

## CLERICAL HOLIDAYS AND CHURCH BUSINESS.

Everyone engaged in active life needs a holiday something to break in upon the necessary monotony of ordinary though important work. We don't know any who need this more than hard working, not very well paid ministers. But in order to be a holiday at all, it must be a holiday indeed, with responsibilities for the time being completely laid aside and work thrown to the winds. It can never for a moment, for instance, be imagined that attending a Conference or an Assembly is of the nature of a holiday. Instead of this being the case, if it is set about at all as it ought to be, it is as hard and exhausting work as any one can possibly engage in. Those who are sent to such meetings are sent upon the business of the Church, are selected for that very purpose, and are not true to themselves or to those who sent them if they do not attend to that business with all diligence. Indeed it is, if possible, now more obligatory on members of Assembly to give honest conscientious attention to that official work at the yearly meeting of the highest judicature of the Church, than it was when all the ministers and representative elders met in Synod, for they are now formally deputed for this purpose, and if they cannot discharge the duty they ought not to come under the obligation. How people can think of bringing their wives to such meetings, unless they have private friends, is more than we can understand. It is no holiday time for the members of Assembly, and if they attend to the work of the Church they cannot have much leisure for doing the agreeable to their better halves. While how these poor unfortunates can enjoy themselves in a strange city and in strange homes, where perhaps they have not one friend, perhaps not even an acquaintance, seems quite incomprehensible. It is always, to be sure, lawful to lead about a wife-sister, but the expediency of such a proceeding is sometimes quite a different story. When it is business let it be business in earnest, when it is holiday making let it be holiday making out and out.—*Canada Presbyterian.*

## GROCCERS' LICENSES.

In our last week's report of the proceedings of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, we inadvertently left out the last clause of the fifth resolution on Temperance as adopted by that reverend court. The resolution actually passed, reads as follows:

"That the Church should urge the Legislature to enact that all places where intoxicating liquors are sold should be closed on public holidays, and, as far as possible, to withdraw licenses from grocceries."

We have italicized the omitted words, the more effectually to draw the attention of our readers to them and to enlist united influence in their support. The whole recommendation, it will be observed, implies a step in advance, and indicates the healthy progress of opinion on the subject in question. Time was, and not so long gone by, when such a proposal, even in a Church court, would have been regarded and denounced as absurd and tyrannical, and when the chances were against its being favourably entertained or adopted by either Presbytery or Synod. It would then have been said that holidays were by way of eminence the very seasons when such places ought to be open if they were allowed at all. The people, it would have been urged, were then abroad intent on holiday-making and general enjoyment. They needed refreshment and rest. What were they to do if the means of securing the one or the other were not available? Holidays with closed taverns, it would have been argued, would not be worthy the name. Better not have them at all, than make them mere delusions and snares. It is different now. Other means of rest and refreshment are provided in ever increasing abundance, and the miserable sight of crowds of holiday-makers returning home intoxicated, with the usual allowance of quarrelling and blows, has been far too common and far too disgusting any longer to reconcile the most respectable portion of the community to open taverns on holidays as even useful, far less indispensable. At the same time it is very evident that this Synodical resolution points unmistakably to prohibition pure and simple as its natural, neces-

sary, and ultimate conclusion, for if open taverns for the sale of intoxicating liquors are not only not needed on the Sabbath, on holidays, and, after a certain hour, on the Saturday evenings, but are, as they have been declared to be, nuisances of the first magnitude at such times, it would be difficult to shew that they can be necessary or even convenient and beneficial on other days and at any hour whatever. We have no doubt the members of the Toronto Synod are quite prepared to acquiesce in this, and quite resolved to work for its being made an "accomplished fact" at the earliest possible date.

The objection taken to groccers being any longer allowed to deal in intoxicating liquors is also exceedingly reasonable and significant. It is notorious that women frequently get such liquors in these stores and have them entered in their pass-books as "grocceries," and that too generally groccers make it a practice to allow their customers to have "free drinks" in their back shops or cellars and are thus the means of leading many into intemperate habits who would never, at first at any rate, have gone to taverns for such indulgences. In many respects in short the grocceries in which intoxicating liquors are sold are more dangerous places than even taverns, and if they could be universally stopped the beneficial result would be both general and most encouraging. We are glad to notice that an ever increasing number of the most respectable groccers throughout the country are shaking themselves free of this dangerous and growingly disreputable business. Many more, we have reason to believe, would only be too glad to do so were they not afraid of losing the patronage of those who still reckon intoxicating liquors among their household necessaries, and who it is therefore feared would only buy their sugar and tea at establishments where they can also be supplied with wine and whiskey. It is surely only right and proper on the other hand for those who believe that the traffic in these liquors is dangerous both to buyers and sellers, to deal exclusively with those who, it may be, to their present pecuniary loss, have separated themselves entirely from the liquor business, and have thus voluntarily anticipated the official action which the members of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston so cordially and unitedly recommend. We have much greater confidence in the steadily growing and strengthening influence of public opinion against the manufacture, sale, and use of intoxicating liquors than in any mere catch vote of the Legislature either in the way of limitation or suppression. It is in any case simply as the former gathers strength that the latter can be successfully or safely called into operation, and therefore such resolutions as those to which we refer are at once signs of the times and encouragements to further effort in the same direction.—*Canada Presbyterian.*

