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MR. McTAVISH'S FAREWELL.

A LARGE CONGREGATION AND IMPRESSIVE SERVICES.

On Sabbath morning, 2nd inst., Chalmers' Church, Woodstock, was crowded to hear the Farewell sermon of the late Pastor of the congregation, the Rev. John McTavish, who has recently accepted a call and will shortly be inducted to the Pastorate of East Church, Inverness, Scotland. Many of the large assemblage present were from other congregations and denominations in town, all of whom, owing to the prominent part which he has taken in Church work here, feel a deep interest in the removal of Mr. McTavish to another sphere of labor. After singing, reading of Acts xx., and earnest devotional exercises, the reverend gentleman preached an able and exceedingly impressive sermon—only a brief synopsis of which is given below—from Acts xx. 32. During the delivery of his discourse, Mr. McTavish was listened to by all with the deepest attention and with evident emotion by very many of his own congregation.

THE SERMON.

Acts xx, verse 32.—"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

A few years prior to the date of this narrative, said the speaker, the Apostle Paul came an entire stranger to Ephesus to hoist the Gospel standard. Twelve men had already been baptized with the baptism of John; i. e., they were baptized as men that looked for the Saviour yet to appear; they did not know that He had already come. This illustrates the difference between the baptism of John and our baptism. Paul's ministry at Ephesus was successful, as is clear from the following circumstances:—(1) That some who cared not for the Lord sought to preach Him after a fashion and work miracles in His name; (2) that others feeling their business interests to be endangered raised an outcry against Him; and (3) above all that many believed and were saved. There never was a successful Ministry that did not receive opposition. The world, the flesh and the devil are sure to fight it. This was the reason of the persecution. Persons engaged in a trade or traffic which will suffer by the Truth being proclaimed by a fearless Ministry will assuredly oppose it. He prayed God that Chalmers' Church congregation may never have a Ministry that will not meet with opposition from the world, or that the flesh and the devil can tolerate easily. When Paul was driven from Ephesus, no doubt many were saying, "What a loss this is to the cause of Jesus; how can His work go on without Him?" But God could get on without Paul. He can get on without any human instrument. Nevertheless he condescends to honor us by using us as His instruments. And when one of these instruments is removed from one sphere to another, you may be sure that there is no more work there for him to do. It is God's will that he is removed. Upon going away Paul sent for the elders of the church to meet him at Miletus and addressed them in the words of our text. By the word "God" in this passage is meant the Father, and the "word of His grace" evidently means the Lord Jesus Christ—thereby meaning the grand instrumentality by which men are brought to the knowledge of God. In this sense God and Christ Jesus are here spoken of as equals—an evidence of Christ's divinity. I don't understand this, but then I don't understand myself and am not surprised that I cannot understand God. The "grace" should more correctly be rendered "favor"—to show that the Lord Jesus is God's gift to man, not purchased, or deserved in any way, but purely a favor from God. This great gift Paul commends, or places before his friends when leaving them. Not that God was likely to forget them, but He honors His people by making them remembrancers to plead His own promises. Thus was Paul honored in commending them to God and the word of His grace.

Again, what did Paul wish for them? He wished them to be built up as a house. Every believer is a house for God. Not a finished or perfect house, but a house nevertheless—on a new foundation. Sin has made us so angular, so rough and out of shape that no wonder the world occasionally points out our defects—they forget what a terrible condition the Church has been brought out of, and hence the Apostle's desire that we should be built up anew, made perfect. God's love alone can do this. This was what prompted the Apostle to plead the cause of his people before God.

Next, the Apostle sought for them an "inheritance among them that are sanctified." And he desired that they should be built up and made so perfect that they would have the capacity to enjoy this inheritance. Sin has deprived us of our possessions. Not only so, but we have a great load of debt or sin upon us. We are nothing, and less than nothing. Think then of such sin-stricken wretches having their sins blotted out and being given an inheritance equal with God. And with such company—the sanctified, the saints in light. The value and pleasure of a residence or home depends much upon its surroundings, the kind of neighbors you have. Think of the surroundings, the associations of God's inheritance. The Lord make us all of that glorious company, and enable us in view of it to keep ourselves in the fear and love of God.

