

REV. G. A. KRATZER'S POSITION

Concerning Mr. Taylor and the Action of the Second Universalist Church

To the Editor of the Democrat and Chronicle:

Sir: On my return to this place Monday, after nearly a week's absence, I was shown copies of the Rochester papers containing an account of the action of the Second Universalist Church in deciding to dismiss its pastor and close its doors after April 1st. I see that this action is quite largely attributed to the sermon which I preached in the church on Dec. 18th, when exchanging with Mr. Taylor; and in the light of later developments, I have no doubt that in large degree the sermon tended to this result. The outcome of the sermon is a great surprise to me, as I supposed it would have the effect of strengthening Mr. Taylor's hands with his people in the position which he had taken against the saloons in their breaking of the law, and against the city officials who were remiss in the enforcement of the law. I was personally acquainted with many of Mr. Taylor's people, but I did not know the business or the habits of any of them. I did not know that I was hitting anybody in particular in anything I said in my sermon of Dec. 18th. I had no idea that I was likely to give any special offense, for I took it for granted that the supporters of the church were Christian in something more than the name. In intending the sermon, not as condemnatory of anybody present but to inspire those who, I took for granted, were in sympathy with all moral and governmental reforms, to greater efforts along the lines mapped out by their pastor in the sermons of the two preceding Sundays, which I had read in the Democrat and Chronicle. However, it appears that the coat fitted some in a manner quite unexpected to me, and that in consequence they left the church. But, except in so far as it may possibly cause inconvenience and loss to Mr. Taylor, I am not sorry that I preached the sermon. I am firmly convinced that a church which cannot survive, and even grow, on an occasional law enforcement sermon, ought either to be regenerated, or else it ought to die; and if I correctly know Mr. Taylor, he feels the same.

I hope this episode may not lead to the closing of the doors of the Second Universalist Church of Rochester, but that it may mark the commencement of its regeneration. I feel that the work for law enforcement and clean government in which Mr. Taylor has been a leader is worth many thousands of dollars to property owners in Rochester. I feel that this same work is worth something that is above and beyond a money value to the thousands of parents in the city who have boys and girls to rear. In view of this, I feel that such a man as Mr. Taylor is worth to the people of the city, and has already proved himself worth to them, many times the sum necessary to maintain him in his pulpit. I feel that the law-abiding, moral, upright people of Rochester could not do themselves a better service than to rally to Mr. Taylor's support without regard to denomination, for he has rendered a

REV. G. A. KRATZER'S POSITION

Concerning Mr. Taylor and the Action of the Second Universalist Church

service of great value to the whole city. I feel that these same people would not administer a more practical rebuke to the law-breaking and immoral element of the city, and those who are its sympathizers, and those who are weak-kneed and disheartened because they fear the power of this element, than to maintain Mr. Taylor in his church. This would show the law-breakers and their partisans that good institutions and good men can and will be maintained in the city without a penny of support from the lower elements, if need be. Nothing could be a stronger encouragement to all the Christian ministers of the city to speak boldly upon all questions of public righteousness than for some of its Christian people to uphold the hands of the man who has taken this noble stand. All honor to the faithful few of his own congregation who stayed by him.

It is said that actions speak louder than words. I will give \$20 toward a salary for Mr. Taylor for the ensuing year. The money will be available quarterly during the year, provided a sufficient sum is raised to ensure his continuance in the position he now occupies. I would gladly make the pledge much greater, but my salary is not a large one. Let several others give as much, according to their means, and this good work will be accomplished. I am not a citizen of Rochester, but nevertheless, I feel that the services of such men as Mr. Taylor are too valuable to our state and nation and to the human race to have them dependent upon the caprice of those engaged in forms of business, which are injurious to the public welfare of their partisans. This letter is written without the knowledge of Mr. Taylor or any other person in Rochester.

G. A. KRATZER

Middleport, N.Y., Jan. 11, 1899

Democrat and Chronicle, Rochester NY, Thu. 12 Jan 1899

Transcribed on 19 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY