

Our Contributors.

A KEEN SCENT FOR INCONVENIENCES.

BY KNOXIAN.

There is a rich mine of good sense in the following clipping from a recent paper by Dr. Joseph Parker.

It is unhappily too plain that some men have a genius for discovering little frets and worries in the working of their ecclesiastical system. They are too sensitive for time and space. It is questionable whether such men can be wholly satisfied with the provisions of heaven itself. We are not great men simply because we have the gift of finding fault with the circumstances which surround us. Men who are so sensitive as to feel nothing but the inconveniences of life will never do any great work under any form of ecclesiastical government.

No, nor any middling work either. They are so much occupied with the "inconveniences" that they have no time to do any work worth speaking of. A man cannot reasonably be expected to do more than one thing at a time and if his whole attention is given to the "inconveniences" how can he give any attention to the work.

A pastor is settled over a congregation that he is not much in love with. Perhaps he accepted the call because he could not get another. The morning after his induction instead of going hopefully to work he sits down and begins to brood over the inconveniences of the situation. The man cannot accomplish anything. If his time and strength are given to working on the inconveniences how can he do anything for the congregation. No man can work up inconveniences and make sermons and pastoral visits at the same time.

A student is sent into a mission field in Muskoka or Algoma where the inconveniences abound. The roads are bad, the stations are far apart, the boarding accommodation is not good and most of the people are more likely to ask, "When are you going to pay us a visit, than, 'What must I do to be saved.'" Two courses are open to that young man. He may sit down and fret over the inconveniences or he may ignore the inconveniences and go on with his work heroically. He may do one or other but he can't do both. If he spends his time working on the inconveniences he can't do much for his stations.

A young man goes to college and finds that the college is not exactly the kind of place he thought it was. He sees a great many inconveniences of one kind and another most of which are in his mind. He thinks he has a mission to remove the inconveniences. Now it is reasonably clear that a young man of average ability cannot reorganize a college and attend to his studies at the same time. If he gives his time and talents to the great work of reorganization he may get plucked in spring. No student can give a session to removing real or imaginary inconveniences and stand well in his classes. The two things cannot be done in one session.

Your case is being called in court and you go within the railing and sit down beside your counsel. The learned gentleman takes his brief out of his bag and gets ready for action. Before the case has gone far he begins to sniff and mutter that the air is bad. So it is but you didn't give him his fee for an opinion on the foulness of court house air. You gave him the fee to attend to your case. When the time comes to cross-examine the witnesses he sniffs some more and mutters about bad ventilation. When he should be addressing the jury he is still sniffing and muttering about the air. He is so much occupied with the inconveniences that he had no time to attend to your case. You could not be blamed if you hinted to him that if he gave all his time and attention to the inconveniences the inconveniences should find his fees.

A clerk, salesman, or official of any kind who takes a situation and gives all his time and attention to the inconveniences should be asked to look to the inconveniences for his salary. You can't do much work and give all your time to the inconveniences.

Some people go much farther than giving their time to the inconveniences that attend their work. They worry and fret about the inconveniences that attend their enjoyments. If you don't think so just keep your eyes open for the next six weeks. In almost any part of Canada you may find people travelling for pleasure and in any party of half a dozen you are sure to find at least one who growls about the inconveniences of pleasure. There is something wrong with the car, or the steamboat, or the hotel, or with somebody or something. The growler thinks more about his real or imaginary inconveniences than he does about the most wonderful things the Almighty has made on this continent. The waiter was a little slow in giving him his breakfast at the hotel and that worried him so he cared nothing for Niagara Falls. What signifies the Falls compared with having a coloured waiter bow to you at the right angle and give you your hash the moment you ask it. His stateroom going down the St. Lawrence was not the kind of thing he expected and he was so worried over its defects that he hardly saw the Thousand Islands and the Rapids. Mr. Cockburn's man didn't put his trunk down in exactly the right place on the boat at Gravenhurst and the beauty of Muskoka fled. The boor didn't get a seat in the car to put his beautiful feet on and that spoilt his trip. Why on earth do these people ever go from home if they must worry themselves and everybody else about the real or imaginary inconveniences of travel. Does any reasonable person expect to have all the comforts of home and all the advantages of travel at the same time. If you are not prepared to put up with the ordinary inconveniences of travel stay at home and don't make yourself a nuisance to the human family.

