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## Contributors and Correspondents

For the Presbyterian.]

### ORIENTAL OCCUPATIONS.—THE TENTMAKER.

BY REV. JOHN DUNBAR, DUNBARTON.

While but comparatively few verses of the sacred record complete the narrative, yet many centuries are said to have intervened between the time of Cain who "built a city," and that of Jabel who was "the father of such as dwell in tents," and while Bible biographies are after exceedingly brief, this record regarding Jabel, brief though it be, is both very important and very significant as showing that the house long preceded the tent, and the settled was so much earlier than the nomadic mode of existence. As flocks and herds increased both in number and in kind, their attendants had to remove them from place to place in quest of pasturage, and in consequence they had to invent and construct temporary dwellings at once habitable and portable. Hence the origin of the tent, and tent-life, afterwards so common amongst the pastoral patriarchs, and in the same land not yet uncommon, even in the present day.

It would be very interesting were it possible, to trace the progressive stages of the tent in its form and texture from its rude and rustic origin to that state of perfection to which it has now and for many ages attained, but this is so dependent on the condition of the people as well as on the climate and products of the countries in which they are used that there could be little certainty or satisfaction in so doing. The simplest and the rudest, although we are not thereby warranted to say the earliest, of these temporary habitations was the booth, constructed both easily and cheaply of the branches or bark of trees, or of both, and like many of our Indian wigwams in the woods erected with little labour, and when no longer needed, abandoned with little regret. The tent however is much more costly and comfortable than the booth. In the southern regions of Asia as among the Hindoos, the tents were made of bamboo or osier reeds, and are easily carried about, but in the more northern and colder regions they were generally formed of the bark of trees sewn together and covered with skins of animals, as is still the case among our western Indians in the wild prairies, and these afford complete protection from the severity of the winter. Very large tents were constructed so as to consist of a number of parts which were easily put together or taken apart as the necessities of the case required. As the tent originated in the exigencies of the pastoral life, we may readily, and we think rightly assume that the earlier kind were but rude frame works covered with skins from the flocks, at first very likely with the wool or hair on, but in process of time these skins were both dressed and dyed and were thereby the less affected by the sun or the rain; hence we read of "rams' skins dyed red" as a covering for the tabernacle in the wilderness. In south-western Asia tents are generally covered, not with skins, but with a kind of cloth or felt, made of wool or goat's hair, which if not naturally so, is usually dyed black. This cloth is commonly the product of the handiwork of the women in the camp, both in its spinning and weaving. Tents were larger or smaller, oblong or pyramidal as suited the taste or requirements of those who used them. The floor of the tent is generally covered with mats, but sometimes with carpets, and on these, those who live in their sit. A small hole dug in the centre serves for a fireplace for cooking, the smoke finding its way out through an opening in the apex, while a few vessels of clay or metal, with some goat-skin bottles and a hand-mill for grinding meal, make up the simple furniture of the eastern shepherd's slender dwelling. The patriarchal tents were evidently not very large, inasmuch as the principal members of the family had each a separate tent, as was the case with Sarah and Leah and Rachel and the maid servants, and each of these tents seems to have had only one apartment. In latter times however, it would appear, that instead of constructing a number of smaller tents, one large tent was erected and divided by curtains into a number of apartments as suited the number and the necessities of the family, and in more modern times, amid regal displays and royal adornments, these tents were often both large and costly, being covered entirely with silk and richly garnished with silver, gold and precious stones.

In savage states, and in sparsely settled countries each one has to supply his own necessities, but as population increases and civilisation advances, division of labour

follows, and in this way trades originate and crafts are kept up; so while in primitive times tentmaking formed a part of domestic economy, in after times it became a distinctive trade; and as it was a maxim among the Jews that "He who does not teach his son a trade teaches him to steal," every Hebrew youth however worthy or well to do, was expected if not required to learn a trade, if need be, to supply his wants, and if not, to amuse his leisure. Thus these sagacious and far seeing Jews, believing that "can do is easily carried about," make us cease to wonder that Aquila and Priscilla, persons of consideration both in Corinth and Ephesus should have been tentmakers, or that Paul however high in social position or scholarly attainment should have been "of the same craft." While some suppose that in the exercise of this craft, Paul merely covered military and other tents with goat or sheep skin, others with more reason suppose that he manufactured the tent-cloth which was employed as in covering, or in other words that Paul was a weaver. The medieval expositors however were very reluctant to acknowledge that the Apostle was ever engaged in, as they think, such an ignoble employment, and busied their brains in suggesting a variety of other and more honourable occupations, in which, rather than in this, he was more likely to labour, but these self-constituted dignitaries ought surely to have known that no honest labour can degrade an honest man, and not to have forgotten that he who was "higher than the sons of men" was himself a carpenter. Be this as it may, we know that Paul not only laboured working with his own hands, but recommended "that if any would not work neither should he eat," and while he openly avowed his avocation and by it secured and asserted his independence, yet no one more thoroughly than he, exhibited and enforced the Divine doctrine that, "so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." But while the apostle held fast and held forth this doctrine as ordained by Christ and to be honoured by Christians, yet in order to remove all prejudices from the minds of the heathen and to correct some erroneous tendencies prevailing among the new converts, though under no necessity so to do, he uttered and exemplified that generous sentiment "I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you and so will I keep myself."

