

Scathing Words for Zimmerman

Rev. D. M. Kirkpatrick on the Lieutenant of Police

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED

Two Crowded Services at the Second Universalist Church—
Unanimous Indorsement of the Pastor and Pledges of Support

At the Second Universalist Church on Spencer street yesterday there was a large attendance at both the morning and evening services. Every member of the congregation went to church and shook hands with the pastor, Rev. David M. Kirkpatrick, who on Saturday was honorably discharged in police court after being on trial for two days, charged with impersonating an officer.

Notwithstanding the eager audience before him in the morning, the minister did not dwell at any length upon the case in which he had been the central figure. He stated before his sermon that he wished to express his thanks to the congregation for having stood by him during the unpleasantness and acknowledged a number of cards and letters of assurance of trust and confidence received by him which he had not found time to answer.

In the evening, there was a larger attendance than at the morning service. Every seat in the church was taken long before the time for services to begin, when the pastor entered and took a seat on the platform. In the meantime, the members of the congregation smiled and nodded to each other and everybody seemed to breathe an air of rejoicing. Before the close the pastor gave the audience to understand in unmistakable language that the end of the matter was not yet, and intimating something disagreeable in future for Lieutenant Zimmerman.

The organist played a voluntary promptly at 7:30 o'clock, at the conclusion of which the pastor usually opens the service, but last evening Frederick H. Cross, of 72 Spencer street, a member of the congregation, stepped to the platform holding in his hand a paper. He stated that as a trustee of the church he took the liberty of addressing the congregation and read the following:

The members and friends of Second Universalist Church, assembled this 10th day of January, 1897, place on record the following:

Whereas, David M. Kirkpatrick has been our pastor for nearly five years, and during that time has, by the record of his work and life, demonstrated himself to be a man of pure thoughts and unblemished character, and has won the high esteem of the people, not only of this society, but of citizens generally, irrespective of creed; and

Whereas, A jury of his peers has dismissed after judicial investigation, the false and baseless charge recently preferred against him; and

Whereas, Our pastor and this society have been grossly wronged by the publication in certain newspapers of sensational and malicious articles calculated to outrage common decency and pervert public morals;

Resolved, That we take this opportunity of declaring publicly that at no time have the faith and confidence in our beloved pastor been shaken;

Scathing Words for Zimmerman

that we pledge him our loyal support in his every undertaking, and trust that he may make here the home of his life work.

Resolved, That we deprecate the publication in unscrupulous newspapers of sensational and scandalous reports touching the character of honest and upright citizens, and urge that such steps may be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar outrages.

Resolved, That all citizens of Rochester interested in the intelligent administration of justice, in the security of personal liberty and in the safety of the youth of our city, unite in urging the board of police commissioners to take prompt and suitable action upon the subject of not only this unjustifiable arrest, but of the vice and immorality that disgrace our city.

After the reading of the resolutions a rising vote of the congregation resulted in their unanimous adoption. Mr. Cross then explained to the members of the church that Mr. Kirkpatrick had been put to considerable expense. He said, "It is perhaps needless to mention the considerable expense which has arisen during the recent unpleasantness in which our beloved pastor played so conspicuous a part. He has been persecuted, and it is expected that everybody will share as far as possible the big burden which must be lifted, and that we may demonstrate more clearly our love and esteem for him. I do not hesitate in saying that nearly everybody here will offer some assistance when the time comes."

At the conclusion of the remarks the pastor walked forward with a pleasant look upon his face. He said, "I was satisfied that I had the sympathy of my people during the scandalous publication of certain newspaper articles. I am indeed very grateful for the kind remembrances in the shape of cards and letters received by me. Owing to business matters and other things which kept me busy, I was unable to answer all the kind greetings, but I take great pleasure in acknowledging them in public and I will endeavor in the near future to answer them in person or by mail.

"I want to assure you all that the 'comedy' wasn't ended with the publication of that extra edition last evening. It was all right as far as proclaiming that the trial had been ended and that I was a free man, but I assure you that there are interesting developments yet to be heard... In other words, there are certain things which are yet to come out, and what some of the papers looked upon as the end of the case was in fact only the preface, as there will certainly be more to follow."

The speaker then opened the service of the evening, his subject being taken from the second commandment. Before commencing, the speaker read the Ten Commandments, from which his series of lectures are being delivered... Continuing, he said, "Although I have agreed to give a series of five lectures, from what has taken place the past week, I may have to make it five more, or even five times five.

Scathing Words for Zimmerman

"When I was on the stand in police court, I was asked if I considered a sermon on the Ten Commandments more suited to the times than the old fashioned Gospel. Now if there is anything older than the law of Moses known to the civilized world, I would like to know what it is. The Ten Commandments are what all good laws are founded upon and what they have been founded upon for years back, anyway as far back as the Christian religion dates... "These commandments dictate all that is good and holy, and by following their dictation, one will be pursuing the right course..."

"I have been reading an opinion by Justice Green of the supreme court on crime, and the contents have moved me considerably. I have come to the conclusion that crime should be met with appropriate punishment. It is even one of the peculiar problems of domestic life. If I am right, and I think I am, there are certain crimes for which imprisonment ought to be given. The giving of money by one who has it is not a punishment and such things should not be received..."It remains for us to make laws which will not allow these criminal people to get off without serving time..."

"Besides having these laws, we should have officers to enforce them. In other words, we should have officers of justice. I have facts in regard to the city police which are applicable in this case. Yesterday, one of my friends took the witness stand in police court and said that a certain officer, well Lieutenant Zimmerman is the man, yes, Lieutenant Zimmerman. He said to my friend that it would be an easy matter to get someone to go my bond and as the offense was not a great one, I could go before the court and plead guilty and pay a fine which would not be very large, as the crime didn't amount to very much. Such a man have we in the person of this Lieutenant Zimmerman—a man who is parading the streets as an officer of the law to say to a minister of the gospel, 'tell your friend to skip his bond.' Well, I'll tell you what I think of that man Zimmerman later. Yes, I'll tell you what I think of him later, not tonight. The mills of God grind slow, but the wicked will not go unpunished."

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Mon. 11 Jan 1897
[abridged]

Transcribed on 20 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY