

The significance of this term has been somewhat obscured by its English equivalent Bishop. But the true nature of the office, as well as its spiritual dignity and high responsibility, are well set forth by St. Paul, in his letter to Timothy, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"; and he then proceeds to show what is required in one who is called "to take care of the Church of God," (1 Tim. iii. 1-7). A still more impressive proof of the importance of the word is found in the fact that it is used in reference to the Saviour Himself: "Ye were as sheep going astray," wrote St. Peter, "but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop"—"Overseer"—"of your souls," (1 Pet. ii. 25).

And here it is only proper to remark that, in the New Testament, these terms do not describe two distinct orders, but belong to one and the same person. In this place St. Paul addresses the elders of the Ephesian church as overseers, bishops appointed by the Holy Ghost; than which no proof can be clearer that the office was the same, whether known by the one or the other of these names. But this is not an exceptional case. The same view is repeatedly presented throughout the Apostolic epistles. Take for instance the language of St. Paul to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly." Now why these demands in regard to elders? "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God," (Titus 1, 5-7). Here the very construction of the argument rests upon the fact that an elder is a bishop. If this be denied, the Apostle's reasoning is not merely weakened, it is destroyed. For what motive can be drawn from the necessity of certain qualifications in the one case to the possession of the same qualifications in another, unless the two be substantially the same? If we say that a Justice of the Peace should be a man of integrity, for magistrates must be incorruptible, we at once affirm that the two titles belong of right to the same officers; but if we hold that each term indicates a distinct order, our conclusion is worthless.

The language of St. Peter confirms that of St. Paul. Thus he writes, "The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," or "fulfilling the office of bishops," (1 Pet. v. 1-2). Here is no vaunting, no airs, no sticking for dignity, no attempt even to enforce counsel by any difference of position between an Apostle and the elders whom he addressed. He does not let himself down to them, but styling himself "also an elder," he rather lifts them up to him. But he enjoins upon them the work of a bishop or overseer. And thus he brings out what we are most anxious to impress upon you, that the word is valuable because it explains the variety, the weight, and the solemnity of the duties entrusted to the elders of the church. The name of bishop is nothing, unless the work of a bishop be performed. The call to this office therefore must be divine, for nothing but divine qualifications and support can enable a man to meet the obligations of this office, or comfort him in the trials connected with it. The anointing of the Spirit of Jehovah is the one grand requisite for the overseer in the church of Christ. This we must most strongly insist upon. Try yourselves by this test. Without the "unction of the Holy One," whatever the gifts or acquirements which you possess, you can be nothing but intruders into the sacred office, and can never perform the functions of a true minister of Christ. With it you are in the genuine succession of the holy Apostles and first bishops of Christianity, and shall, by the grace of God, make full proof of your ministry.

But if such stress be laid upon the calling and gifts of the Holy Spirit, what may be said of your ordination here tonight? Is it in any respect influential? Is it at all necessary? These questions, though subordinate, are proper, and may be answered by a yes or a no, according to the view which may be taken of the influence or the necessity of which they enquire. Is ordination so necessary that no man has a right to minister to the flock of Christ, whatever his qualifications, who has not received it? And does the laying on of hands by properly authorized agents, infallibly impart the right and the ability to exercise the ministry of the Gospel? To these questions we have but a no, a most emphatic no, to render. But if it be asked whether as a recognition on

Conference, of your fitness and as your official recognition of this character, to Christianize, is ordination necessary? Is the answer to prayer in the name of Christ, the imposition of hands on these honored men of God—

"the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ"—is attended with a special blessing, I would as emphatically say Yes. The rite is one of long standing in the church; it has, in fact, come down from Apostolic times, and has been the channel through which God has communicated just such endowments as His ministers have required for the fulfillment of their mission, (Acts xiii. 1-4).

It has indeed been claimed in some quarters that the requisite grace is only bestowed by the laying on of the hands of a Diocesan Bishop; and still further, that there is thus invariably transmitted both Apostolic authority and Apostolic virtue. But involving, as such opinions do, interests of the highest importance to the Church of God—the purity of its doctrines, the validity of its sacraments, nay, the very vitality of its existence,—we are warranted in saying that nothing short of the most explicit statements of Holy Scripture can be taken as proof upon this subject. Proof of this character, though often called for, has never yet been furnished.

