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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1886.

It should not be difficult for a settled pastor to form a correct estimate of the difficulties our catechists have to labour under in not having authority to marry and baptize. Let any pastor ask himself this simple question, How would I like to have to call in a neighbouring Methodist minister to marry the young of my congregation and baptize the children? How long would some ministers hold their congregations together on these conditions? And yet these are precisely the conditions on which we put our catechists to work, and that too in fields in which denominational ties are not nearly so strong as they usually are in established congregations. It does not meet the difficulty to say that a neighbouring Presbyterian minister may be called in. In parts of our largest mission field there is no neighbouring Presbyterian minister to call in. The nearest neighbour may be fifty miles away. People won't go fifty miles for a minister to marry them if they can get one at five. The visits of ordained ministers are few and far between. The mission superintendent can not make his rounds more than once a year. In the meantime we say to our catechists, "You may preach—the most responsible and important work God and his Church ever assigned to man—but you must send for a rival minister of another denomination to marry your young people and baptize the children of your flock." Can no one suggest a practical remedy for this state of things?

DURING the last hours of the General Assembly, an attempt was made to show the supreme court that our catechists labour under very serious disadvantages in the home mission field, because they have no authority to baptize and marry. The attempt was not very successful, mainly because business was being put through with a rush, and there was no time to give the matter any lengthened consideration. Those who are brought into close contact with our home mission work know that just here is one of our weakest points. Our catechists preach, and preach as well, or perhaps better, than any of their neighbours. When the young people under their charge wish to marry, a neighbouring minister, usually a Methodist, has to be called in to perform the ceremony. When there are children to baptize, a minister from another denomination administers the ordinance. The representative of Presbyterianism has to stand meekly aside, while the representative of some rival denomination comes in and does work among our own people that our own representative should do. Is this reasonable? Does such an arrangement do justice to our representative, to the people that he labours among, or to the Church as a whole? The answer must be an emphatic "no." If there is no remedy, then our system is a failure to the extent that it finds no remedy. Surely there is some way of getting over the difficulty without relaxing our practice in regard to ordination.

A YEAR or two ago the American Presbyterian Church of the North made a very friendly advance toward the Southern Church, with a view to organic union. A deputation went to the General Assembly of the Southern Church, were well received, and made

very fine speeches. A deputation came to the Northern Assembly and went through the same programme. There the matter ended. Nothing has since been done except send friendly telegrams from each Assembly to the other. There is no denying the fact that the Southern Church does not desire union at the present time. It is equally evident that they are opposed to union mainly because they think the Northern Church is not sound on some matters—mainly the relation between Church and State. They cannot be persuaded that the Northern Church did not pursue a wrong course during the war. It seems almost like retributory justice that about the very time they broke off union negotiations with the North be nuse of alleged heterodoxy on the question mentioned, a violent agitation broke out in their own body about evolution. It is alleged that one of their professors has been teaching a modified form of evolution to his students, and the Church is greatly excited over the matter. The case is dragging its slow length along through the courts, and nobody can tell when or how it may end. Saying to a neighbouring Church or congregation "Stand by, I am more orthodox than thou" is a risky kind of exercise in these times. Nobody knows where heresy or sin of some kind may show itself around home. Magnifying the alleged faults of our neighbours is a poor business. Those who excel in the wretched business are always the most vulnerable themselves.

THE effect of Christianity on nations is shown by the reluctance with which Christian nations go to war. Less than a hundred years ago the Fishery dispute, about which we read a little every day, would have been settled by an appeal to arms. Less than a hundred years ago the Alabama claims would have been settled in the same way. No sensible American or Englishman thinks of fighting over this fishery business. In fact the people not directly interested in the dispute pay little attention to it. Not one man in a thousand knows much about it. The people are satisfied to allow their representatives to settle the dispute by arbitration of some kind, and if they cannot settle it peacefully then the people will appoint men who can. In fact, a war between Britain and America is scarcely among the probabilities. Demagogues might try to raise bad feelings, but before it came to blows the people would rise in their might and put the demagogues down. There is a vast amount of hard common sense among the rank and file. Most of them have found out that the political demagogues who try to make civilized neighbours butcher each other are either knaves or lunatics or a combination of both. People are beginning to see that war is a terrible scourge, and that peace is an inestimable blessing. The preacher and the school master have been abroad to some purpose, and the millions have learned that they can do something better with themselves than stop bullets. It was high time. When all the nations have learned to treat tyrants and demagogues as they are for the most part treated in England and America, then the nations will learn war no more.

