

considerable observation and reflection, the firm conviction has been forced upon the mind of the writer, that both the Churches and the ministers in this state are suffering from an excess of preaching.

The ministers are suffering. Cases of throat and lung complaints among clergymen, arising from too much public speaking, are constantly multiplying. It is a fact not generally known, yet strictly true, that no small part of those who begin to preach the Gospel, are obliged after a time to give out, from absolute inability to endure the labor imposed upon them. The Churches should know these things. Men who would be shocked with the thought of using a beast cruelly, make no scruple of requiring of a minister that which is most certainly shortening his life. The only way of putting an end to this ruinous state of things is to tell the Church frankly, "You do not consider; you do not remember that your ministers are men, and like other men are destroyed by excessive labor." As a general rule, a clergyman cannot preach more than twice on the Sabbath without undermining his health, and laying the foundation for an early death. Some may do it; some have done it, but most cannot. Wesley's charge to his conferences, was the result of much practical wisdom. "Don't let your preachers," said he, "speak more than twice on the sabbath: for if you do you will certainly destroy them." Have not some of our congregations been unintentionally guilty of destroying their pastors?

The Churches also are suffering from too much preaching. The character of their piety, notwithstanding the revivals which have blessed our land, it is much to be feared, is declining from year to year. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? With three sermons on the Sabbath they have little or no time for *thought* and serious meditation on what they have heard. To use a homely phrase, "what goes in at one ear goes out at the other." The notion is becoming more and more prevalent, that growth in grace is to be obtained by hearing, not by thinking and praying. Hence the increasing number of *thoughtless* Christians—of ignorant Christians—of inconsistent Christians.

The writer is happy to find that he is not alone in this opinion. A writer in the Quarterly Christian Spectator for February, 1858, whose preaching has been eminently successful, remarks as follows: "It is a fact, that revivals, fifteen or twenty years ago, were signalized by a more awful sense of the character and presence of God, by more humbling views of the depravity of the heart, by more joyful hopes of salvation, by deeper solemnity in the converts, and by a much longer duration. It is equally true that our public meetings were then less frequent; there were not as many sermons; Christians were urged to closet duties, and felt that the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but was within them. The anxious were told that God was to be found in solitude. The result was, that when there was a sermon preached it was devoured with avidity, and treasured up with fidelity."

And so it should be now. A sermon should be thought of, and talked about, till it is firmly impressed upon the memory, and made part of the mind's furniture. How much might be done by every Christian father to cultivate habits of attention in his children, and to treasure up in their minds a store of cor-

\* In this connection, it will be proper to quote an extract from the letter of a medical gentleman, of considerable celebrity, upon the subject, which the writer has been permitted to see.

"President Dwight, who had a powerful voice and a strong constitution, thought it unsafe for any man to preach three times in a day. If a minister will make the whole services of the forenoon and afternoon not to exceed an hour and a quarter each, he may venture upon a short evening service in a small room and easy to speak in. I have, however, observed one thing, and that is, I do not remember to have known any person, who has broken down his strength by severe labor in preaching, who has ever recovered it. It seems almost like suicide, only that it is the result of ignorance."

rect sentiment, would be only make it a settled practice to interrogate them on Sabbath evening upon what they had heard during the day! What an evident advantage, moreover, to himself, to familiarize his mind with the important truths to which he had listened. But all this is impossible where three services are held; for the greater part of the evening is employed in attending upon public worship, and the fatigue arising from such an over-abundance of preaching renders serious thought, in common cases, out of the question. The family, instead of having a few important truths deeply fixed in their minds, retire to rest wearied and confused, only to prepare, after another week, for a similar injudicious and comparatively profitless round.

Is this wise? Is it right?

L.

## Natural History.

### THE SUGAR ANTS.

BY JOHN CASTLES, ESQ.

The sugar-ants, so called from their ruinous effects on the sugar-cane, first made their appearance in Grenada, about the year 1770, on a sugar plantation at Petit Haire, a bay, five or six miles from the town of St. George, the capital, conveniently situated for smuggling from Martinique; whence it was concluded they were brought in some vessel employed in that trade. Thence they continued to extend themselves on all sides, for several years; destroying in succession every sugar plantation between St. George's and St. John's, a space of about twelve miles. At the same time colonies of them began to be observed in different parts of the island.

All attempts of the planters to put a stop to the ravages of these insects having been ineffectual, an act was passed by the legislature, entitling the discoverer of a practical mode of destroying them to 20,000*l.* to be paid from the public treasury of the island. The candidates were unsuccessful; yet considerable sums were granted in consideration of trouble and expense in making experiments. In Grenada there had always been several species of ants, which were perfectly innocent with respect to the sugar-cane. The ants in question, on the contrary, were not only highly injurious to it, but to several sorts of trees, as the lime, lemon, orange, &c.

The sugar-ants are of the middle size, slender make, dark red colour, and remarkable for their quickness. All the other species of ants in Grenada have a bitter, musky taste. These, on the contrary, are highly acid, and when rubbed between the palms of the hands, emitted a strong vitriolic sulphurous smell, to which quality it might be owing that these insects are so unfriendly to vegetation. This criterion to distinguish them was infallible. The roads were soon covered by them for miles together; and so crowded where they in many places, that the print of the horse's feet would only appear for a moment or two, till filled up by the surrounding multitude. They universally constructed their nests among the roots of particular plants and trees, as the sugar-cane, lime, lemon, and orange trees, &c.

The destruction of these ants was attempted chiefly by poison and the application of fire. Myriads of them were destroyed by arsenic and corrosive sublimate, mixed with animal substances, as salt-fish, herrings, crabs, and other shell-fish, which they greedily devoured; and it was observed by a magnifying glass, or even the naked eye, that corrosive sublimate rendered them so outrageous that they destroyed each other. But as these poisons could not be laid in sufficient quantity over so large a tract of land, they proved inadequate to the task.

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