Frequent allusions to the tent and tent-life are made in the Word of God, and illustrations significant and important are frequently drawn therefrom. Thus, for instance, "the tents of Schem" imply the countries and spiritual state of his descendants, and "the tents of wickedness" are the places where wicked men dwell. The "dwellers in tents" and "the tents of Judah" refer to the dwellers in unfortified cities. The tent or "tabernacle of testimony" implied God's relation to, and presence with his people, while in it the word of God was deposited. God's tent or "tabernacle is with men" when they eminently enjoy his fellowship and favour. From the simple construction, the scanty accommodation, the temporary duration, and the frequency and facility of removal of the tent, the tentmaker of Tarsus takes occasion to draw the beautiful and affecting contrast between the frailty and instability of the soul's earthly tabernacle and its future house "which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God," when he says "for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (or tent) were dissolved (or taken apart) we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

For the Presbyterian.]

### THE FUND FOR AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS—ON WHAT PRINCIPLE IS IT AND OUGHT IT TO BE DISTRIBUTED.

It is proposed (last Assembly minutes, p. 69) to give to annuitants according to the number of years they have served: ten years service to bring \$100; each subsequent year \$10, until the amount is \$400; less than ten years to bring nothing; and any number of years over forty to bring nothing. Before answering the second part of the above question it will be necessary to inquire—Are aged and infirm ministers entitled to get anything from the fund? We are told that they have a right to do so; on what basis rests this right? The present system places the right in the time of service, not on the kind or efficiency of the service, but on the time. Yet professedly resting on this basis, it does not adhere to it; for while ten years bring \$100, nine years bring nothing. But, on the basis of time, if one serve five years he is as cer-

tainly entitled to a share as if he served forty years; and if in service sixty years, the last twenty are as certainly entitled to a share as the first forty. Thus it appears that if an annuitant has a right upon such a basis that right is trampled on by restrictions as to time.

It is proposed to require a rate from each minister to entitle him to a share in the fund. This would introduce a new principle and place the right on a simple commercial basis, as in insurance. A plainable insurance plan was proposed a few years ago and rejected. If the Church enter into such business no one outside will object, but numbers inside would; and the making a rate compulsory might exclude numbers from reaping the benefits of donations to the fund, while these donations were intended for their benefit, and while Christian people would have a right to designate their gifts, and a right to object to any interference with their design therein. Some would say insurance business does not lie within the sphere of the Church's duty, and we will not contribute by rate or otherwise. But the combination of the systems of rate and of time, or either of them, does not appear to furnish a satisfactory basis of right to the annuitant. It is proposed to require a rate which would not be a commercial equivalent to the annuity, and which would not constitute a right.

It seems to be felt by the managers of the fund that to place the right upon the basis of time is not quite correct, for it is proposed to treat the cases of some, who have served less than ten years, as exceptional; that is, such cases cannot, according to rule, set up a claim of right; they must be treated as being in *forma pauperis*—an indignity which it is anything but Christian for a Christian church to inflict.

The present system does not work well. It does not comport with the design entertained by many, who, from Christian principle, contribute to it. It gives money to some who have no need and it withholds from others who do. It seems to many a shame that rich men or men possessed of competence should accept anything from the fund, and especially when the necessities of poorer brethren are un supplied. People for this reason are slow to contribute. It is surely not to the credit of any church to allow its ministers, overtaken by debility, to suffer from destitution, whether they have served twenty or ten years, or even one year. And it will, as a rule, be found that the young minister, laid aside, is more in need than the old.

