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63

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OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE GRAVESTONE LAWSUIT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—This celebrated case has been frequently referred to in your columns, and as it is now settled, the readers will be pleased to learn what is the conclusion of the whole matter. The victory is decided and most satisfactory. The verdict is in favour of the erection of the tombstone with the identical inscription to which the Rector has been so bitterly opposed, and about which the whole contention has arisen. After unfavorable applications to the Rector of the Parish, to the Bishop of Lincoln, to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Lincoln in his Court, and to the Court of Arches, in which causes and cases Ecclesiastical have been heard; an appeal was made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In this, the highest Court of the realm, and the one of final appeal, the Church pretensions and arrogance of the entire lot, constituting the inferior courts, has received a tremendous rebuke, and they are signally defeated. Wider issues than the erection of a solitary monument in an out of the way parish graveyard have been decided. The high exclusive claims of Episcopalians to the title of Reverend, have been shewn to be utterly baseless, and the term is defined as merely an epithet—a designation of respect to which all are entitled who minister in the Churches, and one which the law confers on none, and regards as proper to all whose vocation is in harmony with the word itself. As an indication of the feeling with which the decision is regarded, a few clergymen have written to the papers requesting to be no longer addressed by the "now desecrated title," and wishing to be known as "P. P." "Paris le Priest"—which is one to which they are perfectly welcome, if it is not disputed on the other hand by the clergy of the Church of Rome.

REPRESSION OF RITUALISM.

By the arms of the law is a slow and costly process. Mr. Disraeli's Public Worship Regulation Act has been a long time on the Statute Books, and three days ago. Yet it is satisfactory to find that a provision exists by which the disgraceful and glaring irregularities of extreme Ritualists in the Church of England can be checked and punished. The suit which has just been decided, was instituted by three parishioners of Folkestone against the clergyman, and the charges were that he had violated the Ritual of the Church in many ways, but chiefly in that he had administered the Communion in his church to one person, that he had erected a crucifix in a most conspicuous place with a sculptured figure upon it, and that certain pictures, seven in number, representing the so-called "stations of the cross," had been set up in the Church. These pictures are highly colored, and are such as are commonly used in Roman Catholic chapels. The decision of Lord Penzance is against the defendant on all these points, the obnoxious sculptures and paintings are to be removed, a sharp reprimand has been administered to the offending clergyman, and he is condemned to pay the whole of the costs. The result of this first trial has been received by the general public with much satisfaction, but we do not expect much adding good from it. The process is very burdensome, the risk of defeat on the part of prosecutors is very great, the spirit of Ritualism is defiant, and the law will not terrify into submission the men whose hearts are set upon forms, sacraments, and priestly prerogatives, rather than the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

CONNEXIONAL COMMITTEES

have been sitting during the fortnight at Centenary Hall. The attendance was unusually large, and topics of great importance were under discussion. Lay

Delegation occupied some time, and the Report will soon be in the hands of the ministers, preparatory to the decision which will be expected from every District meeting. After which the whole question in its advanced form comes before a large mixed Committee, which will make recommendations to the Conference. The Home Mission work of Methodism was another subject upon which a decision was arrived at. Some important modifications will be made, and three distinguished ministers are nominated, one of whom will be selected by Conference to fill the place of the late General Secretary, the Rev. C. Prest. The death of the senior Editor will probably hasten some changes in our Connexional literature, and may probably call another man from the Itinerant ranks to swell the number of the localised and official Brethren. The proposal to elect a clerical Treasurer to the Home Mission Fund, separated from Circuit work, is likely to be met by strong persistent opposition.

THE REV. JABEZ BURNS, D.D.

The busy indefatigable, preacher, author, and traveller has ceased to work and live. Full of honors well earned, highly beloved and esteemed far and wide; he has finished his course and rests in death. The record of his life work is a remarkable one. His early struggles, his brave endurance, his upward path, and undoubted success, form an inspiring story. A stout opponent of slavery, a strong adherent of the Total Abstinence cause, an ardent Baptist, yet one of the foremost defenders of free and open Communion. As a Pastor, he had a long and successful career; his numerous works are known and read everywhere. By the death of Dr. Burns, London has lost an earnest preacher, the cause of Temperance a very earnest advocate, and the Church universal a lovable, brotherly, genial, large hearted man. He visited this neighborhood a few months ago, and we had the privilege of hearing him preach twice, and of spending a portion of the day in pleasant intercourse, and listening to reminiscences of travel, interviews with famous men, and seasons of power from on high, when in other lands, he preached the free, glorious Gospel of the grace of God. "B."