And now, my friends, suffer me to follow the example here set and apply this language, so far as it is applicable, to ourselves at the present time. I don't presume to apply it all to myself, yet I can surely say to the office-bearers of the church, take heed to yourselves and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. God has given you a solemn charge and great responsibilities, and I hope He will enable you to discharge them faithfully. To the congregation, I would say, have confidence in your office-bearers, keep near them, and support them. I fear not to appeal to you, that while conscious of my imperfections, I have sought to proclaim the truth of God fully, openly, as I believed it. I have kept back nothing. I am in this respect clear of the blood of your souls before God. I may have given pain to some; I have never meant to do so. But I had to preach the truth and that only. In dealing with customs that I consider injurious to the spread of the Truth and the building up of believers I have offended some, but I acted conscientiously and am not afraid to meet them before the Judgment Seat of Christ. I have sought to bring you all to the Lord Jesus. I plead with you and I plead with God for you to give yourselves up more to God. Put your trust in Him. I know there are praying people in the congregation and their prayers will be heard. To those who have not yet given themselves to God, I would say, the day is past so far as I am to be the instrument. We are about to separate. It is not likely that we shall ever meet again in this world. I pray God that I may not be a witness against you in the next. In the Lord's name lay hold at once of the hope set before you in the Gospel. Close now. He asks nothing. We have an all-sufficient Saviour in Christ Jesus. He will never leave you, never forsake you. Accept him now. Will you not accept this inheritance? I know that some of you have considered me too strongly opposed to customs and amusements that prevail among you, but believe me it was not because I wished to mar your pleasure, but because I believed them to be injurious to your spiritual interests and the glory of God. And now I say to all, it is my earnest prayer that God may of His abundant mercy soon give you a Pastor who will be much more blessed in his labors than I have been. I thank God heartily for the souls gathered to Jesus since I came amongst you, and I thank Him for any spiritual enlightenment and comfort which any one has received. I go from among you without any unkind feeling, but with the sincerest affection for all of you. Those who have taken offense I can truly ask God to bless, and now for my friends' and brethren's sake peace be in thee I say, and for the House of God my Lord I will seek your good.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

The Rev. John McTavish, who is now in his fifty-ninth year, was educated at Glasgow University, Scotland, and was ordained and inducted to the pastorate of the Presbyterian congregation at Ballachulish, on the borders of Argyll and Invernesshire in the year 1844. Here he remained until 1852 when he removed for a year to Killlean in Kintyre. Having resolved to devote himself to Colonial work for the future he gave up this charge, intending to go to Australia. Illness and other circumstances, however, prevented him from leaving Scotland before the year 1854 when he set sail for Canada and was shortly after his arrival settled among the Presbyterians in Eldon and Thoron, counties of Victoria and Ontario. His then charge is now known as the Beaverton congregation, over which and Woodville he labored until 1872, when he received and accepted a call to Chalmers' Church, Woodstock. Having applied for and received leave of absence to spend a few months in Scotland during the past summer, chiefly for recreation and the benefit of his health, he visited, amongst other places, and preached in Inverness—the result of which was a call to him signed by nearly 1000 members, from the East Presbyterian Church of that city. The call was accepted, and this morning Mr. McTavish and family will leave Woodstock, accompanied by the station by a large number of his late congregation and others, to bid him a regretful and sorrowing good-bye, for

Scotland, to enter upon the duties of his new field.

Few ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, have occupied a more prominent position in the work of the Church or have done more efficient service than has Mr. McTavish. A man of decided ability and strong convictions, he was a positive element which made itself felt in any community. As a preacher he was able, fresh and deeply in earnest, and the same indeed may be said of him in all his relations to the Church and Society. The Presbyterian Mission to the North-West, the French Evangelization scheme, the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund—all now acknowledged successes—and other important branches of the Church's present operations are in no small measure the result of his suggestions and subsequent advocacy. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that his removal from Canada is felt to be a severe loss to the Presbyterian Church, not alone by his brethren of the Ministry but by the members of that body generally.

