

Our Contributors.

TO THE MINISTER ABOUT TO TAKE HIS HOLIDAY.

BY KN. J. J. J.

We propose to write a series of open letters to ministers and several other men. We begin with the minister who is about to go away for his holiday.

DEAR BROTHER.—We heartily congratulate you on the fact that you have a congregation that gives its minister an annual rest of a month if he wishes to take it. Your people have sense. They know that a man can do more and better brain work in eleven months than in twelve if he rests the twelfth. They have also some religion—some regard for the ten commandments. They know that one of the commandments tells us to rest a seventh part of the time. A minister in actual work cannot rest on the seventh day and your congregation honors the decalogue and gives you a rest by giving you a month of Sabbaths at a time. That is fair and generous and you should show your appreciation by good preaching and good pastoral work when you get home.

Meantime you may confer a favour on the profession to which you belong by *not* doing certain things.

Don't talk to everybody on the street about the *best* places to go to. You can easily get all the information you need in regard to that matter from a few friends. If you talk too much about your holidays and "good places" and "good trips" and all that sort of thing badly disposed people may be tempted to suspect you think more of your vacation than you think of your work.

Don't dissect yourself in public. If you are really worked down your friends can easily see it. Don't deliver little homilies on the state of your throat or the condition of your digestive organs. Above all things keep silent about your head. It is a great mistake to give a caustic man or cynical woman a chance to say you do not use your head so much that your brain has any excuse for being weary.

Don't dilate on "overwork," "nervous prostration," "perfect rest," and kindred topics that have unfortunately become too much associated with clerical holidays. Take your vacation like a man. If you have a month and a hundred dollars thank your Master for them and reserve your preaching and lecturing power until you get home and then expend your power on larger and more important subjects.

When you are on your trip don't talk to you fellow passengers as if scarcely any place on earth is good enough for you to spend your vacation in. There are hundreds of ministers at home who need and deserve a rest quite as much as you do who would be very grateful and very glad to have a holiday almost anywhere.

Don't pose as a distinguished person when you arrive at your destination. Don't expect the hotel keeper and the other guests to read an address of welcome to you soon after your arrival. The number of men in this country who are sure to be met with an address and a brass band at a summer hotel is not large and the chances are a million to one that you are not one of them.

Don't ask the hotel keeper to knock a dollar or two a week off your board bill because you are a minister. A minister who makes speeches against hotels during a prohibition campaign, and then asks an hotel keeper to lower his board bill for professional reasons, is doing something that Paul would not have done.

Don't ask the church going people in the hotel "Who preached last Sabbath?" and "Who is going to preach next Sabbath?" and follow up the question by a vehement declaration that you will not preach, no matter who asks you. Nobody may ask you to preach and if anybody does, before you are half through your sermon more than half the

congregation may be sorry you did not keep your resolution about not preaching.

There is ample room for some honest talk on this matter of holiday preaching. We had special facilities for examining the subject not long ago and we saw and heard some things that could hardly fail to lower the clerical profession in the estimation of a straightforward business man. Why should a minister haggle about preaching if in reasonable health? Any doctor in the hotel will cheerfully attend a patient the moment he is asked. We have seen them do it a dozen times. Any lawyer there will give you his advice for five dollars, or perhaps for less, as many times as you care to consult him. If you are a personal friend, or if you are properly introduced, he may advise you for nothing. Shall it be said that ministers of Christ are less devoted to their work than members of these professions are?

There is something worse than a refusal and that is to fish for an invitation and then deliver a homily on over work at home, perfect rest and the fear that "my dear people may hear I have been preaching." We doubt very much if one Session in five hundred ever asked their minister not to preach during his vacation. As a rule elders are men of sense—most of them are very much men of sense. They assume that their minister is a man of sense too, and that he knows, or at least ought to know, whether he is able to preach or not. If they thought he was not able to take care of himself they would send a nurse along to take care of him.

There is grim humour in listening to a minister who says with a straight and solemn face that his dear people made him promise not to preach while on his holidays when you have good reason to believe that some of the dear people would not heave a sigh, or miss a meal, or lose an hour's sleep if he preached in some other place for the remainder of his natural life. In politics people would call that sort of thing humbug.

John Hall preaches during his vacation and does so in a spirit which conveys the impression that he considers it a privilege to preach the glorious gospel. Cuyler is a pretty old man now but he wrote the other day that he "always likes to give a good rural brother a week's let up from sermon work by preaching for him."

Brother, if you really feel that it is not your duty to preach, say "No," like a Christian. If you can preach, say "Yes," like a man. Above all things don't make a fuss, and then preach, and leave it open to people to say that the fuss was much bigger than the sermon.

HUXLEY.

BY REV. W. G. JORDAN, B.A.

There has just passed away one who lived a strenuous life, fought a vigorous battle, and exerted a powerful influence. He was a representative man, but we believe that for sometime his influence has been waning, and that among thinking men in the English-speaking world there is a reaction against the claims of physical science to explore and explain by its peculiar methods the whole realm of thought and life. He sums up his own career in the following words: "I have subordinated any reasonable or unreasonable ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends, to the popularization of science, to the development and organization of scientific education, to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution, and to untiring opposition to the ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism which in England, as elsewhere, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is a deadly enemy of science."