February 7, 1876.

ENGLISH METHODISM—OFFICIAL DECISIONS, &c.—Table Talk in the London Methodist has a word upon two or three rather important subjects:—

The special Home Missionary Committee last week considered several important questions. It resolved to continue the present condition of affairs with the War Office, and not to ask for payment by the Government to ministers appointed for the benefit of Wesleyan soldiers, and not to encourage any local application for such grants. This Committee was largely attended, and some members were present who are not often seen there. They doubtless felt interest in the nomination of a successor to Mr. Prest. It was resolved to send to the Conference the following names: Rev. Gervase Smith, Rev. A. M. Anley, Rev. M. O. Osborn. I hear some people think that, after nine years' drudgery over schedules and other work, the unpaid Secretary, Rev. John Bond, should at least have had a nomination. He has been very diligent at his post; and, as faithfulness and sincerity are the highest things, it would be ungracious for him who has them to repine. The Committee has also recommended the Conference to set apart from Circuit work Rev. John W. Greaves, as Treasurer of the Home Mission and Contingent Fund. This is the "third time of asking." Twice before the Conference has refused a similar request.

"Table Talk" seems to have access to sources of information not open to ordinary enquirers, as witness the following:—

"There is said to be no decision about the vacant editorship. Some say it will not be filled up at all; others that it ought to be filled; indeed, names have been freely talked about during the week for nomination as Mr. Frankland's successor, and chiefly those of Dr. Williams, Mr. Toyne, and Mr. R. N. Young.

The speech delivered by the President of the Conference, at a missionary meeting at Bolton, on the intolerant bigotry exercised in social life and rural districts against Methodists, has attracted considerable notice. Extracts from it have appeared in several London and many provincial papers. In some country towns it has been reprinted on lips and widely circulated. It was high time some such utterance was made, and we may congratulate ourselves that we have a President, who could and would make it."

REVEREND, AND ANTI-REVEREND.

The English papers just now are enjoying the sensation arising from the decision in the Keet case, and the results which follow. We select a few specimens by way of illustration. They will be read with interest:—

From the Leeds Mercury.

It may be that in some rural districts of England, Wesleyans and other Nonconformists, with their preachers, have been somewhat puffed up by the decision of the judicial committee, authorising a Wesleyan minister to call himself "Rev." on his daughter's tombstone. If so, their glorying will be turned into confusion by the heroic action of the Vicar of Little Petherick, St. Issey, Cornwall. That clergyman has not wasted time by waiting to see what others of his outraged clerical brethren would do, but has at once repudiated for himself the adjective by which schismatics have new legal sanction to describe themselves. In an advertisement in a Plymouth newspaper, the Vicar of Little Petherick requests correspondents to address him in future as G. W. MANNING. He adds, "Correspondents who prefix to my name the now desecrated epithet of 'reverend' will please not to be offended if I reject their letters." By this brilliant move the Nonconformist victory, at any rate so far as Little Petherick is concerned, is turned into ignominious defeat; and 'Reverend,' instead of being the "laudatory epithet" applied to members of a sacred profession, becomes the badge of the propagators of heresy and schism. BISHOP TEMPLE is unworthy to bear rule over G. W. MANNING. The sooner that single-eyed believer in the Apostolical succession can be transferred to some parish under the congenial, if not genial, sway of DR. CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH, the happier will it be for G. W. MANNING and for Little Petherick.

The "P.P."—The editor of the Western Morning News appends the following note to a letter which has been addressed to him by "G. W. Manning, P. P.," in answer to the critics who have loaded his letter-box with "Billingsgate." "We also have had the recipients of a multitude of letters on this fertile theme, but being more used to such inflictions than our reverend correspondent, we have not been overwhelmed by them. Much difficulty seems to be felt as to what the letters 'P.P.' can mean. The solution, 'Popish Priest,' is forbidden by a reference to the 'Diocesan Calendar,' showing G. W. Manning to be rector of a Cornish parish, having a population of 216 souls and a living of £220, with a residence. The suggestion that it implies some connection with Pope Pius IX. is, for the same reason, inadmissible. The correspondents who suggest 'Paul Pry' and 'Proud Pharisee' are manifestly themselves irreverent; much nearer the mark is the idea that Mr. Manning must have some undefined connection with 'Peculiar People.' The suggestion of 'Pitiful Passeyite' may be at once dismissed. 'Presumptuous Person' is not likely to be correct, and 'Primitive Peculiarity' is a very far-fetched idea. The first prize at this Guessing Bee must be awarded to the correspondent who suggests 'Parochial Parson.' That certainly must be correct. Another class of correspondents make sober attempts to convince G. W. Manning that he errs in laying exclusive claim to a title which Shakespeare makes Othello apply to 'Dukes, senators, and officers,' and which a greater than Shakespeare would condemn, being applied to any set of men on the ground of episcopal ordination. But these and other correspondents waste their time. They won't convince Mr. Manning—that is certain, and nobody else needs convincing."