THE RUMSELLER'S LICENSE.

For the Presbyterian.]

A license to weaken and paralyze the strong man, to destroy the intellect and dethrone reason; license to transform the noble and affectionate husband into a monster of cruelty, to break the heart of the gentle confiding being, whom he had vowed to love and cherish; license to darken even the memory of innocent, joyous childhood, by depriving them of a father's love, guidance and protection, boqueathing them the sad legacy of rags, tears, wretchedness, and the dire curse of example; license to injure and rob thy neighbor, whom thou art commanded to "love as thyself," take his last penny, drain his purse, and then spurn him from your presence; license to spread a net for thy brother man, enslave him, mark the effort of thy victim to break the fetters and escape the fearful thralldom; license to blight the fond hopes of parents by destroying their noble, promising boy, taking from them the prop of their declining years and bringing their "gray hair with sorrow to the grave;" license to kindle hatred and strife, to inflame the evil passions of humanity, to nerve the arm of the robber, whet the knife of the assassin, harden the heart, sear the conscience, debase the man created in the image of God, to the level of the beasts that perish; license to desecrate the Sabbath, open the flood-gates of wickedness, and change this beautiful world into a sink of corruption—a hell upon earth—and train and educate man for an endless perdition, for "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." Review the dark catalogue of crime to which this nefarious license leads, oh! cruel rum-seller. Thy work of destruction is truly appalling! Thy mission is fearful, whilst accumulating thy unholy gain. Examine thy license! Will it stand investigation at the bar of conscience or the tribunal of the great God? "For all these things the Lord shall bring thee into judgment."

O. MERRIAM.

REV. DR. BONAR.

The Rev. Dr. Horatus Bonar is described by Dr. Prime, in the *Observer*, as a venerable-looking man, sixty-five years of age, short of stature, with a round, smooth, fresh face, beaming with intelligence and love. In the pulpit he reads very slowly, and his prayers are short, tender, and comprehensive. Of his work for the children of his charge, Dr. Prim. writes:

Dr. Bonar preaches on the first Sabbath evening of each month to the children of the congregation. The service begins at half-past six and closes at eight, which in this latitude is before sunset, and at nine it is perfect daylight, so that the hour is quite convenient to assemble the children. The house was crowded, the parents being out in full force, children from mission schools, and strangers not a few. The pastor was like a father among the children of his own house. He stepped down from his pulpit again and again, while they were assembling, to seat one and another, called to them to come forward, spoke tenderly to them, and evidently was an object of love to them all. All the children had a Bible in hand, and when the minister named the chapter he was about to read, he passed till they had found the place. He read a few words and hesitated, when the whole mass of them called out the next word, as he stopped only to have them show that they were keeping the place. He would ask them a question on what he was reading, and they would answer promptly. The same way it was when he read the hymns. Then he asked them a few questions in the Shorter Catechism, and they repeated the answers fluently. They sang some of the sweetest of the modern revival hymns, and with great spirit. For the sermon he found his text in Proverbs. "Wisdom hath builded her house," and, having taught them how Christ is the house, he proposed to tell them, 1, of the house; 2, of the open door; 3,

of the feast; 4, the company; and 5, the welcome. Under each of these heads he talked to them just as a parent would in the family circle, and they were all attention. He made them repeat the heads as he went on, and over and over, until they were fixed in their minds. Under the head of the open door, he asked if a boy twelve years old could go in, and they said—Yes. Could a babe get in? Yes. If all wanted to go in at once, could they get in? Yes. And if all the people in Scotland and England and America wanted to get in at the open door, could they all go in? Yes. The poor? Yes, without money or price. The gates of Eastern cities are shut at sunset, and he said: "I once came to the gate of Jerusalem, and it was shut. I knocked hard, but no one answered. At length I put a piece of money into the keyhole, and the keeper opened and let me in. But this door requires no fee, for all are welcome, and it stands open night and day." And so he went on; in the middle of his sermon he said, "I think you are tired; let us sing a hymn," and away they went with the "Sweetest carol ever sung."

