

Forgotten Social Gospellers: Reverends J.B. Silcox and Hugh Pedley

MÉLANIE MÉTHOT

In the introduction to *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity*, David Lyon states that “secularization understood as religious decline, deflects attention from ways that religious impulse is being relocated and religious activities restructured.”¹ Indeed, Ramsay Cook and David Marshall,² by focusing on the decline of theological doctrines, attenuate the fact that turn-of-the-century Christians experienced differently their faith. Lyon’s comment obliquely endorses Richard Allen’s 1971 conclusion.³ Studying the social gospel, a movement led by Protestant church leaders who responded to the challenges that Darwinism and the new philosophy of higher criticism posed to religious beliefs, Allen points out that many religious leaders decided to direct their attention away from theological issues to social questions. He contends that Christianity did not lose its appeal during this period of intense philosophical challenge; on the contrary, it became more widespread.⁴

By shifting the central focus from religious elites, and by giving voice to prosaic preachers and to how their message was received, one realizes that churches and denominations deepened their public presence rather than lost their appeal. If advertisement speaks the language of popularity, that is, pastors, priests or pope are often portrayed endorsing a variety of products, that is in itself revealing. But that is the object of another paper. Reverends J.B. Silcox and Hugh Pedley might not be familiar names to our contemporary ears, but to turn-of-the-century Canadians, they were celebrities. Their pastorates are real testimonies of church relevance. Not only did the two reverends attract large crowds, but their influence is also confirmed by the

fact that their ideas were published in books, pamphlets and newspapers, with readers commenting on them. They even qualified for entry in the celebrated *Who's Who in Canada*.

Both pastors worked to fulfill the expectations of a modern Christian society. They did not propose revolutionary measures, not even groundbreaking solutions, but they revealed their idealism and their faith in the regeneration of individuals. Like other social gospellers, they took on the mission of Christianizing the political economy of industrial capitalism. Each had his own particular plan to bring the Kingdom of God on earth. Believing that the "industrial system" was flawed because it had lost touch with Christianity, Silcox advocated the preaching of the gospel as the chief solution to the ills of the city. Pedley thought that the "unification" of the churches in Canada was the start of substantial social reforms. They impressed their peers, at the very least, by exposing what they saw as urban ills and at prompting action. They engaged their community.

Who were they?

One of twelve children born of William Silcox and Nancy Phillips, John B. Silcox became a renowned reverend. He grew up on his father's farm while attending Frome's Elementary public school. He entered the normal school in Toronto and pursued his theological studies in the Congregational College of Montreal at the time when Reverend Henry Wilkes was principal. At McGill University he encountered the most eminent nineteenth-century Canadian scientist, Sir William Dawson. There is, however, no trace of Dawson's influence in his sermons.⁵ Silcox did not belong to the scientific community, nor show any interest in scientific research. Silcox was more attracted to poetry, literature and art, than to natural sciences. Some of his sermons even dealt extensively with the works of John Whittier or other "poet-preachers." Silcox did not try to reach people with facts, to appeal to reason or common sense, he hoped to touch souls through sentiment. He took after Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), a dynamic American Congregational preacher, orator, and lecturer who discussed every important issue of the day in his sermons.

It is striking that the preacher chose big cities to spread his message, cities that were trying to cope with massive immigration and rapid industrialization. Silcox's first position between 1876 and 1883 was at the Western Congregational Church in Toronto. Then from 1883 to 1890 he occupied the

pulpit of the Central Church of Winnipeg. Next he moved to the United States for two years and preached at the First Church of Sacramento (California). Then after three years at Emmanuel Church in Montreal, he returned to the United States for five years, three spent at Leavitt Street Church (Chicago) and two back at the First Church of Sacramento. He was called to preach once more in Winnipeg and remained there for four years. Leaving Winnipeg, he spent close to one year at Plymouth Church (Lansing Michigan) before returning to Toronto. From 1908 to 1915, he preached at the Westminster Congregational Church in Kansas, and the next two years in a London (Canada) church. Then widowed and seventy years old, he did not occupy specific pulpits but, still in great demand, continued to preach across Canada and the United States until his death in 1933.