Selfishness has more to do with the growling of travel than sensitiveness. A man starts from home determined to gobble

up all the best things within his reach. He must have the best seat in the car, and the best berth in the steamboat and the best room in the hotel—in fact the best of everything. His whole trip is a hoggish grab for the best. Sometimes he does not succeed in getting the best because there are other swine abroad and then he grunts.

"We are not great men," observes Dr. Parker, "because we have the gift of finding fault with the circumstances which surround us." Nor are men great because they can make a fuss on steamboats and in summer hotels. On the contrary the men who do that sort of thing are usually very small men. Nobody would know they were there if they didn't make a fuss of some kind.

PLYMOUTHISM.

(Concluded.)

PLYMOUTHISM AND "SYSTEM."

The Brethren are fiercely hostile to any settled method of church government. To have regular office bearers or any rules for anything is proclaimed an offence against the prerogatives and supremacy of the Holy Ghost. They claim that He presides over all their affairs, and that He dictates all their speech and all their business. Their preachers are said to be His mouthpieces, and utter only what He inspires. Well, the permanent presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is one of the blessed doctrines taught by our Master, and one which His people can never lose sight of. But to say, because of this, that Christians are so many pieces of irresponsible machinery, as the Brethren would make them out to be, is simply to say what is not warranted by Scripture, and what is contradicted by the "goings on" of the Brethren themselves. They will not deny the presence of the Holy Ghost in the New Testament churches. But to be consistent with their theory, they should deny the existence in those churches of ordained elders, deacons, deaconesses and other officers, specially set aside for the management of church business. Will they do this? Besides, if the Holy Ghost presides over all the meetings of the Brethren, superintending all their affairs, and dictating all their speeches, business and acts, as they claim, we do not see how they can escape the conclusion, that He is, consequently, chargeable with all the blunders, divisions, animosities, and browls of which they have been guilty. The very supposition is monstrous, but the Brethren are responsible for it. We have authentic accounts of some of their meetings, at which, it is pretty clear, that some one, other than the Holy Ghost, presided. As a matter of fact, the presidency of the Holy Ghost is ignored and belied by the Brethren themselves. They have their pre-arranged methods, rules, regulations, order of meetings, etc., like the churches which they so flippantly condemn. What are their hymn books, places and times of meeting, regular preachers, methods of conducting worship, schemes for raising money, and other things of a like nature? In our simplicity we are in the habit of classifying these under the tabooed word, "System;" and it is noticeable that the Brethren call them by that name when they speak of them in connection with other churches.

CARRYING A "MUZZLE" WITHOUT AUTHORITY.

A paid minister is a sore grievance to the Plymouthite. It is quite true that those who "hold forth" among the Brethren do not decline payment whenever it is forthcoming. They have, however, an ingenious method of accounting for this, and one which is worthy of the Jesuit himself. Dr. Davis writes, "I do not know of one example in all the New Testament to support the practice of a paid ministry." But does he know an example to support the contrary proposition, viz.,—that the ministry should *not* be paid? In the meantime let the Doctor continue his sophistry. "But as regards itinerant pastors, evangelists and teachers, the principle is plain enough, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." The distinction drawn is this: that preaching the Gospel is preaching exclusively to *unbelievers*, and that such preaching should be paid for, according to 1 Cor. ix. 14, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." On the other hand, it is said that the work of the pastor or elder is to preach to believers, *i.e.*, "To feed the flock of God," and therefore he should not be paid. We demand, On what authority does Plymouthism make this distinction? Our position is, that the New Testament nowhere warrants either of these propositions, but that it does warrant the very reverse. Let us see. The command to "feed the Church of God" is found in Acts xx. 28, and, according to verse 17, they who received it were "elders" in the church at Ephesus. Now, the Plymouthite says that these should not be paid; but Paul says that they ought to be paid. It is undeniable, from the passage in Acts, that the "elder" was a *settled pastor*. Now in Timothy v. 17, we read, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." But what has this "double honour" to do with the question of pastoral support? The answer is in the following (verse 18): "For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his hire." Out of his own mouth the Plymouthite is, again, convicted of perverting the Scriptures.