Upon what basis, then, is the annuitant's claim of right to rest? Plainly and simply upon those principles of equity and benevolence which Christianity teaches. Common christian feeling and principle say—If a man gives his life to the service of the Church, the Church should stand between him and want. And if the Church be properly appealed to, and its constitution not improperly interfered with, it will do so. Christian feeling can be easily reached by simply presenting its object. There is a man who has given his youth and strength and substance to the service of the Church; he has become disabled by the hand of God upon him; you are invited to do as you feel to be according to the mind of Christ in the case. The claim of right in such a case does not arise from length of service, but from the simple fact of self-surrender to that service and disabling therein. And it seems plainly to follow that the amount given to the annuitant should correspond to the necessities of his case. The claim is not commercial and is not based on time. The claim is simply this—I have devoted myself to the service of Christ in the Church, and for this end have spent my time, strength and substance; and I claim that I should not suffer from want; I don't claim riches or luxury, but I claim relief to my necessities.

A retired minister possessed of competence may say—I have as much claim as the poorer man because I have served longer. If the basis of the right, as above set forth is correct, his claim must be denied, and the nobleness and generosity of it yet more emphatically denied. A man who gives himself up to the Ministry of Christ is supposed to make an entire surrender of himself and all he is possessed of to His service. If Christ gives him opportunity to serve Him, and worldly goods besides, it does not look like a grateful and devoted servant to expect a share of that fund which is intended to feed the afflicted poor, for that is the design of the fund, and comports with the nature of the appeals made in its behalf.

It may be said that to give according to necessity is impracticable. We are not persuaded of this. The annuitant should have no objection to stating the amount or source of his income, and the number of his family, and any peculiarly in his condition affecting his resources would be known to his brethren. Upon such data distribution might be made with less friction upon feeling, than has been the case often before.

For the Presbyterian.]

### THE LORD KNOWETH THEM THAT ARE HIS.

BY A. R. D.

Every unregenerate soul is at enmity against God. Satan says claim to every such soul. He holds them captive and keeps urging them on to wage war against their Creator, and as a reward he offers them the empty vanities of this world; but oh, the reward in the next is eternal woe, from which there is no relief. What is the short period of time spent in this world compared with eternity.

Did you ever sit down and calmly consider whether you are bound? There are two destinies beyond this transient life of ours; one is an eternity of woe and misery, having Satan the arch-fiend as its king; the other is an eternity of everlasting bliss, having Christ our Redeemer as its king.

When we have finished our allotted time here on earth we will be called to our eternal home, which we shall find either in heaven or hell.

Time is short, life is uncertain. While it is yet day we should be up and doing. Our future happiness depends on how we spend our time while here on earth, and the use we make of the privileges given us by our all-wise Creator. If we have misused the talents He has given us, He will cast us off forever. Satan then will take us to dwell with him throughout the endless ages of eternity. Solemn thought! Oh my dear friends, is the thought not enough to make us strive that we by the assistance of the Holy Spirit may enter in at the strait gate that leads to everlasting life, where we shall live forever in happiness and have Christ for our king.

Christ comes to us while we are yet sinners and in bondage to Satan and the world, and says: "Come over to me, renounce the devil, turn to me and I will have mercy upon you, I will loose your bonds and set you free. Accept of me as your king and captain and I will make you my subjects, you I will make you sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, and ye shall reign with me forever.

Oh my dear friends, is it not a consoling thought to know that once accepted of Christ we can never perish. "I give," says Christ, "to them eternal life, and they shall never perish." "I know my sheep, they hear my voice and follow me." What unbonded confidence we then have in our leader. Though Satan rage and all the world turn against us, Christ our captain will never forsake us. "I will never leave thee" says Christ.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: will his mission be in vain? Was man left to save himself? If so I am afraid Christ's mission will be fruitless, for man is naturally evil. He is born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. We can do nothing of ourselves. We cannot go to Christ except the Father draw us. And if the Holy Spirit begins a good work in us, the Father will carry it on to completion. Once accepted of Christ we are sure of heaven. Christ will dwell in us and we in Him, and all the powers in earth or hell cannot drive Him away from the citadel of the soul once he has taken up his abode there. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Then sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law but under grace.

Of course, my dear friends, we cannot live without sin for as Paul says "When I would do good evil is present with me. No man liveth and sinneth not."

We are commanded to grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. We may slip and fall, but God says in His holy word that He will not cast us off forever. My dear friends, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and do you think that the all-wise Father would permit this outburst of joy, ye would participate in it Himself, if He were not sure of their eternal salvation? If so, He would be partaking of glory that did not belong to Him. Jehovah changeth not, He does not justify to-day and condemn to-morrow. He does not accept of children to-day and permit them to be the children of the devil to-morrow. Jehovah knoweth no shadow of turning.

