

[Middleport, Niagara Co.]

REV. KRATZER'S RESIGNATION

In relation to the resignation of Rev. G. A. Kratzer, pastor of the Universalist church of Middleport, thereby hangs a tale. In the Middleport Herald of this week Editor Hinchey takes off his coat and goes into the subject to a finish, in an editorial entitled "The Busybodies Were Busy," which we reproduce herewith:

The past week has developed a peculiar state of affairs in one of our local churches. The annual meeting of the Universalist church was held Tuesday, March 10, and the congregation were about evenly divided as to retaining the services of the Rev. G. A. Kratzer for another year at an increased salary.

Mr. Kratzer has labored in the parish or the past six years as no former pastor ever did; he worked early and late; he worked along the right lines; he began with the young people, increased their attendance at church and Sunday school, and incidentally increased the receipts from all sources, by a systematic plan of action.

At the time Mr. Kratzer accepted the charge here, the Universalist parish was in a run-down condition; its members were mostly elderly people; the young had been overlooked; he was told the state of affairs and began his labor in a manner that soon won him to their church. The Universalist society of this village has always wanted something for nothing, especially in the ministerial line; they want a most capable man, one who is able to command a salary of from \$1,200 to \$1,500 a year, and yet they expect Mr. Kratzer, one of this kind, to remain here and preach the teachings of Christ to them, for \$850, while they remain at home and discuss his recent purchases of jewelry or flowers. What business is it to any member of his congregation what he does with this money? He earns every cent of it and much more, yet many want an itemized account of this \$850. Mr. Kratzer is without doubt the most talented and learned preacher that was ever called to this church. He does what many former ministers of this society did not do, and that is pay his way. Perhaps he did not take "tea" with all the ladies of his congregation; had he done so he certainly would be entitled to a pension.

There are members of that congregation who have been members nigh onto 40 years, who today expect a minister to devote as much attention to them as he does to the young people, who are not yet members of any church. In other words they want to save those who are already in the fold, never minding those on the outside. A pretty kind of Christianity that!

Mr. Kratzer was wise not to waste any time on those whose ideas are of the 17th century; but he worked where there was an opportunity to save a soul; he was kind, thoughtful and always considerate of everyone. His

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sermons were able, showed much thought and preparation, and covered a wide range of vision. In the past year he has showed marked improvement in his delivery. He is certain to make his mark in this denomination when the opportunity presents itself, unhampered by local jealousies, feuds and back bitings.

The Universalist parish here is a comparatively wealthy one; has an endowment fund of \$5,000; yet the total amount paid by the members towards Mr. Kratzer's salary of \$850 the past year was \$435. Members of this congregation who are worth from \$5,000 to \$10,000 give the magnificent sum of \$3 a year each, and expect to maintain a church on such subscriptions.

This congregation wants a good shaking up to see where they are at. In the meantime until they can afford to pay a decent salary to a competent man, close up the edifice and put out a sign "To Let."

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