The energetic pastor adapted his preaching to modern society. He was well aware of the growing demand for “entertainment.” He even preached on the art of preaching, stressing that: “It is the preacher’s business to get a hearing for the gospel.”⁶ He specified that, “To win the ear of the people, you must talk their language. The preacher must be a man of his time.”⁷ Silcox thought that the pulpit had to use tools and strategies to keep the people interested in the gospel.⁸ Without a doubt, Silcox mastered the art of oratory. His “Grip and Grit” sermon was just as popular as an Oscar-winning film would be in our day, so popular, indeed, that he delivered it more than two hundred times!

Perhaps less colourful than Silcox, Reverend Hugh Pedley nevertheless attracted a large following.⁹ The question of his identity is, however, hard to answer as no personal papers exist, and apart from the 1898 and 1912 notices in Morgan’s collected biographies of famous men and women,¹⁰ no other biographical sketch of the man has been found. Born in England in 1852 to Charles Pedley and Sarah Stowell, daughter of Dr. Stowell principal of Chesnut College (England), Hugh Pedley graduated from McGill in 1876 and studied for the ministry at the Congregational College of Montreal. His father was a preacher, and he had at least one brother, James William, who also chose to join the ministry. At thirty-one, Hugh Pedley married Elizabeth Field, the oldest daughter of Corelli Collard Field, a merchant who in 1886 became mayor of Cobourg, Ontario, and was later elected to the House of Representatives.

Although they often occupied the same pulpits, Pedley’s career path differed substantially from that of Silcox. Pedley preferred to remain in one congregation rather than moving every third or fourth year. He first occupied

the Congregational pulpit of Cobourg, where he laboured for ten years. It was during that ministry that he published his first article entitled, "Theological Students and the Time" arguing that the ministry had a duty to solve the problems of the times. He personally made his commitment to "deal bravely and skillfully with the actual world of to-day,"¹¹ thus indicating his sympathy with social gospel thinking.

In 1888, Reverend Pedley moved to Winnipeg to replace Silcox at the Central Congregational Church. He often gave speeches or sermons on social reform and labour issues.¹² In 1900, Pedley accepted a call to preach at Emmanuel Congregational Church in Montreal where he worked for the next seventeen years. He was elected to many honourable positions such as chair of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, moderator of the Congregational Association of Quebec and President of the Montreal Protestant Minister's Association. He was also a member of the joint committee on church union. In 1909 he was elected Chair of the Congregational Union of Canada and chosen as their delegate to the World's Congregational Congress in Chicago, and the World's International Congregational Councils in Boston and London. These positions all confirm his dedication to church union. Unfortunately, Pedley died in 1923, two years before his long-time dream came true with the formation of the United Church of Canada.

If Silcox's philosophy is mostly drawn from his sermons, Pedley's comes principally from his utopian novel, *Looking Forward. A Novel for the Times. The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne*. His novel was modelled after the most famous and influential of American utopian novels of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy's (1850-1898) *Looking Backward 2000-1887* (1888). Bellamy's novel presents an ideal state by contrasting one to the old order. Through the eyes of fictional Julian West, a rich Bostonian about to get married, but who falls into an hypnotic sleep of a hundred and thirteen years, Bellamy depicts a society where the social and cultural divisions of the nineteenth century have disappeared. The author addressed the tensions between individual freedom and society's needs. Opposed to the individualism of the marketplace, he suggested a collectivist social order that would fulfill man's spiritual as well as material needs. As Michael J. Turner demonstrates, Bellamy counted on humanity's inherent goodness to transform society.¹³