We may indeed be reminded that St. Paul wrote to Timothy, "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands," (2 Tim. i. 6); but apart from the impropriety of inferring an imperative and universal obligation, from an allusion to a single fact, we have another similar passage, addressed to the same young minister, to place side by side with that, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," (1 Tim. iv. 14). The one of these quotations, for the purpose of settling a general principle, is as valuable as the other. But there is, in reality, no conflict between them. If reference is made to two different occasions, the "gift" is not affirmed to be of superior excellence when the Apostle himself laid hands on Timothy, than when this was done by the presbytery or elders. But the occasion for both may have been the same; and then the teaching of the two texts is, that the "gift" might be spoken of as the resultant of the faith both of the Apostle and of his co-presbyters—or of either of them—when this young servant of Christ was set apart for the Ministry of the Gospel. If, then, as we believe, you have been Divinely called and qualified for this work, and if, moreover, you have received Scriptural ordination, then are you Christian Elders, New Testament Bishops, and are sent forth with the highest authorization to "feed the flock of the Lord, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

But there are other names by which true ministers of Christ are designated, each of them having some peculiar significance, and each, therefore, well worthy of your careful study. One of these, "Ambassadors for Christ," it is not necessary for me to dwell upon at present, that being the theme of your honored ex-President's excellent charge, delivered to others of your class last evening. I can but ask you to lay well to heart the faithful utterances of that hour; for they were intended for you as much as for those then ordained.

But let me remind you that you are called Preachers, Heralds—the first New Testament name of the minister of Christ. When our Lord had chosen the twelve, He sent them forth, and said, "As ye go preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. x. 7.) After His resurrection, when again He commissioned His Apostles, His command was "Preach the Gospel to every creature," (Mark xvi. 15.) We urge upon you fidelity to this part of your vocation. Publish the truth. Proclaim the glad tidings. "Preach the word." This does not mean, read sermons, but, as a herald, proclaim, publish your Master's message. Let your thoughts be well arranged, your words "sought out and acceptable," but do not injure the effect of the whole, by appearing to be perfunctory distrustful of divine help, or more solicitous about a well rounded period than about the success of the truth. Catch the eye of your hearers, and you will not only be likely to reach their heart, but by a blessed re-action the sympathy which you beget in them will intensify your own, and be a greater help than the most perfect manuscript. "Go," said the angel to the apostles, as he liberated them from prison. "Go, stand and speak in the temple, to the people, all the words of this life," (Acts v. 20).

You are evangelists and teachers. The message with which you are entrusted is one of mercy from the God of Heaven to all men. In the exposition and enforcement of it you will find ample scope for the exercise of all your intellectual and emotional endowments. Endeavor to realize the vast and varying necessities of your fellow-men. Study the whole plan of salvation, both in its principles, its details, and its wonderful harmonies, that you may be able to convince men, to win them over to the obedience of faith, to

comfort them in all their sorrows, and to prepare them for the inheritance of heaven. But do not allow yourselves to be beguiled into regions of barren speculation, of science, or of philosophy, falsely so called. You are set, indeed, "for the defence of the Gospel," and you ought to be prepared for any attack which may be made upon it. Nevertheless, to attempt to refute every objection to Christian truth, would be an endless task, and might occasion more doubt than it would cure. But you can never be wrong in enunciating positive truth. Let it, however, be the whole truth—all the counsel of God. This will be accompanied by a power superior to mere logic or eloquence, a power which will pierce through the strongest barriers of prejudice and unbelief, and commend itself to "every man's conscience in the sight of God." As Christian ministers you are also pastors; but as the duties involved in this term are specifically alluded to in a later part of the text, we shall for the present pass on to consider.

(To be continued.)

REV. MR. SPRAGUE AT EXMOUTH STREET CHURCH.

The Rev. Howard Sprague, pastor of the Centenary congregation, preached in the basement of the Exmouth street Methodist Church last evening, taking for his text the words of the 3rd verse of the 71st Psalm:

"Be thou my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort."

The relation of God to nature and to man, said the preacher in opening, is one of the things most thought about, and a history of the views held by mankind thereon in successive periods would be an interesting study. As compared with ages gone before, there is now in man a sense of distance from God, produced 1st—By the consciousness of sinfulness which belongs to man in all ages and makes him feel his unfitness for fellowship with God. 2nd—There is the absorption of the present time in material pursuits; the dwelling together in great cities and the want of contact with nature, which is itself a corrective of the love of materialistic things. It was over man's separation from nature that Wadsworth mourned when he wrote that he would rather live as a pagan than be content to dwell as did thousands of Christians in the cities of England.