and when they were quite waked up with it, he spoke to them again. The whole service was a proof of what I have so often said, that there is no need of clap-trap, funny stories, and baby talk, or religious twaddle, to interest children. Here they were taught the most important truths, saving truth, in simple language, and they were deeply interested. They listened with both ears, answered promptly, and probably remembered much that was said to them. Ministers who preach to children, and teachers, may take a hint from this great and excellent preacher, who knows how to instruct the old and the young. I have heard many Sabbath school sermons and addresses, but never one that more happily met the wants of the youthful mind and heart.

CLERGYMEN'S INFLUENCE.

It is quite possible to estimate the minister of religion too highly; to regard him as the source of blessing, instead of one of the channels through which blessing comes; to allow him to eclipse the Master whom he ought to reveal. This the Roman Catholics do; and we are not quite sure that it has not been done to a greater or less extent by some Protestants; but with them the movement has long been in an opposite direction. Now, it is quite possible to go too far in this direction also; to exalt the ministerial office as to deprive it of all weight and influence; to repeat the truism that "the minister is only a man" so frequently that it comes to mean that he is something less than a man. True he is only a man; but a man may be a Prince. The following extract from an American exchange seems to indicate a return to proper feeling on this subject:—

There is a tendency in certain schools of thought, even in the Christian Church, to regard the ministerial office as a thing to be treated with effluence rather than respect, and as a refuge for amiable souls rather than a vantage-ground for hearty work. Another idea is, that ministers, although really a relic of the days of priestcraft, may be tolerated if they are seen to work with twice the diligence of other Christians in every department of religious and secular reform. Thus *The Christian Register*, the Boston Unitarian organ, has just intimated that the world will "keep a place" for specially able and devoted clergymen, but will let the office die out if its occupants are merely seekers after their own ease and convenience. Now, we do not look back with pleasure upon those days when ministers were absurdly coddled, were given all the best corners in life, and were considered oracles on all possible subjects. The modern decline of priest-worship has had a good effect on the clerical profession, which is more self-reliant and manly than it used to be. But there is some danger lest thoughtless persons go too far. We do not see how the ministerial office can be dispensed with until Christians get to heaven and need no human minister. Every ecclesiastical body, from the hierarchical Church of Rome to the plain and informal body of Friends, must have certain members who devote themselves in some especial degree to the care of religious affairs, the visitation of the sick and poor, the management of public worship, or the instruction of the people by preaching. Such persons need a special training and a clear idea of the importance of their duties; and therefore they deserve a respect different, in some ways, from that accorded to the other Christian workers. There are divers theories of ordination; some Christians regard their clergymen as recipients of a special and permanent grace of the Holy Ghost, while others consider them merely as officers elected by their ecclesiastical peers to perform, for a longer or a shorter time, certain delegated religious duties. But even though there may be "a church without a bishop and a state without a king," we do not see how the church can get along without an order of preachers and workers. Whatever be their views of the authority of such an order or the source of its powers all Christians ought to agree that its office is permanent, until Christ's mandate to his messengers be fulfilled, and the whole world is Christianized.

It seems strange to have to argue for the permanence of the ministerial profession, but the paper we have quoted only voices a too common notion. The real trouble with *The Christian Register* is with its own denomination, which is now vexed both with vacant pulpits and with churchless ministers—as is the case in other denominations also. When every other de-

partment at Harvard has grown in numbers, the Divinity School has stood still, and not even the zeal of men like Edward Everett Hale or the bounty of rich scholarships can fill it up. It seldom has more than fifteen or twenty students, and a quarter of these drift out of the Unitarian ministry when they graduate. Yet the denomination has been talking about "manly men in the pulpit" for twenty five years. We believe that some of its members, *The Christian Register* included, have gone to the opposite extreme in their dislike of sacerdotalism and inefficiency. Many Sunday essays on literature or morals are not a good substitute for the old-fashioned notion of a preacher's duty. Just now we believe there is quite as much danger of looking down on the minister as of looking up to him. At any rate, able or stupid, he is the messenger of good news, or, in the Saxon phrase, the "gospeler." His words are true though his mouth be foolish.