Pedley's own utopian novel constitutes the tangible proof of Bellamy's influence. He borrowed many elements from the successful American

utopian novel, starting with the romance between Julian West and Edith, the descendent of West's former fiancée. Reverend McCheyne, Pedley's own hero, also falls for the daughter of the woman he loved in his former life. The similarities between the novels are, however, much more substantial than the romance. In Pedley's story, the protagonist is a scientific-minded Presbyterian minister who questions from a young age the division among the Protestant churches. For the love of science (and for the plot of the novel), McCheyne puts himself in a coma that is supposed to last only two weeks, but fate leaves him in that state for twenty-five years. In contrast to the one hundred and thirteen years of Bellamy, Pedley needs only twenty-five years to bring about "The New Order." This speaks volumes about the idealism and optimism of Pedley. Borrowing the tactic of Bellamy, it is through the eyes of McCheyne that the reader discovers the changes that took place in the last quarter of century, how the old order was transformed into a new state. Remembering the horrid urban conditions of 1902, McCheyne is happily surprised to see that conditions have improved tenfold in Winnipeg and in Montreal. In both utopias, universal education and moral enlightenment become commonplace. Just like Bellamy, Pedley did not seek to overthrow industrialism, but to purify it. The reverend's concerns were more spiritual rather than political or economical.

Although they promoted a similar type of society, Pedley and Bellamy proposed a different path to reach it. For Bellamy the catalyst is the replacement of private capitalism by public capitalism, the result being collectivist ideas superseding the competition ethos; for Pedley, the unification of the Church serves as the turning point for men's and women's purification. In his perfect society, the new unified church brings "a catholicity of feeling, a consciousness of responsibility for the national welfare, a sensitiveness to real-world problems." A mentor explains to the young Reverend McCheyne: "you know, some of our best men never had joined the church, but in some way, not easy to explain, the unifying of the churches made Christ more real to them."¹⁴

Pedley also took Bellamy's *Equality* as the "foundation of his words" for a published Labour Day sermon.¹⁵ Much less popular than *Looking Backward*, probably because of the lack of dramatic interest, but more revealing in terms of Bellamy's social philosophy, *Equality*'s goal was to fill in the empty spaces left by *Looking Backwards*. Pedley readily conceded that of the two novels, the sequel was better. He admired the vivid descriptions of the "modern social conditions" found in *Equality*. "There are certain great

anomalies and injustices that stand out like great open sores to shame all our boast of progress,” he said. Pedley mentioned the vivid portrayal of the economic waste of competition and the unequal distribution of the world’s wealth. But, what Pedley probably found the most enticing was the novel’s “recognition of great Christian principles.” Pedley stated that *Equality* “denounces sectarianism and rebukes the hatred of nation against nation.”¹⁶ Bellamy made clear that although there were no more churches and specially trained preachers in his new order, religion had not faded away.

Amidst the praises Pedley showered on Bellamy, he injected one criticism. For the American author, economic changes were imperative for the soul to progress, the revolution had to start with the system rather than with individuals. This is where Pedley differed, stating that the “defect [of the novel] is the virtual refusal to take into account the factor of human sinfulness.”¹⁷ He believed the revolution had to be spiritual first. Religion simply had to be pertinent again.

While Bellamy’s work clearly had a great influence on Pedley, he acknowledged that he owed much to George M. Grant (principal of Queen’s University), Samuel S. Nelles (Principal of Victoria University), William Caven (Principal of Knox College), and John F. Stevenson (principal of the Congregational College of Montreal). Their commitment to church unification inspired him, he noted, to “take the forward step,” to suggest a solution to the afflictions of urban and industrial society.

