

**The Church Guardian,**  
A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.  
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#### INSTRUCTION OUT OF THE PULPIT.

THE Bishop of Fredericton, speaking at the Consecration of the new Church at Gagetown, N. B., alluded to the ignorance of Scripture, even of its simplest historical facts, which he found so prevalent among the younger members of the Church. This is also the experience of all who have to deal with the religious training of the young. It is especially noticeable in country districts where Services are few, and Sunday Schools are irregularly kept, and taught by Teachers, who, in many cases, can hardly be expected for ignorance of the Bible. At the last Grammar School we attended in England, we not only studied Scripture History, but went over and over again Whateley's introductory Lessons on "The Evidences of Christianity," a little book which ought to be in the hands of all our young people. How seldom do we see such a book, or even a Scripture History in the houses of our people. We are very fond of talking of the lack of home teaching. How few parents are capable of teaching their children anything but the questions and answers on their papers. And how little are we doing to fit the future parents for teaching! The fact is, this matter of religious instruction is one of life and death to the state, as well as to the Christian people in it. Given a couple of generations without religious teaching, and the result is communism, anarchy, and social and public chaos. The state absolutely refuses to teach the simplest elements of religion, and thus practically ignores Him who is Ruler of the world, and from whom the powers that be derive their authority. To Christian people is committed the task of religious instruction. And the result in a scattered and new country with few books, and fewer qualified teachers is this ignorance of the Bible complained of. We say nothing of ignorance of Church History. That is a *terra incognita* to almost all, young or old. Now, the ordinary sermon from a text has its place and usefulness, but it will never remedy this ignorance. Most of the time, the clergy preach to people as if they knew a great deal of Scripture. They preach theological discourses, containing expressions and phrases which are so much Hebrew to most of their hearers. The people want exposition of the Bible, and some idea of the connection between the books, and Bible teaching on subjects treated as a whole. The writer of this has for some time past at his Friday evening Service, taken up different books, and given a familiar explanation of them, chapter by chapter. He has found the benefit of it himself, and the people have been in-

terested and instructed. We want more expository, and less preaching. Another great want, is more instruction out of the pulpit. Sufficient use is not made of week evening classes at different points, preceded by a very brief Service, where solid instruction should be given on Biblical and Historical topics. The crying need in the Church is more teaching.

Therefore, we encourage the formation of Guilds, Bible Classes and meetings of all kinds where instruction is given. Here comes in another use that could be made of permanent deacons. These men could be most usefully employed in holding Bible Classes during the week. What would not Rectors give if they had in their Parishes laymen competent to give instruction of this kind to the young men? It is this concentration of teaching power which makes us look with admiration on a large and well-ordered English Parish, with its staff of Curates, its Bible Women, Scripture Readers, District Visitors and Societies of all kinds. They are able to reach and instruct large numbers of people by their well organized equipments. While we sigh at our weakness and want of means we may well ask ourselves if we are making as much use of the power that lies in instruction as we might, whether we are not depending too much on services and Sunday schools, and neglecting means of familiar instruction which our people, young and old, so sorely need. Clergy and people need to come in contact, so that an interest may be excited in the subject of instruction, and that spirit of inquiry provoked which will result in knowledge and reasons for our belief and practice.

#### PARISH WORK AGAIN.

THE mistaken notion regarding congregations is, that they are to be worked up by the minister; whereas, the true idea is, that they are bodies of people organized to work, and the minister is to work among them, as their guide and leader. The official functions of the Parish Priest cannot be delegated to the laity, he alone is authorized and commissioned to perform certain spiritual acts, but there is a large amount of work which he cannot do alone. One reason why so many Parishes are at a stand still, is because the people think their duty is done when they attend the Services more or less irregularly, and contribute a paltry sum to the stipend of their clergyman and the Parish expenses. They allow one man, single-handed, to try and grapple with the manifold works required in the Parish. There is a spiritual side to the pastor's work which belongs to him alone, but there is a temporal side closely connected with this which the people ought to share with him. We lay it down as a rule, that every adult in the Parish, unless hindered by extraordinary causes, should have some specific work to do in connection with the Church. It may be very humble or very trifling. God thinks none the less of it, if done to his honour. We sometimes wonder if Parishes realize what might be accomplished "if the people had a mind to work," not the few faithful ones to be found in every community, but we mean the parishioners as a body. What a gain it would be if every Parish had a Guild Society, with its manifold agencies for work! Inside and outside of the parish, God is calling for laborers. The fields of duty are white, and they stand waiting for the laborers. Look among you, ye who read this, and see what might be done in your own parish. Resolve to be a power in some work, and stir up others to help you. The winter season is now upon us when, in the country, especially, there is much leisure time. Shall that time be spent idly in amusement, or is there nothing that you owe to God? God has

given you strength, energy, ambition and hope. We ask you to give them to the best of all causes, under the most glorious of all leaders, Jesus Christ.