In point of fact, we believe the clerical profession in its entirety, worth of respect, not only for its mission, but for its brains. It is about as completely the learned profession as ever it was. The proportion of liberally educated men in law and medicine is not a third as large as in the ministry, and the modern minister is pretty sure to be as well posted in regard to Darwin's last book or the meaning of the most recent Turkish victory as any of his medical or legal parishioners. He is quite as worthy of respect for his intelligence as the school-teacher or the journalist; and when his people find this out they should be the more willing to hear his religious message instead of demanding that he put it aside in consequence of his ability to interest them on other themes. In a word, the minister exists for the Church, not the Church for the minister.

A Thank Offering.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I notice with a great deal of pleasure the reference in your issue of last week to the circular of the Rev. Dr. Cochran, Convener of the Home Mission Committee, in which he proposed that a special collection be taken up on Thanksgiving Day in aid of the Home Mission Fund. For some years past I have spoken to ministers as occasion offered, and urged the taking up of a "thank-offering" at the Thanksgiving service, for the benefit of the Mission Funds of the Church, and in nearly every case the suggestion was well received. The same suggestion was made to the Convener of Home Missions just before the meeting of the Assembly, and I am truly glad to see that he has, with his usual energy and zeal for the important branch of the Church's work over which he has presided so well, brought the matter officially before the ministers and congregations of the Church. It is surely not too much to ask of our people, that, when they go up to God's house to commemorate His goodness to them during the year, and return their thanks to Him for His great kindnesses, they shall give back into the treasury of the Lord a little of what he has loaned to them.

A comparatively small thank-offering from each member and adherent will add a good many thousand dollars to the Mission Fund; and it is to be hoped the congregations will respond nobly. I do not think that it should be confined to the Home Missions, but include the Foreign Missions as well. There need be no difficulty about the respective shares, as the total collections can be distributed on the basis of the ordinary funds. The carrying out of the suggestion will afford the people an opportunity of showing the practical value of their gratitude; and in giving, it should be as a "free-will offering," and not in any way to interfere with the regular contributions to the schemes of the Church, as, if allowed to do this, it cannot in any proper sense be a "thank-offering." I am, dear sir, sincerely yours, M.

A Conversation Between a Roman Catholic Priest and a Protestant.

Prot.—Could St. Paul forgive sins?
Priest.—He could.
Prot.—Please tell me who gave him the power.
Priest.—Jesus Christ.
Prot.—Please show me where you can point to one passage of Scripture to show that St. Paul ever forgave sins. He only preached forgiveness of sins through Christ. See Acts xiii. 38, 39; xvi. 31.
Prot.—But Peter could forgive sins. See John xx. 22, 23.
Prot.—Please look at Acts iv. 12; v. 31; x. 34, 35, 43; also, Chap. xi. 14; and you will find that he only preached forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and that he understood the commission he got in John xx. 22, 23.
Prot.—Was ever the blessed Virgin in America?
Priest.—No.
Prot.—Does she know the American people?
Priest.—No.
Prot.—Then why do the American people pray to her when she does not know them?
Priest.—God hears the prayers offered to her and tells them to her.
Prot.—Then God can give the blessing you want from Him and save her the trouble. We do not need another intercessor as we have Christ and none else will do but Him, John xiv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

AN ULSTER PROTESTANT.

Toronto, 4th Sept., 1877.

The Rev. R. P. McKay, will be ordained and inducted to the pastorate of Knox Church, Scarborough, on the 9th of October. Mr. McKay is at present on a tour in Great Britain.