THERE is a growing feeling across the lines that the American clergy are overdoing the holiday business. No sensible person pays any attention to what is said on the subject by literary Philistines who write about empty churches simply to have a thing at the clergy. These men never attend church, and most of them would prefer that all churches were closed all the year round. When a divine like Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon writes in this way, however, the matter becomes different.

For the second scandal of the vacation usage, as it generally prevails, is this: that it tends to widen, deepen and fix the impression that ministers of the Gospel are a self-indulgent class of people. I do not believe that this impression (which certainly prevails more widely than ministers generally are aware) is just. The ministry as a profession undoubtedly is infested to a considerable extent with cowards and shirks and self-seekers. But it is constantly dropping them out of active service. The actual working clergy of America, as known to me by an experience beginning with my earliest memory, is by every measurement a noble class of men. But the clergy appear to the average man of the world on vacation in by no means an heroic aspect. At many of the idliest of summer resorts there is no one profession so multitudinously represented as that of the men who are supposed to be officially burning with zeal for the rescue of a dying world; and there is no smaller small-talk talked, and no lazier dawdling done, by any than is done by them. Is it strange that men should sometimes wonder why and how it is that the clergy as a class, as seen

from the watering-place point of view, should seem to have so much more time for lounging than the physicians as a class or the lawyers as a class? Any change of the habits of the profession which should tend to correct this impression so far as it is unjust would be a most desirable change. It will be a long time before similar charges can be brought against the Canadian clergy as a class. Most of them are mercifully delivered from the temptations of summer resorts. Still it is well to be careful. If a minister talks much about holidays and "the best places to go to"; if he makes it evident that he is thinking as much about his vacation as about his work; if he ends his holiday, and begins his work with manifest reluctance, he injures himself and the class to which he belongs. Anything that tends to make people look upon the clergy as an effeminate, selfish, ease-loving class, does the ministry an immense amount of harm. A vacation is a good thing for anybody. For many it is a necessity, but a wise minister will take the vacation with as little fuss as possible.

GERMAN THEOLOGY.

It is a significant and encouraging fact that the drift of German theology is no longer in the direction of doubt and unbelief. The cold and chilling speculations of a quarter of a century ago no longer dominate the principal schools of theology, and present their glittering and delusive attractions to young and ardent minds. Emboldened by success, the destructive criticism of that time indulged in prophetic declarations that evangelical orthodoxy was nearing its extinction. The Tübingen School was in the ascendant, and the disciples of Bruno Baur and Strauss were jubilant at the prospect. Friends of the faith once delivered to the saints were, to say the least, apprehensive, not that they feared for the ultimate progress of truth, for the Word of the Lord endureth for ever, but even a temporary eclipse of divine truth is disastrous to many. The hopes of the one and the fears of the other have not been realized. A much more gratifying state of things now prevails at almost all the leading German universities.

Perhaps the most remarkable change is observable in the University of Tübingen itself. The theological professors are in sympathy with evangelical truth, and they seek to impress it on the minds of their students. What was not so long since a centre whence a destructive rationalism went forth with its desolating effect has now become a source of spiritual light and strength to a new generation. The principal theological chairs in the universities of Berlin, Leipzig and Erlangen are occupied by men whose piety is as distinctive as their scholarship is unquestioned. When such men as Luthardt, Kahnis, Delitzsch and Christlieb exert a powerful influence in their respective universities, excellent results may justly be expected.

Another change is also noticeable. Young adherents of the negative theology were very often a self-sufficient class. They were the illuminati, the strong-minded, the progressive, the intelligent, those in sympathy with evangelicalism were regarded as well-meaning weaklings, worthy only of a half-contemptuous patronage. This unlovely cynicism is replaced by a kinder and more brotherly spirit. It is true unfortunately still that some students of modern science are prone to exalt materialism as the sum of all knowledge, and regard the theologian with a mixture of pity and contempt. Theological study in Germany is becoming increasingly popular. Lax views are no longer attractive. These are reported to prevail at Jena and Heidelberg. But these are not the universities, famous though they are, to which the students of sacred learning resort. In addition to their great distinction, these historic institutions possess large endowments, and hold out great inducements in the way of scholarships, yet in spite of these the attendance is most meagre. The following is the recorded attendance on the theological classes in the Prussian universities:

There were in 1881-82 in the nine universities of Prussia 1,394 students of theology. For 1885-86 the number reported is 2,553—nearly double in four years. Of these 726 were in Berlin, 282 in Halle, 300 in Griefsvald, 240 in Königsberg, 225 in Göttingen, 159 in Breslau, 159 in Marburg, 98 in Bonn, and 64 in Kiel.

The warm-hearted Teutonic nature cannot find satisfaction in unbelief. A gospel denuded of all that is distinctive is dreary and repellent; it cannot live long, but, unfortunately, it lasts long enough to do