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54

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A SAD PROBLEM IN MINISTERIAL LIFE.

"What is the cause of so much sickness among our Ministers?" has recently become a frequent and perplexing question. It is well known that the aggregate ministerial life is considered the best property on which Insurance Societies can trade; and yet we have become painfully conscious during recent years that, so far as the Maritime Provinces are concerned—with all our reputation for healthfulness of climate—our young ministers are breaking down in rather alarming proportions. There must be causes for this. We have got beyond the notion that Providence arranges all our calamities irrespective of earthly circumstances. Providence, according to the sanitary tables, works favorably or unfavorably according as lands are drained, houses are ventilated, diet is observed, and sudden changes are avoided. Leaving unavoidable troubles out of the question—sickness and misfortunes which come to men in ways not to be prevented by any human foresight; and saying nothing of frail constitutions which, in every profession, bring a large percentage of early deaths; there must always be causes when a class of robust, hearty young men show in a few years a sad record of decline in strength and decrease of numbers. It may be well to study this subject.

Is the transition of employment in the cases of young ministers too abrupt? The majority of our candidates come from the bench, the plough, and other active professions. They have spent their previous years in the open air, with muscular exertion. Our ministry confines them to a course of study and an assiduous attention to preparation for the pulpit, which demand every hour at the young man's disposal. If careless and easy in his habits, no physical harm may come; if diligent he is brought under the strong protest of nature, which means disease and premature supernumerary-ship. Thus our best men, because our most devoted men, give way early.

Do we all understand the value, the absolute necessity, of exercise? Riding in a carriage is not exercise. Paving the floor with a load of manuscript-sermon on one's memory is not exercise. For two hours at least every day the heart and lungs and liver should be obliged to exert themselves. Walking, riding on horseback, the use of the axe, the saw or the gymnasium, should come sacredly into the life of every day.

Is the ordinary diet of the times conducive to the health of sedentary men? We protest most decisively against the modern methods of preparing bread—that chief staple article of diet. Every element almost which God has given for nourishment in wheat, is taken away; the least nutritive particles alone are kept, and they are so refined and macerated that human nature refuses to assimilate what they offer for food. Come back to first principles. Eat bread as did Adam—as God provided the materials—taking the wheat—all of it—and that without any addition of yeast, forcing liquids or chemicals. Yeast and soda are poisons, and the system protests against them in every

possible way. Bruised wheat and cold water and fire are all that is needed to make wholesome bread and cure dyspepsia. Drugs of every kind should meet the fate of yeast and soda. Fling them to the dogs.

Disease is perpetually lying in wait for our young ministers in that delusion of hospitality—the preacher's bed room. Kept exclusively for him, this sacred chamber sees no fire till he comes to require it, when the heat brings to the surface all the moisture which has been accumulating for weeks perhaps. Into the midst of this he walks, and there he spends the night, to carry away with him the seeds of future mischief. It would be prudent—for the preacher—to take the room of the host and hostess, and let them enjoy the luxury of the spare bed room—and the cough! Our good people are deceived here. Not for the world would they injure the minister; but it is done nevertheless.

Do our young ministers undertake too much in the ordinary duties of the pastoral and pulpit relation? The notorious "fagging" of college life is but a trifle compared with the distress of an overworked pastor and preacher. The exhaustion, the "blues" the utter contempt of self and one's labors, the irritation of brain and nerves, which crowd into a single Monday's experience, are dreadful to be borne. Surely this is a contrast to the buoyancy, the spring and delight which naturally associate themselves in thought with the noblest life to which human being was ever called. Measure thy strength young man; and having found the true estimate, do not be coaxed or compelled into going beyond it. Let your admiring parishioners ply their seductive arts upon others; they cannot give thee back the flush of health or the cordial of a happy spirit. Do not attempt to labour a week in every twenty-four hours.