Be God's servants; be Christ's soldiers.

"Think that day lost whose low descending sun Views from thy hand no noble action done."

SEVERAL mistakes occurred in our leader of last week. The kindness of our friends will doubtless overlook the blunders; and their presence will make our proof-reader more watchful in the future.

#### AN EXAMPLE WORTHY OF IMITATION.

They have a way of doing things in the United States which could well be copied with great advantage to the Missionary cause of the Church with us in Canada. The Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions, held their annual meeting in New York, on Oct. 12th, at which the wives of several of the Missionary Bishops made known the wants of their respective fields. The N. Y. *Churchman* shall tell the result:

"These various remarks were listened to with deep interest, and as each of the first four ladies ceased speaking, gifts and pledges were promptly made, which in a very short time ensured the support of the woman helper in Salt Lake, a scholarship at Reno for the coming year, and the erection of seventeen dormitories—afterwards increased to twenty—in Wolfe Hall, while over \$200 were contributed for Mrs. Bisford's work, the whole amount raised, in money and promises, being more than \$1,300. This quick and generous response was most satisfactory to both those who asked and those who gave assistance, and added greatly to the interest of the meeting."

#### PETITION AGAINST A CHANGE IN THE MARRIAGE LAWS.

We direct the attention of the Clergy to the Petition printed below, copies of which will at once be sent them, asking the Dominion Parliament not to change the existing Laws relating to Marriage. As the Session of the House begins so early, the Clergy must bestir themselves at once, so as to be in a position to send up to Ottawa a well filled Petition immediately after the Christmas vacation.

TO THE HONORABLE THE \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE DOMINION OF CANADA:

The Petition of the undersigned Members of the Church of England, in the Parish (or Mission) of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Diocese of Nova Scotia,

*Humbly Sheweth,*  
That your Petitioners have reason to believe, that a Bill is to be introduced in to your Honorable House to abolish one, or more, of the restrictions upon marriage, contained in the Table of Prohibited Degrees recognized by the Law of England. And, inasmuch as they believe these restrictions to be enforced by the Holy Scriptures, they earnestly deprecate the passage of any Bill which would legalize marriages prohibited by the Word of God.

Your Petitioners submit that, as Christians, they are well assured that marriage, according to their Master's teaching, is a divine institution, (not merely a civil contract,) and that "so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful;" and they fear that the proposed legislation may involve the Dominion in the guilt of direct antagonism to the revealed will of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe.

More particularly, your Petitioners apprehend that any alteration in the relative position of Brothers-in-law, and Sisters-in-law, must injuriously affect the comfort and happiness of many households, and must also deprive motherless children of the loving care of any unmarried Aunt, at the time when, immediately after the Mother's death, such care would be most beneficial, and under the present law is frequently enjoyed.

Your Petitioners therefore pray your Honorable House, to refuse to adopt any restrictions, of which the divine authority, and binding force, were acknowledged by the whole Church, for many ages from the beginning of the Christian dis-

pensation, and to uphold the principle, that not even the highest civil authority may dispense with them.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

THE *Dominion Churchman*, in its latest issue, takes a little article of ours on "Extremes meet," which had found its way into the *Ohio Standard of the Cross*, and credits it to that paper. We often see pieces from *Church Work* in it without credit. Even this is better than taking an article referring to an incident in New Brunswick, and crediting it to an Ohio paper.

#### ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE MARRIAGE LAW OF THE DOMINION, LEGALIZING MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED HUSBAND'S BROTHER, AND WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Summary of a Sermon delivered in St. Peter's Church, Charlottetown, P.E.I., by Rev. G. W. Housson, on Sunday, November 14th.

"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."—*Ephesians v. 32.*

THESE words the inspired Apostle uses when speaking of the relative duties of husbands and wives. In the verses preceding the text he had been enforcing these duties. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church; wives to submit themselves to their husbands as the Church to Christ. The sacramental view of the marriage union comes from thinking of it as an earthly representation of a heavenly union, and from recognizing that special divine grace will be given to those married persons who seek it, which will enable them to fulfil their high duties, and to set forth the Divine ideal. It is Christianity alone that has raised that which was a mere natural union into a far higher sphere, thereby giving rise to the Christian home life with all its sanctities, and elevating woman to a position higher than she had had before.

Referring marriage to the union between Christ and the Church, as its example and ideal, guards two truths; i.e., the indissolubility of the marriage vow, and the completeness and perfection of the union between man and wife. When one of these truths is tampered with, the other suffers.