While J.F. Stevenson is not very a familiar figure in Canadian history, the other three men, especially Grant, have been widely studied. Carl Berger writes that Reverend George Monro Grant (1835-1902) was a “precursor” to the social gospel movement.¹⁸ Hubert Krygsman documents that already in 1870, Grant “developed a system of ideas that consciously departed from Presbyterian orthodoxy and imitated the liberal theology of the social gospel.” Krygsman further argues that “the efforts to unite God’s people into a tolerant Christian society that recognized all of life as the arena of religious practice was the central impulse of Grant’s life.”¹⁹ Grant was expressly recognized by his peers for his progressive views towards other faiths. John Dent wrote in 1881 that the gentleman was “a zealous advocate of [church] union.” Also of interest to Pedley must have been Grant’s dedication to “scientific research.”²⁰ The technological advances he described in the novel, the inquisitive mind of his hero, and the detailed explanation of McCheyne’s scientific experience, all illustrate Pedley’s own inclination for sciences.

This untainted curiosity in modern science was something that Pedley, Grant and Reverend Samuel Nelles (1823-1887) all shared. When Nelles became Principal of Victoria University, there were only two faculties: arts and theology. He devoted time and energy to add the Faculties of Medicine and of Law. His biographer, G.S. French, writes that Nelles actively encouraged the study of sciences.²¹ As McKillop demonstrates, the destructive impact of evolutionary ideas on orthodoxy prompted some religious men to welcome “critical inquiry.” McKillop states that Reverend Nelles believed that “clear and independent thinking . . . guided by principles derived from religious inspiration”²² was the solution to free thinking. This was exactly what Pedley advocated in his piece on what a preacher’s education ought to be: “He [the minister] should be qualified so to master this great flood of free-thinking that, instead of laying waste all that is fairest and best in our life, it shall be as a broad river which fertilizes and clothes with beauty all the land through which it sweeps in its stately course.”²³

In William Caven (1830-1904), the Principal of Knox College, Pedley must have admired the active role the man took in the amalgamation of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Pedley probably also valued Caven’s interest in education matters. Education was an important tool in reforming the souls. Pedley stressed that in the new order “intellectual life would have due honour,” that “there would be no longer ignorance nor the brutality that has its roots in ignorance.”²⁴ Also, the very fact that the four men he chose to dedicate his novel to were all principals of colleges or universities testifies to the value Pedley put on education.

Their Thought

Both Silcox and Pedley definitely felt that modern, especially urban society, needed to be injected with a fresh dose of Christianity. Civic corruption, the inequities that the industrial system engendered, the sweating system, the bad working conditions that the majority of labourers suffered, slums, drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling, in sum the social ills that tended to converge in the city, disturbed them greatly. As Pedley put it: “The history of humanity is largely a history of great cities, and it is in the city that the battle between good and evil reaches its climax.”²⁵ For him, cities were prisons where immoral habits clustered, poverty was the norm, and civic officials were corrupted. It was important to be aware of the sad conditions that prevailed in the city. Just like “the ancient prophets of Israel” who were

not “blind to the sinister side of life or deaf to the cry of human wrong and suffering,” seeing with “clear penetrating gaze the evil of the world,”²⁶ social gospellers were to tell it the way it was.

Silcox sincerely believed that the urban “industrial system” was flawed because it widened the gap between rich and poor, sanctioned “white slavery,” and fostered child labour. What made it flawed was the fact that it had lost its touch with Christianity. Men and women were physically and morally suffering because of the lack of ethics within the industrial order. It was inherently imperfect because it promoted materialistic values instead of Christian ones. Indeed, the very values underlying the industrial order were amoral, or worse “pagan.”²⁷ What was intrinsically wrong with the industrial system was that it shifted the focus of life from the spiritual to the material realm.

Like Silcox, Pedley stressed that the industrial system tended to deepen the gap between rich and poor.²⁸ Commenting on Bellamy’s *Equality*, he congratulated the author for illustrating truthfully the present glaring contrasts of the industrial city.²⁹ Pedley recognized that it was the labouring class which suffered the most in an industrial society that was unduly led by the concept of profits. He contended that “the competition between these commercial monsters means the lowering of wages to the smallest possible figure.”³⁰