From the early laxity which left candidates for our ministry much to their own habits, our conferences have perhaps gone a little too far in the other direction. To overtake a course of study such as our young men have now placed before them, and work a heavy circuit at the same time, is enough to destroy human eyes and discourage human hearts. If we add to all this the shameful burden of anxiety which is left to our ministers often as respects the payment of their honest debts, by the niggardly systems of finance that offer them small salaries and withhold even these for ten of the twelve months, we need not wonder at the consequences.

There is room for reflection here then all round. Let us reflect to some purpose.

UNIVERSALISM is represented for the first time in Nova Scotia by a newspaper. The first issue contains a sermon by Rev. C. Weston, in which this extract is contained, relating to the "Church of the Redeemer," of which he is pastor:—

About the time this edifice was dedicated, a correspondent of one of our religious journals was kind enough to intimate that the name was "a lure," and the Church "a trap." Men expressed surprise that the Universalists should choose such a name, because "they don't believe in any Redeemer!" Some of you doubtless remember that these strictures were then answered from this Pulpit, and it was here explained and declared, in the strongest and plainest terms, that these representations were altogether unwarranted and untrue. But our declarations went for nothing; and the charge of inconsistency and false pretence continues to be made against us. A short time ago it was hung at us both by a correspondent and editor of the WESLEYAN, and it is I presume, in consequence of this renewal of the old criticism that I have been asked to speak to you upon the subject. You will readily perceive that the charge goes deeper than the mere appropriateness of a name or title; being grounded in the supposition that the belief and teaching of this Church in-

clude no recognition of Christ as a Redeemer; and it is to the work of correcting this mistake that I address myself.

Let us see. Mr. Weston's faith is Unitarian, not properly Universalist. Christ he believes was a good man, but not God. This is the doctrine of his sermon. Christ, then, cannot be a Redeemer to him according to our notion of the word. The highest sense in which Christ is a Redeemer, by Mr. W.'s teaching, is that the world is to become subject to him. He is a Redeemer only as an Exemplar and as a Ruler. The doctrine of Christ's atonement by his own blood and sufferings for the sins of mankind, Mr. Weston will not only not accept but treats with as much sarcasm as his genius and training can bring to his aid. Is not this so? Who then is right?

Redeem, from *re*, back, and *emo* *emptum*, to buy; to buy back, with a price, to ransom. Where does this feature of Christ's character and work come in among the doctrines preached in the "Church of the Redeemer?" Not at all. The Church's name is a contradiction of the Church's faith.

SMOKING ALCOHOL.

It is not generally known that alcohol is used in the manufacture of cigars, but it is a fact.

The cigars that won the prize at the Centennial were sprinkled with New England rum. Port wine is used in some brands, and the fatal alcohol in nearly, if not all.

The case is now plain. Every man who puts a cigar in his mouth gets the taste and some of the effects of alcohol.

No doubt this is one of the reasons why it is so hard for a smoker to give up the habit; and why it is so common for suckers to become drunkards.

It is time the light of truth was let in upon the whole business. Many a man has smoked for years in utter ignorance that he was smoking alcohol as well as tobacco. And ministers and laymen have fallen from its baneful effects.—*Christian Woman.*

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE FAILURE OF THE CONFERENCE.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—The stately Representatives of the great European Powers, who went to Constantinople unbidden by the Turks, and who tried hard to settle the affairs of that distracted Empire; have failed to accomplish any beneficial result. They have left for their homes, not a little annoyed at the pride and obstinacy of the people and government of Turkey.

AT THE PRESENT

moment silence and suspense are in the ascendancy among the friends of Turkey, and the advocates of her oppressed and misgoverned Provinces. Negotiations are pending with Servia and Montenegro, it is not improbable that Turkey may now in the absence of the Conference, grant some of the reforms which have been so persistently urged.

