

Abracadabra

The Wayside Philosopher

(All Legal Responsibility Assumed by the Author)

In my last notes I suggested that a clergyman should take several (say four) years Science and Philosophy before ordination. A further glance at that position may not be unprofitable.

Years ago I heard Rev. Mr. Squires, an eastern clergyman, when he had but his first year in Science (Physics) attack "Evolution" in a sermon. It is a question of some debate whether the impertinence or the ignorance of such a sermon is its outstanding feature.

Some years later in Vancouver, Rev. Roland Grant (now deceased) preached a sermon on "Darwinism." The doctor's gift of language; a wide but careless reading taken with a more or less acquaintance with, rather than knowledge of, certain fields of study, only deepened the impression left of how foolish a man can become when he wanders into unknown regions.

About a year ago, Rev. J. Campbell, of our local First Baptist church, gave another striking instance of this in his pulpit discourse on "Harold." I am no admirer of the Rev. A. E. Cooke, but his pulpit comment on the wisdom of clergymen sticking to Biblical themes and refusing to traverse strange by-paths impressed me as the soundest of sound sense.

Incidents such as the above—wholly unnecessary and productive of no good—are all too common.

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How much better either to refrain from any such conduct or to set forth the various authorities in any particular realm. In the latter case, those interested can pursue right methods of gaining the knowledge which will allow them to choose what the foundations of their belief in such matters shall be! In the former, any error cannot be charged to the speaker.

Hardly less important is a clergyman's philosophy. Every man can doubtless recall numerous instances in which inaccuracies of deduction, of language, of illustration, of application, have marred otherwise thoughtful and inspiring discourses.

These notes are intended to lead up to the question of why the church is not more profoundly moving men by its teaching and direct touch. I mean "the church," as it is commonly recognized to be. Indirectly, it is performing wonders. It is still the salt of the earth. Today, however, it refuses to shoulder much of its work and leaves fraternal societies, clubs, etc., to carry on work which should be under its acknowledged control or direction.

Is it not that, in some measure, the church still erects altars to "The Unknown God"; that it refuses boldly to declare, "There is no other good but God"?

In the main, is there not too much stress laid on "Faith" as a saving grace? People are asked to have