Here is the opinion of jolly, rollicking Punch:—

THE DESECRATED REVEREND!
"Farewell, farewell to thee, title of 'Reverend'!"
"Thus warbled a Rector on Cornwall's bleak shore—
"My scorn that that desecrate prefix shall never cease!
"The 'P.P.' of St. Petroc is 'Reverend' no more!"

What are we to make of the following extract from a Plymouth journal:—

NOTICE.—I request that all communications to me through the Post-office be addressed as under:—

J. W. MANNING, P.P.,
St. Petroc Minor, St. Issey,
Cornwall.

Correspondents who prefix to my name the now desecrated epithet of "The Reverend," will please not to be offended if I reject their letters, &c.

G. W. MANNING.

Can any clergyman of the Church of England be so inflated by self-esteem without self-respect, so destitute of dignity, charity, common-sense, and taste, so devoid of all perception of absurdity, as to be conceived capable of penning this notice? It must be "a thing devised by the enemy"—the fling of hostile and unscrupulous Secretaries. Perhaps they will next advertise Mr. Manning as renouncing

the clerical black and white tie because Wesleyan ministers wear them, and adopting coloured clothes and a bird's-eye fogle instead.

It may be that the letters "P.P." are insidiously intended to be taken for "Parish Priest," so making out the name-sake of Cardinal Manning a Ritualist, aping the style of his Eminence's Priesthood. Suppose a Popish Priest were to publish a request that nobody should address him by his name the letters "P. P." now desecrated in their permitted assumption by a Protestant heretic? Would you not consider him as great an ass as a Church of England clergyman renouncing the title of "Reverend" because it has been decided by the Court of Appeal that it may legally be carved on the gravestone of a Wesleyan preacher?—

BEREAN NOTES.

March 5.] LESSON X. GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID. [B. C. 1042.] [2 SAM. 7. 18-29.

HOME READINGS.

MONDAY—2 Sam. 7. 18-29.
TUESDAY—2 Sam. 7. 1-17.
WEDNESDAY—Psa. 46. 1-11.
THURSDAY—Psa. 48. 1-14.
FRIDAY—Psa. 145. 1-10.
SATURDAY—Heb. 6. 11-20.
SUNDAY—1 Pet. 1. 1-9.

TOPIC: Hope Resting upon God.

GOLDEN TEXT: Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised up to Israel a Saviour, Jesus. Acts 13. 23.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

Hope resting—

1. Upon the works of God, ver. 18-24.
2. Upon the words of God, ver. 25-29.

What in this lesson shows—

1. The benefits of knowing God's works and words?
2. The benefits of trusting God's works and words?

DOCTRINE: The truthfulness of God. Exod. 34. 6; Psa. 146. 6.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

In this lesson we see God's Covenant with David. As we read it we do not wonder at finding David's and the Christian's "hope resting upon God." The apostle in the GOLDEN TEXT records the fulfilment of God's promise: "Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised up to Israel a Saviour, Jesus." In the OUTLINE we see HOPE RESTING, 1. Upon the works of God; 2. Upon the words of God.

BY D. A. WHEDON, D.D.

The purpose of David, formed soon after bringing up the ark to his tabernacle, of erecting a temple for the glory of Jehovah, was certainly a laudable one. Nathan, the prophet, at once warmly commended it. But God had other plans for both him and his temple. Though it was then a time of rest from war, it would not long continue. David, from the necessities of the case, must be a warrior-king, and a temple, significant of permanence, would be inappropriate until the kingdom should become permanently established. It was reserved for Solomon, and peaceable, as his name means, to build it. So God sent Nathan to forbid David's project, much to his disappointment, doubtless, but he gave him at the same time a message of wonderful blessing and far-reaching import. He first recounts what he has already done, and then tells what he intends to do. Our title terms the latter a COVENANT. Strictly, a covenant is a mutual contract between two parties; here it must be understood as a solemn promise made by God, to whose fulfilment he held himself as if bound by an oath. David's prayer in response is, in like manner, two-fold, embracing both the past and the future, God's works and God's words.