"THE VOICE OF RUSSIA" is not heard at present. There is an evident reluctance to rush into the conflict single-handed, and perhaps there has been a discovery that Turkey is not quite so sick and enfeebled as generally represented. The situation of the whole is somewhat hopeful. There will be some substantial alleviation of the burdens and wrongs of the Christian populations, and war will be averted. If these results be gained it will scarcely be correct to represent the Conference as an entire failure.

THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT

will be opened next Thursday, Feb. 8, by her Majesty the Queen in person. Intense interest will be felt in the statements and explanations of her Majesty's Government, and in the absence of the great Leader of the party, Lord Beaconsfield, the Opposition, although numerically weak, will be able to tax the utmost resources of the Government, in eloquence and strategy

An important and lively session is anticipated.

IN METHODISM

A few noteworthy events have occurred. The completion of the Memorial Chapel at Dalbury College has been duly celebrated. It has been erected at a cost of £20,000, by the family and relatives of the late

JOHN HEALD, ESQ.,

and it is a noble monument to the memory of that great and good man. In life his services to Methodism were continuous, his gifts upon a munificent scale, and at his death he left a portion of his wealth to carry on the work of our Church, and now for all time, this splendid sanctuary will confer blessings upon the College and neighborhood of Dalbury.

THE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

stood in need of a better chapel, and at length it possesses one which is described as a marvel of beauty and completeness. The costliness of material, and the high style of the workmanship, places the new church of "St. Paul's" at the very head and front of architectural Methodism in England, and provokes an enquiry as to the selection of so imposing a name.

RITUALISM AT HATCHAM

has engrossed public attention in England for many weeks, and now that the Rev. Mr. Tooth is a close prisoner in a London jail, stoutly refusing to submit to his Diocesan, the Lord Bishop of Rochester, and to the decision of Lord Penzance, who represents the Civil power, the question is becoming of absorbing interest. The church which has been the theatre of gaudy displays and undisguised Romanism, is now closed. The State is in conflict with one of its own Clergymen, and he is backed up by a great array of Clergy and Laymen. It is impossible to tell whereunto this strife will grow, or what will be the ultimate dimensions of this little quarrel, circling round the person of an obscure minister, but touching some of the most vital questions of the times, and bringing into prominence the great subject of Disestablishment—the only adequate remedy for the disease.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL UNION

is doing a blessed work. We had a visit last night from the Rev. C. Kelly, the Secretary of the Union, and Editor of the "Sabbath School Magazine." The question is now fully answered as to the necessity of establishing a Connexional Union, for whereas 700 schools were connected with the Union at Old Bailey, which has done and is still doing an excellent work; we have 2,900 affiliated schools, and the number is rapidly increasing. Mr. Kelly is energetically carrying out the work entrusted to him, and is full of hope as to the future of the Sabbath Schools of Methodism. The "Magazine" is attaining a very large circulation. Libraries are being provided in great numbers, and District Unions are opening Central Depots in many large towns.

SCHOOL BOARD SCHOOLS

are multiplying, and it is a source of much satisfaction that at this time the Church of God is going so much to make its Sabbath Schools attractive and increasingly efficient. "B."

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIFTH YEAR, 1877. MARCH.
FIRST QUARTER: STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

B. C. 899. LESSON IX. THE STORY OF NABOTH; OR, THE FRUIT OF COVENANTNESS.—1 Kings 21: 4-14. March 4.

EXPLANATORY.

HIS HOUSE. Probably at Samaria. Possibly the "ivory house" of chap. 22: 39, and Amos 3: 15. Heavy and displeased. That is, sullen and angry. Naboth. From his reluctance to Jehovah (verse 3), he was probably one of the seven thousand faithful ones, chap. 19: 18. Had said. His refusal was based upon the divine law. (Num. 36: 7.) He refused because it was wrong. His bed. Couch. The couch upon which he reclined at the table. He lay down flat, turned away from the table and would not eat. A manifestation of ill-temper, even now characteristic of Oriental monarchs.