Any one who knows anything about the late professor knows that this declaration understates the truth as to his purely scientific attainments and reputation. His bitterest opponents never attempted to belittle Huxley's position as a scientist. Besides being

a specialist in zoology, he had considerable skill in psychology, considered as a limited, positive science, but his critics maintain that when he took to theology, philosophy, and Biblical criticism he dealt with things that he had not thoroughly considered, and while they did not question his right to express his opinion upon any subject, when he stepped outside his own sphere they did not regard that opinion as being of special weight. We believe that he was an able man and that he has done good work as a popularizer of science, and as an organizer of scientific education. His text book of physiology is a model of what an elementary manual may be. His work at South Kensington was of great value to the whole nation. The writer of this article took up five scientific subjects in connection with evening classes affiliated to the government department of science and art, and can testify that however crude and imperfect some of the teaching may be, a splendid work has been done in bringing the facts of modern science within the reach of all. Men who belong to the "clerical class" can rejoice that England has, during the last half century produced men like Huxley to champion the claims and interests of physical science. But we do not believe that physical science covers the whole realm of life. And when the scientist would reduce psychology to a department of physiology, despise philosophy as a vain striving after the unknowable, and condemn theology as a meaningless jangle about unintelligible chimeras, we have many questions to ask which are both urgent and important. Huxley besides being a patient investigator of natural "co-existences and sequences" endowed with a masterly ability in the way of popular exposition, had a brilliant literary gift. In this age when the press is open to any who can use it, he was able to make his voice heard clearly and strongly. He preached his "lay sermons"; published able essays and keen reviews until he attained a position of great influence; so that many who admired his ability and sympathized with his spirit accepted unhesitatingly his utterances on morals and religion. He is credited with coining the word "agnostic," and he described Positivism (with which as an attempt at philosophy he must have had considerable sympathy) as "Catholicism minus Christianity." His writings abound with striking phrases and happy turns of expression. In controversy he always made the best of his own case and was quick to detect any weakness in his opponent's position. He frankly acknowledged the success of Butler's polemic against deism, and negatively he may be said to have done good service in helping to make clear the questions which are now at issue between Christianity and scepticism. In this brief sketch we cannot attempt anything like a full discussion of Huxley's life and work, but there are one or two practical lessons which are suggested by a passing glance at this subject.

We rejoice in the freedom which he enjoyed to denounce superstition, to lecture bishops and rebuke clerics; that is one of the signs of health in our modern life, that men who are sincere, earnest and courteous shall have the fullest liberty to express the thought that is in them. We think, however, that an impartial reading of history will show that this liberty was not gained for us by agnosticism or scepticism. "The spirit that denies" cannot build influential systems of thought or enduring institutions to minister to, and mould the life of men. Liberty has not come through negation, but by the sacrifices and victories of faith.

We do not believe that "clericalism" can be fought with no better equipment than that which Professor Huxley possessed. So long as man feels his need of religion, a shallow agnosticism will in the long run play into the hands of an arrogant dogmatism. The "clericalism" which fosters ignorant superstition and enslaves the conscience of men, can only be fought by the powers of a true spiritual life. The truth

preached so nobly by Amos, Paul, Luther, Knox and the glorious company of martyrs that the individual soul has its own privileges and responsibilities before God. This is surely the most effective weapon against priestcraft. If what we wish to guard against is the narrowness and intolerance which any class as a class is liable to drift into, then I think that the tone of the words quoted above, shows that no class of men is free from that danger, and suggests that even a "class" of scientists might be intolerant and overbearing if they were vested with too much power. What we all need in this respect is a more catholic spirit, a larger Christian charity.

The strength of Huxley's position as against theology is in its weakness. He took his stand upon the scientific position, and appealed to the common sense of men. Physical science is common sight and thought about the things that are around us made clear and accurate, but it does not deal with the deeper problems of thought and life. While it may be true that there are arguments for religion to meet every view of life, it is also true that religion cannot be made into a thing of sight, touch and taste, of superficial observation or mechanical experiment. If religion is to justify itself to reason in the face of scientific objections we must realize that the view of the world taken by the scientist is narrow and limited. The apologetic which meets the objections of physical science with the criticism of philosophy cannot be made popular, as only by strenuous thought can we understand the new mental standpoint to which we are called. In this sphere it may be true that—

"A shallow draught intoxicates the brain,
But drinking deeply sobers it again."

We fall back, then, for consolation upon two facts. There are in us religious instincts and spiritual feelings which crave for a satisfaction that is not to be found in physical science. This fact may be a difficult one for the evolutionist to deal with, but being there it exerts a living influence and calls for a rational explanation. In a morbid condition or in a state of ignorance these instincts may make it possible for the worst forms of clericalism to flourish, but without them there could be no real religion. The Christian religion has shown its power to meet all these needs, although it is possible that nowhere has it been grasped in its full-orbed completeness and splendour. So we rejoice that no man can do anything against the truth, and that our small partial views of things cannot arrest the progress of God's revelation.

"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light,
It is daybreak everywhere."

Strathroy, July 19, 1895.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. FRANCIS R. BEATTIE, D.D.

This Assembly convened this year at Dallas, Texas, on the sixteenth day of May, and continued in session about ten days. A few items concerning the annual meeting of the supreme court of the Southern Presbyterian Church at this point, so far away, may be of interest to some of the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

The State of Texas, within whose bounds this Assembly met, is justly called the "Empire State," for it is larger than the states of New York and Pennsylvania together, and it would make more than six states the size of South Carolina. It is a new region and has a vast Home mission field within its bounds, in which the Southern Church is pushing its work with vigor.

Dallas is a growing city of about 30,000 in the central area of Northern Texas, and though not much more than a quarter of a century old, it is a solid and prosperous place. The Assembly met in the First