God's Works. VER. 18. DAVID WENT IN the tabernacle, and offered his prayer, SAT BEFORE. On his heels, and near the ark. Or, instead of referring to his posture, the meaning may be that he waited there. WHO AM I? Surely, nobody; a simple shepherd boy whom God had lifted up to a throne. MY HOUSE. Respectable in family, but nothing more. No merit was in him or it. BROUGHT ME HITHERTO. Ver. 8, 9, explain. It was God who chose him, protect d, delivered, led, and exalted him, and made him great.

19. A SMALL THING. David's greatness was great for him, by all the worldly distance between a shepherd and a king, but, O! how small as between him and his God. A GREAT WHILE. David was the founder of his dynasty, the first of his line. Not a royal house in Europe is a thousand years old, but the promise here given looks forward through a longer peri-

od, even to Christ, and then beyond him FOREVER, ver. 13, 16. David is so struck with the gracious condescension thus displayed, that he asks, in adoring astonishment, IS THIS THE MANNER, OR LAW, OF God's dealing with MAN? This is a mode of strongly affirming the contrary. "A man of high degree" (1 Chron. 17. 17.) might, perhaps, expect something of the kind, but not a shepherd boy.

20. 21. SAY MORE. That is, in the way of grateful expression or of desire. He saw the permanency of his throne and kingdom assured, and with all his love of country and family could ask for them nothing more. Yet he can adore. THEY WORD'S SAKE. The prophetic word of promise which God would magnify.

22. THOU ART GREAT. David's soul now overflows in adoration of the divine greatness. First, God is GREAT in himself, in his unity and supremacy; second, he has shown it in his wonderful deliverance of his PEOPLE FROM EGYPT, and planting them in Canaan in spite of opposing NATIONS and GODS, ver. 23; and, third, in having proved the validity of the covenant with Israel, and CONFIRMED it by bringing them to their present security and prosperity.

God's Word, VER. 25. THE WORD. David next reverts to the promise just made himself, and asks for its fulfilment. I WILL BUILD THREE A HOUSE, are the foundation words. The "house of David" is the family, the posterity of David. The exposition of the promise we have in vers. 12-16: "I will set up thy seed after thee; I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever; thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever; thy throne shall be established forever." The primary reference was to the earthly throne and kingdom; and so David understood it. A part of what was said could only thus apply, while another part points to the spiritual kingdom, of which the earthly was a type, and to Jesus, David's son, who now sits upon its throne. Thenceforth in the psalms and prophecies, the son of David rises into prominence, and the kingdom is expected to find its permanence and glory in him as the Messiah. When he came he was the true and legal heir to the throne of Israel, and in him as the exalted king, the promise has its proper fulfilment. See Psa. 89. 3, 4, 20, 29, 36, 37; 131. 11; Isa. 9. 6, 7; Jer. 23. 5, 6; 33. 21; Luke 1. 32, 33; John 1^o 34; Acts 13. 23; Heb. 1. 8. Keil well says, "The posterity of David could only last forever by running out in a person who lives forever, that is, by culminating in the Messiah, who lives forever and of whose kingdom there is no end." How much of all this David perceived we cannot tell; but we well know that it is fully realized in Christ.

26. HAST REVEALED. This fact was the apology for so great a request, and also the ground of the prayer. Promised things are things to be prayed for.

29. THOU HAST SPOKEN IT. He had just said, THEY WORDS BE TRUE, and now he plants himself once more upon the word and promise of God, with a firm conviction of its faithfulness. That God has said a thing is enough for him who believes that there is a God at all. David ascertains what God has said, and then believes it with his whole soul, and makes it the ground of asking his blessing. Thus what God had done and said became the basis of a blessed hope for the future of his HOUSE even FOREVER. And God has been true to his word, as he always is, and has raised us up of this man's seed, a Saviour, Jesus, who shall reign forever.

Lessons 1. The truthfulness of God. Let us fasten this in our minds. He is true. His Bible is true. His promises are true. What he has said we may depend on, for he will not lie to saint or sinner, nor can he fail those who trust him. Psa. 89. 35; Heb. 6. 17-19; Num. 28. 19; Exek. 24. 14. 2. Our hope for eternity must rest on God. Every other basis is shifting sand. Each of us can find enough in what God has done for us and said to us, to rest our hopes upon, especially in his gift of his Son and the promise of life through him. Matt. 7. 24-27; Psa. 50. 23; Acts 4. 12; 10. 43; John 6. 68; 3. 16. 3. Now that a Saviour is raised up, let us receive and love him. Let the teacher press this practical lesson and not rest until his whole class are in covenant with Christ. Acts 2. 38; 13. 26; 1 Tim. 1. 15; Prov. 8. 17.