An attempt, which very nearly succeeded, was made last winter to change the marriage laws of the Dominion, so as to permit marriage between a deceased husband's brother and a deceased wife's sister. The attempt will probably be made again, so it is well the matter should be brought before you.

Some speakers in Parliament stated that the English House of Commons had passed such a bill as this, and that many prominent English statesmen and divines had spoken in favor of it. This statement was quite inaccurate. Such a bill never passed; I doubt if it was ever introduced into the English Parliament. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a single person of note who has advocated it.

It may be granted that the advocates of a change in Canada are more consistent than these in England; but that does not alter the fact that no one in England has proposed to allow marriage with a deceased brother's wife.

If we thought of this subject merely as members of the Church of England, the proposed change need not give us the slightest anxiety. The law of our Church is clear and explicit, and Parliament cannot change it. Any priest of the Church of England solemnizing such a marriage is liable to degradation; any member of that Church contracting the alliance, to excommunication. No priest who performed the ceremony in such a case can continue in the ministry. No persons who so marry can continue in the Church.

But as citizens of the country we have a deep interest in the question. If the change is wrong, it must do harm. A nation cannot any more than an individual, escape the consequences of a wrong act, or of a mistaken act, however honest the mistake may be.

In considering the question I will take the lowest grounds possible—will meet the advocates of the change on their own grounds.

[Let us then consider the principle of the existing prohibitions—first without any reference to the Bible at all.

Shall there be any prohibitions at all?

Everyone will say Yes.

Prohibitions must be under two heads—of Consanguinity or Blood relations—of affinity or Marriage relations.

What blood relations should be prohibited?

These also are under two heads—direct and collateral.

Let us see what are prohibited under each head and why.

Marriages are prohibited in the direct line in every degree, i.e. parents and their children, grandchildren, &c., are prohibited.

There is no need to seek a reason for such prohibitions—the very thought of such unions is horrible. We can speak of them (and anyone will agree) as forbidden naturally.

Now as to collateral blood relations.

The principle adopted in our table of prohibited degrees is that these relations may not marry within the fourth degree. In this way of reckoning the steps are taken to and from the common ancestor, and both parties are included. But this will be plainer by illustration.

Take brother and sister. This is called the third degree, counting thus:—B. other one, up to parent two, down to sister three.

The reason of this prohibition is not quite the same as that of the former. There may have been a time when such unions were necessary. But it is quite evident that the close and intimate family life of brothers and sister makes it of the utmost importance morally that such unions be not thought of. And when an opinion is passed on from generation to generation, being thus hereditary, it becomes instinctive. These unions were forbidden as soon as possible on moral grounds,—aversion to them has now become an instinct of all civilized races.

Now take the next step, viz: uncle and niece. In counting as before we begin with brother one degree up to parent two, down to sister three, down to sister's daughter four—within the fourth degree, therefore, prohibited.

The reason of this is a similar one to that in the case of brother and sister, though not so strong. There may be many circumstances under which a father's brother will take almost a father's place. In the very great majority of cases the difference of age is such as to assimilate the relationship in some degree to the paternal. There is a very general agreement (we shall see by and-by not a complete agreement) that for moral reasons these unions also should be prohibited.

Counting in the same way as before, it will be seen that cousins are in the fifth degree. They are not prohibited. Many think they should be; and they are not without strong reasons in support of their opinion. It is, however, plain that, if prohibited, it would be on a different principle from the other collateral relations. Cousins do not live intimately in one family as do brothers and sisters. There is not the same nearness to the father as in the case of the uncle, nor ordinarily the same difference of age. They would not be prohibited on moral grounds. If forbidden, it would be for physiological reasons. It is probable (to say the least) that on these grounds it would be better to prohibit them. But I am now only showing that the table is consistent with itself in not prohibiting them. However desirable that it should do so it has not gone into these reasons. It may be imperfect—it is not inconsistent.

So much for blood relation. Now, as to the question of affinity or marriage relation.

It comes before us in this form. With reference to this question, are a man's wife's relations to be considered his own? Now, surely there can be but two answers to this question—yes or no. Our present laws say yes, and act consistently on that principle. If there are any who think the answer should be "no," their position would be intelligible and their course clear. They must say, a man, therefore, can marry his deceased wife's sister, mother or daughter and a woman may marry her deceased husband's father, son or brother. If a man's wife's sister is no relation to him, neither is his wife's daughter (by a former marriage) nor his wife's mother. Do let those who propose the change adopt some principle. The present table is logical and consistent. One which wholly disregarded affinity would also be so. But this proposed one is neither one thing nor the other.

Suppose these changes made, what moral could give any reason for the prohib-