visitor and what the mayor said, and then insist that the public demands to know immediately what the mayor is going to do about it.

As soon as the votes were counted in the mayoralty election my home phone began to ring incessantly, and this kept up day after day. By actual count, during the late afternoon and evening a call came in every four minutes. Some relief was secured by omitting my name from the next edition of the telephone directory, but before that was done people called up on all kinds of subjects. For instance, the winter of 1917-18 was an extremely cold one. Even the garbage froze in the containers, so that the work of the collectors was hard. I was summoned from a Sunday dinner to listen to a man who said that he had

bought a brand-new garbage-can for \$3.50; that the collectors had just been through his street and that now his can was all full of dents. He added, "I wish you would come out and look at it." I told him the work of collecting garbage was under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Public Works and that he should telephone him about it. He replied: "I *did* call him up, but from his language I infer that he does not care what happens to my garbage-can."

The hardest task before the successful candidate is to keep the right perspective, because so many people will actually or metaphorically pat him on the back and tell him what a wonderful man he is. It requires real self-control not to swell up with pride under the shower of commendation. A new mayor is certain to be the recipient of complimentary letters which may have every appearance of good faith and may be perfectly sincere, but a little searching of the office files will help lessen his pride when he discovers that in many instances the same people have been writing the same kind of letter to every preceding mayor.

No doubt most people believe that the two campaigns necessary under the direct primary, with the long weeks of working at high pressure day and night, are the hardest part of public life. That is not the case. During the campaign a man's friends are about him, offering advice and encouragement, defending him from attacks, and giving him all the inspiration and help that come from cordial fellowship; but they cannot keep this up. The day comes when they must be absorbed again in their usual affairs. The mayor is left alone with his tasks, with his responsibilities, and with the pledges of service to the public which he has made. Then there arrive on the scene the seekers of special privileges, those who have something to gain as a result of decisions that are made in the

conduct of the public business or in the framing of policies that are to be pursued in the administration of public departments. The mayor must make his decisions. The friends who are not close enough to know the facts sit back at home and begin to wonder at the course that their candidate is taking now that he is in office, and some of those friends will soon join the ranks of active critics. The people seem far away and indifferent. Edward Bok in his autobiography remarks that as a young man he believed that at the top there must be keen competition, but he found when he reached the top that it was a lonely place. The mayor, as the first citizen of the municipality, has an opportunity to learn that this is true. It is passing through this lonely period that tries a man's soul. It is then that he must keep a stout heart and hold steadily before his eyes the ideals and principles for which he stands; otherwise he will lose courage, yield to the pressure to which he is subject, and make those mistakes which will forever mar his administration. If he be a candidate for re-election, the situation changes when the time for the campaign draws near; friends again rally about him and the loneliness is gone.

The mayor of a great city sees an unending tide of humanity flowing through his office. He learns the characteristics of each race. While all citizens are Americans and it may be impossible from looking at individuals to tell their racial origin, still they possess certain characteristics which attach to their ancestral blood and which must be reckoned with in the problems of administration. Some of these traits are very conspicuous. For example, the Irishman is the best backer any person can have who is a candidate for appointment to a public office. He never will admit that his friend has a fault of any kind. His quick Celtic wit always de-