Still farther, in 1 Cor. ix. 7, Paul presents three illustrations in support of the fact, that the "elder"—minister or settled pastor—should be supported, *viz.*, the *soldier*, the *vine-dresser*, and the *shepherd*. His argument is, that as each of these is rewarded for his labours, so should the minister be. But the apostle has not done yet; in verse thirteen he tells

us that the priests of the temple, "live of the things of the temple." The Plymouthite will scarcely have the temerity to assert that those priests were "itinerant evangelists." It is a simple fact of history that they were settled ministers and had a settled income. Perhaps the Plymouthite will call those paid ministers "money-grabbers;" but the fact remains that they were paid by Divine authority. But one favourite text of the Brethren upon this matter is, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Still, Christ who uttered the words said, also, "The labourer is worthy of his hire." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." By the way, would not this text apply to the "itinerant evangelist," or to the cobbler, with as much force as it does to the minister? The minister was certainly not singled out by Christ for this special generosity and blessedness. The Brethren tell us that "the minister ought to live by faith and not upon a fixed income." So he might, and would, perhaps, if the butcher, the baker, the tailor, the landlord, the city tax-gatherer, etc., could be persuaded to do business upon the same terms. Mr. E. Rust says: "Many Brethren live by faith, and find it to answer very well—they have hats, clothes, provisions, luxuries, and \$1,000 a year, while Paul hungered and fasted, and the poor starving saints in Jerusalem did likewise."

"BREAKING BREAD."

All evangelical churches are at one upon the importance of the Lord's supper; but when these Plymouth sectaries insist that Scripture requires its celebration *every Lord's Day*, they must pardon us if we ask for chapter and verse. The only text looking in that direction is found in Acts xx. 7, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." We submit that there is not one word here to furnish either rule or inference in support of the Brethren's theory. There is not one word to show that the weekly celebration of the Lord's supper was then a practice, or that it is now an obligation. All that can be gathered from the text is that upon this particular occasion the disciples had come together to break bread, and that Paul preached to them. We have no quarrel with the Brethren for their weekly breaking of bread; but when they abuse and denounce us for not accepting their *ipse dixit* as a Divine Revelation we crave leave to enter a protest. Moreover, they pretend to a great respect for apostolic precedent, especially in minute details. Why, then, do they depart from it in this case? As a rule they break bread in the morning, whereas the New Testament churches did so in the evening. Again, they assume a sitting posture; but the posture of the New Testament churches was that of reclining. But Plymouthism does not take well to logic.

HIS HEAVENLY HUMANITY.

There are many doctrinal errors fundamental to this system, but space will not permit us to enlarge upon them. There is, for instance, their error respecting the person of Christ. They tell us that the words, "made of a woman," do not mean "born of a woman," and that he was not man of the substance of his mother, but that of his Father. Hence they talk about the "Divine Man," and his "Heavenly Humanity." The contention is that the Holy Ghost introduced some divine element into his human nature. The text quoted in support of the theory is 1 Cor. xv. 47, "The second man is the Lord from heaven." In reply we might quote Heb. ii. 14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same." We may point out also that the words of the angel were not, "The Holy Ghost conceived in the womb of the virgin;" but, "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb," (see Luke i. 31.) His humanity, therefore, must have been of *her* substance, and so *not* divine. In harmony with this, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews frequently uses the phrase, "This man," and Paul, Romans viii. 3, tells us that the Redeemer was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh." If any other proof were needed there is the unanswerable fact of His death.

ERROR CONCERNING THE WORK OF CHRIST.

Not only do the Brethren deny the vicarious character of the Saviour's righteousness, but they limit His *atoning* sufferings to His sufferings upon the cross. Other sufferings are admitted, but these are ascribed to causes which are not easy to understand. On this point Mr. Darby had better speak for himself: "There is a double character of suffering besides atoning work, which Christ has entered into and which others can feel—the sufferings arising from the sense of chastening in respect of sin, and these mixed with the pressure of Satan's power in the soul, and the terror of foreseen wrath. In the former we suffer with Christ as a privilege; in the latter we suffer for our folly and under God's hand, but Christ has entered into it. He sympathizes with us. But all this is distinct from suffering instead of us, so as to save us from suffering, undergoing God's wrath that we might not." We are told also that Christ endured "distress under the sense of sins," and this, again, as distinct from His atoning work. But does not this involve a charge of guilt against Christ? Can any but the guilty experience a "sense of sin?" And yet John declares that "He knew no sin."

ERROR CONCERNING FAITH.

The teaching of the Brethren about faith is deeply tinged with Sandemanianism. With them faith is but an intellectual assent to the doctrines of the Gospel. Christ came to save sinners—that is faith. Christ died for me—that is faith. It stops with "If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be made whole"—it does not rush through the crowd