Silcox also believed capital was wrong and that labour was needlessly suffering injustices. Workers should, therefore, fight ardently until capital recognizes its sins and make amends. Unhesitatingly, he explicitly justified labour’s fight, proclaiming in metaphorical language that “the unrest of the people, the discontent of the masses, the volcanic eruptions in the form of labour strikes and wars are not to be deplored as evil. They are the lightening flashes, the thunder peals of a storm that will clear the social atmosphere and refresh the valleys of toil with fertilizing showers.”³¹

Silcox was not calling for a socialist revolution, but for a metamorphosis of the practices current in the capitalist system, for a “return” to Christian values instead of the material ethos that permeated industrial society. Capital would not disappear, but the exploitation of labour had to go. He did not condemn workers for using strikes, as he whole-heartedly felt they were justified. His rhetoric was moving, forceful and passionate. “Our industrial system has enriched a few to a limit beyond the dreams of avarice,” he asserted, “at the same time it has allowed multitude to sink into a poverty that means dark, hopeless, helpless servitude.”³² Silcox compared workers to the

slaves of antiquity: “to the hierarchical potentates, monarchial despots, political bosses and industrial Pharaohs of today, God is saying in plainest language, ‘Let my people go.’”³³ Silcox did not hesitate to use the slave analogy. He professed in a much publicised sermon that: “the fact is we have white slaves by the thousands, men and women, who drudge from morn till night, hardly earning enough to keep soul and body together.”³⁴

By depicting workers as slaves, Silcox was posing as a “nineteenth-century Moses” whose divine mission was to free workers from the chains that ruthless Capital tied around their necks in the form of long hours, bad conditions and meagre wages. It was through repeated denunciations that Silcox hoped to free workers. And they did come be the hundreds to listen to him.³⁵

Pedley’s stand on labour issues was as passionate. The *Morning Telegram* summarized his message:

He compared the position of the workers who were between buyers and sellers to those unfortunates in the death chamber of the inquisition, where the ceiling and the floor slowly come together and though the agony might be shorter or longer, according to circumstances, the final end was the same, and he reminded those present that the condition of the employees in Emerson & Hague’s factory was the thin end of the wedge of the sweating system being introduced in Winnipeg. He said that the payment of inadequate wages has ever been the means of creating crime and immorality and of indirectly instituting the system from which such evils grow.³⁶

Pedley apparently wanted to show that profit-oriented entrepreneurs endangered the physical, mental and moral health of citizens. The fundamental problem with turn-of-the-century Canadian society was that individualism (self-interest without regards to others) was winning the day at the expense of communitarianism. Pedley warned his congregation that

there are evils that spring out of our system, and with a change of the system the evils may pass. But there are other evils, that do not spring out of the system, that spring out of the perversity and selfishness of the human heart, and hearts must be changed as well as systems before these are abolished.³⁷

God was certainly not to blame for the “dark and squalid places” found in some cities; people were. Pedley preached that “there are at least three facts in human nature that stand in the way of the regeneration of society, and these are Ignorance, Sloth and Selfishness.”³⁸ “Man should have an interest in the welfare of his fellow-creature and respect the rights of all,” he said.³⁹ In other words, the community must have, before all else, a sense of the common good. It was time to abandon individualism and adopt a more community-oriented approach, a more Christian attitude.

It is interesting to note that Pedley’s portrait of a perfect society accepts that classes would not disappear, but that by 1927, the church is aware of the different needs of each class. McCheyne’s friend, the Bishop, tells him:

There are many classes in the community and our services are so arranged that it is difficult for anyone to find an excuse for non-attendance. The nurse, the night-watchman, the men on night shifts, the servants, are all taken into account. From seven o’clock in the morning to ten o’clock at night on Sunday there is in this place opportunity for worship.⁴⁰

Classes would remain in society, but a united church would be able to reach everyone, implying that the church would guide them into being better citizens. The church would establish a politic of common good.