The 3rd influence tending to promote a sense of distance from God, was the pursuit of scientific thought. Man has now come to look on nature as a self-acting machine. Not that God works directly to each result, but through great general laws; and one result of this philosophy is that men have come to think of God separate from nature and apart from human life. The rev. gentleman here contrasted the present materialistic tone of thought with that of the old testament, in which God is ever present in all, in the rising sun, the lightning's flash, the voice of the thunder, not only as a living presence in nature, but also the ever present friend of man. This idea pervades the entire Book of God, and is uttered by every variety of figure, one of which is that of the text.

God is a strong habitation. The use of this figure is explained by the feudal character of the time in which it was written, when each family had its fortified stronghold for shelter against attack. Again and again the old testament and the psalms speak of God as a rock and a defence.

Another idea of the text is "Home." Be thou my home, my continual habitation. Thanks to the character of the old testament civilization we have homes and know the value of them, some of us now more than ever before. Home does not consist of a pile of brick, but of those to whom our heart beats for peace and happiness, free from outside care. Home is where the smile of the wife makes sunshine and the prattle of the children merry music. But, said Mr. Sprague, if you want to know what home really is, to know it in the meaning of my text, go to a foreign land, be among strangers, without one familiar voice among the millions around you; then you will have a conception of home such as you never had before. To be alone with nature in the woods or in the field does not necessarily convey a sense of loneliness, but it is when swallowed up in the multitude of a great city that you realize you are truly alone. Never can I forget, remarked the preacher, one

day not long ago, when passing the Royal Exchange, London, at noon, the clock struck twelve and as the bells in the tower chimed forth the air of "Auld Lang Syne," my heart crossed the ocean at a bound, but my mind turned to the words of my text: "Be thou my strong habitation whereunto I may continually resort."

The personal presence of God was next dwelt on by Mr. Sprague, who said the realization of the idea of the text depended, in the first place, on a right view of God's character, who, hating and punishing sin, yet is revealed to us as perfect love. In the second place, it depended on our own feeling towards God. If we desire to find rest in God, we may each come directly to Him. Man has not always felt this, partly because of his sinful consciousness, partly because of a power-grasping priesthood, who seek to mediate between God and man. Similar to this Roman Catholic priesthood are those who seek to introduce the confessional into the Church of England. God, unto whom we may continually resort, is the only High Priest—Christ the only mediator between God and man. Especially in the hour of sorrow, doubt or fear, when we think God has forgotten us, is there need to remember the words of the text.

The rev. gentleman closed with an earnest appeal to his hearers to come nearer to God, and to make Him their strong habitation and continual resort.

At the conclusion of the service, Mr. Sprague stated that while in England he had been advised on high medical authority to abstain from all labor for fully three months. While making this statement, he assured his Society that he could not remain idle, but would discharge at least part of his duties to the best of his ability.

The congregation which assembled to hear Mr. Sprague on this his first appearance since his return from Great Britain, was very large, completely filling the spacious Sunday school room of the church.—Telegraph.

"DEM SUPPOSÉS."

Those who are so anxious about the future as to be unhappy in the present may learn a lesson from a poor colored woman. Her name was Nancy, and she earned a moderate living by washing. She was, however, always happy. One day one of those anxious Christians who are constantly "taking thought" about the morrow, said to her:

"Ah, Nancy, it is well enough to be happy now, but I should think your thoughts of your future would sober you. Suppose, for instance, that you should be sick and unable to work; or suppose that your present employers should move away, and no one else give you anything to do; or suppose—"

"Stop!" cried Nancy, "I never suppose. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I know I shall not want. And, honey," she added to her gloomy friend, "it's all dem supposés as is makin' you so mis'able. You'd orter give dem all up an' jes' trus' in de Lord."—The Presbyterian.

TEA AND ENTERTAINMENT.