If Christ hath set his affections on a man he will love him to the end. If he hath begotten us unto a lively hope, He will not suffer us to fall away and perish. If it was possible for one of God's dear children to fall away and perish, then might all. If one for whom Christ died might be condemned, then might the Saviour's blood be utterly void and vain—Christ's blood cleanseth us from all sin—what were Christ's intentions in coming into this

world? Was it to save all men? If so why are not all men saved. Is He not able to carry out his intentions? Will his intentions be frustrated? If so by whom? Satan say you; then is not Satan stronger than Christ? The intention of Christ's death is just equal to its effects. Since Christ is the Son of God, in His atonement and redemption His intentions and desires cannot be frustrated.

Shall Christ endure the lash and be held up as a spectacle for men and devils to be mocked and spat upon and then endure what is worse than all, a disappointment in the fulfillment of his designs? No, No.

Christ became a subject for us, He bore our sins, He paid the debt, and God the righteous judge will not exact second payment. If Christ has paid the debt for all men, then why does God send men to hell for a debt that His son paid to the uttermost farthing? You owe me a hundred dollars. I want security from you. You are unable to give it. My son has compassion on you and says, I will go his security. I accept my son's security. You fail and are unable to meet the note when due. My son pays the amount and I accept of it. Now I have no right to follow you for what my son has paid, and for which you hold a clear receipt. So we have been in debt to God and were unable to meet His just demands. Christ had compassion on us and paid the debt, and God the righteous Judge will never ask us to pay a debt that His Son has already paid. Now my dear friends, should we not take encouragement from this and strive by Divine help to live to the honor and glory of God; and we should make the best use of our time and talents, knowing that whatever we do for the Master and which is acceptable to Him will not be done in vain.

Once our eternal hopes are built on the Rock of Ages, Christ being the key stone of all our expectations, fogs of doubt, storms of controversy, quicksands of error, fierce billows of infidelity may dash against the base of the rock of our salvation, yet it will stand fast forever.

### Presbytery of Lindsay.

A regular meeting of this Presbytery took place at Woodville on the 29th of May. The following are the chief items of business:—Rev. J. Campbell, in behalf of a committee appointed to prepare a minute relative to the resignation of Rev. J. McClung, submitted the following, which was adopted: "The Presbytery, in accepting Rev. John McClung's resignation of the charge of Wick and Greenbank, express their deep regret at losing so able and agreeable a co-presbyter, and one who has been so regular in attending their meetings. In taking leave of their brother the members of this court would also take the opportunity of expressing the high esteem in which Mr. McClung was held, their appreciation of his faithfulness as a pastor and earnestness as a preacher of the gospel, and their hope that the Lord of the vineyard may soon open for him another field of labor." A motion was introduced by Mr. R. Douglass recommending that a tax be levied on the Presbytery for money to defray the expense of commissioners to the General Assembly. The motion was lost on a division. The clerk reported that he appeared before the Assembly's Home Mission Committee, and that he was cordially granted the sum claimed in aid of the supplemented congregations and Mission stations of the Presbytery; that Mr. Alexander Fraser is laboring in Sunderland and Vroomant, and Mr. Samuel Carruthers in Cobcoenk, Headlake, Digby and Garden; and that the most cheering reports come in from all these stations concerning the successful labors of the missionaries employed. Rev. J. Campbell and the session of which he is moderator were instructed to attend to the election and ordination of elders in Sunderland. Rev. J. Campbell and Rev. J. Murray were appointed a committee to superintend the literary studies of Mr. Angus McLeod, student, for the ensuing three months. A call to Rev. J. McNabb, of Beaverton, from the congregations of High Bluff and Portage Creek, in the Presbytery of Manitoba, was read by the clerk. It was cordial and unanimous, and was accompanied with the promise of a stipend of \$900, with an excellent manse and a glebe of 100 acres. The Presbytery agreed to hold an adjourned meeting at Beaverton on the 10th of July, at 2 p.m., and to cite the congregations of Beaverton and South Mara to appear there for their interests. A circular from the Presbytery of Saugeen was read intimating the intention of that Presbytery to ask leave of the General Assembly at its first meeting to receive as minister of our church Rev. G. A. Smith, a minister of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Another circular to the same effect from the Presbytery of Hamilton was read in relation to Rev. J. L. Robinson, of the U. P. Church of America. There was read also an extract minute from the records of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, stating that the sum of \$22.68 was levied on the Presbytery of Lindsay to aid the Manitoba College Building Fund. After lengthened discussion it was agreed that this Presbytery does not feel justified in levying an additional tax upon the congregations within its bounds under present circumstances. The Rev. J. Campbell gave notice that at the next meeting of Presbytery he would move that steps be taken to organize a Sabbath School Convention in connection with the Presbytery. The next regular meeting will be held, D.V., at Lindsay on the last Tuesday of August, at 4 p.m.—J. L. Murray, Presbytery Clerk.