JEZEBEL, HIS WIFE. Her character as a strong, unscrupulous, and ambitious

woman is clearly brought out in this narrative. Her influence for evil over Ahab was supreme. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." (Prov. 19: 14) but Ahab did not seek his from that source. His marriage was one of his great sins. 1 Kings 16: 31.

GIVE ME. Ahab had offered the full value in money, or a better vineyard for Naboth's. He could not legally take it by force. See Ezek. 46: 18. His avaricious heart could not see why another should not do wrong for gain; and his petulance was partly chagrin at Naboth's implied reproach.

DOST THOU NOW COVER? Jezebel's contempt for her weak husband is evident. Educated under a more despotic rule than ever Ahab dared assume, she has no sympathy for his want of spirit. I will give. Quick to conceive a plan, and knowing her power, she hesitates at no wickedness to accomplish her purpose.

WROTE LETTERS. These had all the authority of the king. The impress of his seal upon them (not to seal up) was by his permission, and thus the crime was shared by him. Seal. Signet rings are very ancient, as shown by Egyptian and Chaldean remains. Pharaoh's ring, Gen. 41: 42, was one. Jndah's is mentioned in Gen. 38: 18. The impression was probably made in clay. See Job. 38: 14. Elders. Nobles. Doubtless the city tribunal. (Deut. 16: 18.) His city. Naboth was an inhabitant of Jezreel, and letters were written from Samaria. See chap. 20: 43.

A FAST. To atone for some supposed disgrace, and thus create a prejudice against Naboth when he is accused. It was also a religious cloak to cover crime, not used alone by Jezebel. On high. Not in honor, but in sight of the people, to be tried for crime.

TWO MEN. Two witnesses were necessary to convict. Sons of Belial. Hebrew: Belial. Not a proper name, but signifies worthless, lawless—hence "a worthless, lawless fellow." In the New Testament it appears as a name for Satan, or all that is bad. (2 Cor. 6: 15.) Blaspheme God. Jezebel knew the people would not stone Naboth for blaspheming Baal. Even in their idolatry they respected the honored NAME, and would punish the convicted blasphemer with death. How like the Jews in the time of Christ. The king. To make the sentence more certain, death being the customary punishment for this act. (See 2 Sam. 19: 21.) Also that his possessions, as those of a traitor, might be forfeited to the king. (Yer. 15: 16, 19, and 2 Sam. 16: 4.)

ELDERS AND NOBLES. DID. Their alacrity in carrying out the infamous designs of their wicked queen, shows how long they had fallen. "Like king, like people." Oriental justice is little better at the present time. How much more noble the Christian standard: "We ought to obey God rather than man." (Acts. 5: 29.)

THESE CAME TWO MEN. Satan is always ready with tools when they are needed by his workmen. So when Christ must be convicted (Matt. 26: 60), and Stephen was to be stoned. (Acts 6: 13.) Carried him forth out of the city. Capital punishment always took place out of the city. (See Acts 7: 58; Lev. 24: 14.) Stoned him. A punishment common with mobs. (Ezod. 8: 26; Num. 14: 10, etc.) and made the lawless mode of executing blasphemers, sacrificers to Moloch, wizards, Sabbath breakers, idolaters, and enticers to idolatry, rebellious sons and adulterers. According to 2 Kings 9: 29, his sons sufficed with him, as was not uncommon. (Josh. 7: 24.)

SENT TO JEZEBEL. Having handed their hands in blood to please her, they hasten to send her word, hoping to receive some reward. Their readiness to commit the crime, and to send her word, her manner of receiving it, and telling Ahab, and his proceeding to immediately punish by it, all show an utter recklessness and hardness of heart, the direct outcome of the infamous and delusory flattery which she had introduced. Is dead. In verse 19 the murder is charged upon Ahab. He, his house, and Jezebel, were condemned for the crime. He was guilty because his apostasy from the Lord paved the way for the crime; he was guilty because he did not, though he prevented it and did not, though he lent his authority to it, and he was guilty because he accepted the result.