Wednesday evening last was celebrated by the friends of the Second Methodist Church, with a tea and entertainment. The tables were spread in the class rooms, and were given by the following persons: Miss Annie Beer, Misses Callbeck, Mrs. W. E. Dawson, Mrs. Geo. E. Full, Mrs. Hazard, Mrs. Hogan and Mrs. Maehon, Mrs. Hutchison, Mrs. Hueston and Mrs. Lacy, Mrs. Dr. Johnson, Misses Jury, Misses Ellis and Mrs. S. Stumbles, Mrs. John Sellar, Mrs. Strong and Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Webber and Mrs. Tanton, Mrs. Wheatley and Mrs. Wright, Miss McKechnie and Miss M. Beer. Also Mrs. J. R. Brecken gave the value of a table. Many others furnished cakes. The tables were covered with the choicest and richest supplies that we have had an opportunity of seeing for a long time. The ladies seemed to have prepared without regard to expense or trouble. Some of the tables were burdened by cakes of more than ordinary size. One on Mrs. Sellar's table left all competitors behind in its race upwards.

The entertainment after the tea was an enjoyable time. The singing, under the direction of Mrs. Stumbles, was good. She, assisted by Miss Blatch,

presided at the organ, which was an instrument of superior tone, lent by Mr. Miller. Mr. Pope Fletcher rendered good service by singing two solos, entitled "Watching and Waiting," and "God bless the badge of Heaven's Blue." Mr. Fultz appeared to advantage in a solo and chorus called "While the days are going by." A quartette and chorus, "Arise and Shine," was finely rendered by Mrs. Stumbles, Miss Murley, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Fultz, and the choir. A duet and chorus, "Mother watch the little feet," by Misses Murley and Cooks, was finely rendered. The opening anthem, "Let every heart rejoice," was well received. Mr. Wm. Beer and Mr. P. Lea, from the Prince St. choir, ably assisted. The choir had been well trained, and reflected great credit on Mrs. Stumbles, the leader.

The singing was interspersed with several readings. Mr. Geo. E. Full read from Macaulay's lays of Ancient Rome; Mr. G. W. Millner gave two short recitations from Shakespeare; Miss Barr read Longfellow's Hiawatha, Mr. J. LePage gave two short recitations; Mr. J. R. Brecken read the Railway Chase, a Temperance Story. All seemed to enjoy themselves, and a pleasant evening was spent. The gross proceeds are a little over \$140. Next week we will give a brief history of this Church, as well as some particulars respecting its size, etc.—Charlottetown Argus.

OBITUARY.

BAYFIELD.

On the 7th of Oct., 1877, Catherine Keenan, wife of James McClean, exchanged this "vale of tears" for the "better country that is an heavenly." During a series of meetings conducted by Rev. T. D. Hart, she sought and obtained the blessing of justification, was baptized and became a member of the Methodist Church. She proved to be a most consistent Christian, adorning both her private and public life with all the fruits of the Spirit.

When laid upon a bed of suffering and disease, she manifested a true spirit of resignation, proving in a remarkable manner the power of religion to withdraw the affections from earthly things and place them on those above. She frequently expressed the desire to depart and be with Christ. And endeavored to impress upon those around her the necessity of a preparation for eternity. Her body was committed to the "house prepared for all living," by Rev. A. C. McDonald, Episcopal, who improved the occasion by an appropriate discourse from 2 Cor. v. 1. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hand, eternal in the heavens. E.

EDWARD BENNETT.

Died Oct. 28th, aged 59. He walked with God and he was not for God took him. These words were beautifully exemplified in the life and death of the subject of this brief sketch. Brother Bennett was converted to God about 29 years since, under the faithful ministry of the Rev. Thomas Fox. He did not find peace with God without a hard struggle, but having once obtained it he continued to walk with God enjoying the blessings of peace and pardon. After the death of William Bennett, his only brother, he was appointed a leader of the Methodist Society at Fortune. It was in connection with this department of the Christian church that Bro. Bennett exemplified those gifts and graces for which he was admired and loved. As a husband he was loving and affectionate as his sorrowing widow can testify. As a father he was kind and compassionate. It was in connection with this feature of his character that the writer was called to witness with what Christian resignation he sustained the sudden bereavement of a beloved daughter after she had been married a little over a year. At the time of her death he was suffering from that most subtle disease consumption. About a fortnight before his death he went with his son-in-law to see the grave of his beloved daughter for the last time, and this circumstance probably tended to hasten the event of his death.

His remains were interred on Sunday, Oct. 28th, in the presence of a large number of sympathizing relatives and friends. The Rev. Solomon Matthews took part in the funeral service, and the writer preached a short sermon based on the last verse of the seventeenth Psalm. How feelingly we are called upon to relate the fact that the graves of both father and daughter have been covered so soon with newly fallen snow. May the God of all consolation and grace comfort and sustain the family in their painful bereavement. J. H. Fortune.