Churches were to Christianize society and this meant embarking on many crusades. Silcox was very much distressed by issues such as sabbath observance, temperance, prostitution and gambling. His position on these issues was as categorical as his views on the industrial system. He declared: “there is no need that Theatres, Moving Picture shows, should be open on Sunday. It is against the cultivation of religion to have them open, and what works against religion works against the well-being of humanity and of the nation.”⁴¹ The sabbath simply had to be observed.

His position on temperance was as clear-cut as the one he held on the sabbath. He affirmed: “I believe in total abstinence for the individual. I believe in total prohibition for the nation. I believe in moral suasion and I believe in legal suasion.”⁴² To Silcox, prohibition was Christ’s will.⁴³ He was equally uncompromising when it came to prostitution. Silcox delivered powerful sermons on the issue, telling his congregations that: “we quarantine the house where scarlet fever rages. Why not quarantine the house where the

scarlet sin is rampant? If we have the right to protect our families from physical contagion, why not from moral infection?"⁴⁴

Social vices also concerned Reverend Pedley. He once asked: "is it not axiomatic truth that the welfare of society depends upon the morality of society?"⁴⁵ Pedley strove to direct public opinion so society would declare, without reserve, gambling, prostitution, and intemperance as serious moral, physical and social threats that had to be dealt with promptly.⁴⁶ He found the question of prohibition pressing enough to postpone his sermon on the "Law of love in business life" in order to preach a series of three sermons on the 1897 prohibition plebiscite. It is interesting to note that Pedley did not believe that alcoholism was specifically a working-class problem. He stated: "the snake intemperance is not content with winding in and out the dirty dwellings, it glides through the door of the prosperous home and finds victims where the floor is richly carpeted and the walls decked with art."⁴⁷ It was specifically because intemperance was widespread that it had to be treated with urgency, he believed.

Religion was indeed to influence all aspects of life. Silcox saw the solution to all the ills of modern life in the application of the golden rule. He believed there was one, and only one, way to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a "perfect society". He claimed that "converting men and women to Christian life is the surest and only permanent way of social reform."⁴⁸ For him, "every industrial problem, every political problem [was] a religious problem. The principles of religion extends [sic] over the entire domain of human life . . . the great problem that confronts us today is the Christianizing of human relationships."⁴⁹ It did not matter how he formulated it, he always came back to the same idea: "the salvation of men depends largely on the preaching of the gospel."⁵⁰ His strategy was to touch first the soul by spreading the gospel, and then to Christianize the "shop and the store, the factory and the bank."⁵¹

For Pedley, the best way to inculcate a politic of common good was through the unification of the Christian churches. If only the church could become the "social centre for the community," Pedley thought, people would be better Christians, hence less selfish. His hero reflects: "what we need is a parish system along free church lines, that will put a well-equipped church in every section of the city, and lay upon it special responsibility for the moral and social welfare of that section."⁵² The church would be more than a place of worship, it would also be a place to socialize.

Throughout his career, Pedley emphasized the role a unified church should play in social matters. In his novel, he mentioned two other agencies, the government and the school. Indeed, three weapons were to be used to purify the hearts of Canadians: “Force, Education, Religion – the baton, the school, the church – the policeman, the teacher, the Christian worker.” The “Triple Alliance” would cleanse society:

It is wonderful how much can be done by vigorous city government, wonderful what can be accomplished by an efficient school-system. But there is this to be said for the Church, that, in addition to the direct actual work it accomplishes, it has a tremendous influence in making the other agencies, especially the municipal effective. Why, the Church in that parish has created such an atmosphere that municipal corruption cannot live in it.⁵³

In sum, a powerful unified church would lead towards the purification of industrial and urban society.

Their impact

Their contribution can not be measured in terms of impact on direct legislation, but what counts is their success in raising public consciousness. Given Silcox’s apparent popularity, one may argue that his sermons really spoke to the people. Unfortunately, how they directly affected men and women is more difficult to measure. Although some did criticise his stances on prohibition, prostitution and sabbath observance,⁵⁴ he nevertheless repeatedly filled churches and meeting halls. This indicates that turn-of-the-century citizens did go to church.