## SIMPLICITY IN PREACHING.

We remember to have met with the following passage from a sermon—we will not be so cruel as to give the reference. The preacher wanted to say that every man has a sense of deathlessness, of immortality in him. He announced his doctrine in this pleasant fashion. "The deep intuitional glance of the soul penetrating beyond the surface and sphere of the superficial and phenomenal to the remote recesses of an absolute being, adumbrates its own immortality in its progressive perceptions." And it was from the same region that we fell in with the divisions of a sermon upon a text whose awful topic ought really to have made the preacher modest, and to have imposed upon his lips the sentiment of holy ground, and a bush burning with fire. Not so, however. The text was—"God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth;" upon which the preacher said—"The text naturally divides itself into three parts—first, we have presented to us the transcendental properties of the divine nature. Second, we have the anthropomorphic relations under which those transcendental properties in the divine nature stand revealed and become apprehensible; and third, we have the appropriate symbolism by which those anthropomorphic relations and illustrations of the transcendental properties in the divine nature consti-

tute worship." This has always struck us as a fair illustration of what may be called "the-house-that-Jack-built" style of eloquence. It has ever seemed to us amazing that there should be men able to talk after this profane fashion; yet even the use of fine words has not always been related to this thoughtless profanity; there have been men-preachers who seemed naturally to think in this odd style of speech, this bombastic phraseology. We take up a volume in which we find a preacher in the course of his sermon has to describe a tear; he speaks of it as "the small particle of the aqueous fluid which trickles from the visual organ over the lineaments of the countenance, betokening grief." And there is a story told of a Rev. John Hamilton, of South Leith, who, many long years since, was in the habit of astonishing his hearers by such marvellous words as the following, with which he introduced a sermon upon the text—"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself:"—"I shall not nibble at necessities, nor ingeminate prolixities, but with the sword of brevity shall cut the Gordian knot of obscurity, and so proceed to give you the genuine purport of this mellifluous and aromatic subject, calculated alienarily (only) for the meridian of that microcosm—man?" Perhaps our readers may say, "Too much of this;" it is still true that ignorance has frequently been delighted with these exhibitions, and certain preachers of shallow attainment have been as frequently fond of this verbal pedantry. Even great men have indulged this habit, men like Samuel Johnson, Samuel Parr, Winter Hamilton; they were all great scholars, but they could not apparently take off what must always seem to their readers to be the seven-league boots of language; they neither of them served their reputation by the practice, and each of them, and many others beside them, would have been more popular had they been more simple. Is not the highest eloquence simplicity? Try it by the most impassioned paragraphs from Chrysostom, or from Robert Hall.—*Sunday at Home.*

## ANCIENT AND MODERN DENIAL OF GOD.

It is supposed that our age is so wise and advanced that a great gulf yawns between it and that in which the Bible originated, and we can no longer think its thoughts. But the idea that we are so very different from those ages is totally groundless, as the Bible itself shews. It tells us that away in those distant times there were many distinguished men, who denied God just as our modern philosophers and their friends, who held their denial for the highest wisdom, and who looked down upon others as antiquated, ignorant, and stupid, in sore need of being rescued from their narrow-mindedness and foolishness—men who, while denying Him, lived yet according to all appearance well and happily, who were counted the wisest men of their days, and completely dominated the thought of their age. We know also from the Bible how they endeavoured to establish their denial, partly from the apparent defects and weaknesses of the opinions contrary to their own, and partly from the misfortunes and miseries of those of their contemporaries who thought and acted differently from them; and all this is set before us as plainly as if the Book were describing men of our own time who are well known to us. Our minds are also not a little supported by this consideration, which also the Bible sets before us, that such deniers of God did not appear in the times in which the old religion was the innermost power and highest pride of Israel, but only in those later times when its first pure force was broken and it had begun more keenly to feel the defects of its old economy and the incompleteness of its traditional faith. Still less does such a denial of God reach back into the earliest times of the life of man on earth, for in those there burned the intensest longing for the revelation of God and to obtain perfect certainty of His existence and nearness. But in the later centuries of antiquity a new obscuration of the human mind got the upper hand on this its highest and brightest side, and many learned schools were founded to increase and perpetuate this obscuration, yea and flourished long; so that we can rightly assert that the last centuries, those from 700 or 800 B.C., were exactly like our own time