Silcox’s influence on implementing direct legislation to deal with social and moral issues, however, was limited. Aiming at the clergy in general, rather than at Silcox specifically, the editor of one labour paper concluded that: “not one of them has made a practical move towards relieving the oppressed, beyond a few empty, meaningless exhortations as to what should be.”⁵⁵ Even with regards to specific campaigns that Silcox led, there was little impact. For example, prohibition did not come into effect in 1897, and authorities continued to favour a segregation policy throughout Silcox’s terms in Winnipeg. Where Silcox did succeed, however, was in raising public awareness. A certain “Purity” thanked him for the “fearless

stand” he took on the question of prostitution.⁵⁶ Pedley received similar praise when *The Montreal Herald* described him as “a man who thinks, who faces vexing questions squarely, who does not avoid the sometimes unorthodox solution of these questions, and who expresses his opinions orthodox, or unorthodox, with a fearless tongue.”⁵⁷

Conclusion

Reverends Hugh Pedley and J.B. Silcox were social gossellers who believed a better society was within reach. Silcox strove to bring the kingdom of God on earth, to create a humane society based on Christian principles of love, charity, humanity, brotherhood and democracy. The church had to be concerned with social problems such as prostitution, alcoholism and intolerable living and working conditions. Silcox did not work to establish social missions, settlement houses or workers’ unions, but laboured to alter people’s attitude. His idea of direct assistance was to promulgate the teaching of the Bible.

Looking Forward is the best testimony that the kingdom of God could be established right now on earth. The church, aided by the school and the state, could inculcate a politic of common good. Reverend Pedley certainly displayed the same idealism that his friend Silcox did. He too believed he could change society by preaching the gospel. He went one step further than Silcox, however, by focusing on a concrete reform: the unification of the church. It was only when the church was united that the gospel could reach all classes in society.

Regardless of how idealist, optimistic or even utopic we might find their respective plans, they still sounded rational and sensible to the ears of turn-of-the-century Canadians who by the thousands listened to the two reverends.

Endnotes

1. David Lyon, “Introduction,” in *Rethinking Church, State and Modernity*, eds. David Lyon and Marguerite Van Die (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 10.
2. *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); and David Marshall, *Secularizing the Faith: Canadian Protestant Clergy and the Crisis of Belief, 1850-1940*

- (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
3. Richard Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-1928* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971).
 4. Allen, *The Social Passion*, 352-354.
 5. The United Church Archives -Conference of Manitoba Northwest and Ontario (hereafter UCA-MNO) houses about 220 of Silcox's sermons.
 6. J.B. Silcox, "The Minister as a Preacher," 13, S3, Box A, PP58, Rev. J.B. Silcox Papers (hereafter JBSP), UCA-MNO.
 7. Silcox, "The Minister as a Preacher," 14.
 8. J.B. Silcox, "Preaching to the People" (1907), 5, F2, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
 9. Allan Maclean, "Central Church Stalwarts," *Central Church Chronicle* 1, No. 3 (March 1927), File E2, MG7G1, Central Congregational Church Papers (hereafter CCCP), Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter PAM).
 10. Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898 and 1912).
 11. Hugh Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times," *Canadian Monthly and National Review* 18 (July 1880): 88, 91.
 12. C.A. Moor, "A Glimpse of Central Church," *The Canadian Congregationalist* 16, No. 13 (April 1909): 5-6, File E1, MG7G1, CCCP, PAM.
 13. Michael J. Turner, "For God and America: The Religious and Moral Premises of Edward Bellamy's Socialism," *Journal of Religious History* 20, No. 2 (1996): 185-209.
 14. Hugh Pedley, *Looking Forward. A Novel for the Times. The Strange Experience of the Rev. Fergus McCheyne* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 114, 187, 252.
 15. The sermon was printed in two papers: "Labour Day Sermons," *The Voice*, 11 September 1897; and "Labour," *Daily Nor Western*, 6 September 1897.
 16. Hugh Pedley quoted in "Labour Day Sermons," and "Labour."
 17. Pedley quoted in "Labour Day Sermons."
 18. Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 183.

19. Hubert Krygsman, "'Practical Preaching': The Liberal Theology of George M. Grant" (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1986), 6, 9.
20. John Charles Dent, "The very Rev. George Monro Grant, D.D.," *The Canadian Portrait Gallery* (Toronto: J.B. Magurn, 1881), 170, 173.
21. G.S. French, "Nelles, Samuel Sobieski," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XI, 1881-1890* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 641.
22. A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), 6.
23. Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times," 91.
24. Hugh Pedley, *War and the New Earth. Sermon Preached in Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, Sunday Evening May 30th, 1915*, 5.
25. Hugh Pedley, quoted in "Civic Evils, Their Cure," *Daily Nor Western*, 23 April 1894.
26. Pedley, *War and the New Earth*, 3.
27. J.B. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 17, E4, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
28. "Progress of the Working Classes," *The Voice*, 15 December 1894; and "Rev. Mr. Pedley," *Daily Nor Western*, 23 October 1896.
29. "Labour Day Sermons."
30. "Labour Day Sermons."
31. J.B. Silcox, "God and the People" (1893), 12, H4, Box 8, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
32. J.B. Silcox, "The Christianization of Industrial Relations" (1915), 5-6, I5, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
33. J.B. Silcox, "God and the People" (1893), 13, H4, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
34. J.B. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), 14, S3, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
35. In 1931, a journalist recalled that "for four years he crowded the building to capacity every Sunday," "Central to Hold 50th Anniversary," (Vertical File, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO). One of his obituaries stressed: "One of the most

widely known members of the clergy in Canada, he never preached to a vacant seat at a Sunday evening service" ("Rev. J.B. Silcox Dies Suddenly in Toronto," [Vertical File, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO]). "Those who reached the Congregational tabernacle early yesterday morning obtained seats, but those who came late considered themselves fortunate on even gaining admittance and standing room to listen to the farewell sermon of the popular pastor J.B. Silcox who leaves this week," ("Farewell Sermon" [San Diego], Newspaper articles, E7, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO).

36. "The Church and Labour," *Morning Telegram*, 20 February 1899.
37. "Labour Day Sermons."
38. Pedley, *War and the New Earth*, 6-7.
39. "The Ministers' Sympathy With Closing of Stores," *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, 28 April 1890.
40. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 106-107.
41. J.B. Silcox, "The Humanity of Sunday" (1913), 2, B1, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
42. J.B. Silcox, "The Modern Devil," 6-7, W5, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
43. J.B. Silcox, "The Man Sent from God," 20, V5, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
44. J.B. Silcox, "The Scarlet Sin," 16, Z6, Box B, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
45. Pedley, "Theological Students and the Times," 88.
46. "Social Reform," *Daily Nor Western*, 9 December 1896.
47. Hugh Pedley quoted in "Social Reform," *Daily Nor Western*, 14 December 1896.
48. J.B. Silcox, "A Man Concerned for Other Men" (1915), 16, K3, Box A, PP58, JBSP, UCA-MNO.
49. Silcox, "Social Redemption" (1901), 2.
50. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 5.
51. Silcox, "A Preacher of Righteousness," 15.
52. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 138, 143.
53. Pedley, *Looking Forward*, 138, 143.

54. A Man, "The Modern Devil," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 December 1901; James Shillinglaw, "Ministers and Prohibition," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 December 1901; A Lover of Freedom, "Sabbath Slavery," *The Voice*, 21 August 1897; and St-Charles, "A Workshop View of Our Sunday," *The Voice*, 31 May 1901.
55. "Current Comment," *The Voice*, 1 June 1895.
56. Purity, "Letter to Rev. J.B. Silcox, 21 May 1912," File 1, MS353, PP58, JBSP, Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill University Libraries.
57. Quoted in Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 893.

