

Reflections on the Sudden Death of Pastor W. H. Morgan, Oak Bay, N. B.

I have been very much affected by the sudden death of our dear brother, Pastor W. H. Morgan, which occurred on Thursday Evening, March 23rd, at Oak Bay, Charlotte County, in the prime of life, being at the early age of thirty-four years. Pastor Morgan came to Oak Bay some two years ago. His former charge was at Pembroke, Me. He was ordained in 1890. His native place is in the province of Ontario. He leaves a widow, who has the sympathy of a large circle of friends and brothers and sisters in Christ, who will pray that she may now be consoled by the precious promises that cheered the heart of her late beloved husband. His work at Oak Bay was carried on successfully, as he has an energy of purpose backed up by a buoyant faith in the promises of God to the faithful sower of the seed of the kingdom.

My acquaintance with Bro. Morgan has been brief, but as I recall the circumstances of our first meeting while attending the sessions of the N. B. Southern Association last July they bring back very pleasant recollections. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Morgan, Deacon N. B. Cottle and wife, Deacon Sprague, Pastor S. H. Cornwall and the writer were hospitably entertained in the lovely home of Deacon James Toole. It was amid the beautiful scenery of Tooleton, Kars, Kings County and the good company I was fortunate to be with during the Association, that I was so favorably impressed, and drawn out in Christian fellowship towards our dear departed brother, which had become more intimate by correspondence with each other. His letters were always spiritual and helpful to me, and largely interpreted the devotional life of the man. He had the happy faculty of writing sentiments in his letters that drew the recipient nearer to the source of all good. I have before me four of the last letters he wrote, and since looking over them I cannot but conclude he must have enjoyed to a wonderful degree the work to which he felt called of God to do.

In a letter dated January 19th, he writes in a joyful strain concerning some protracted meetings being held at Oak Bay, and says: "I reply early to let you know about my wonderful meetings. We are having great success. I knew you would be anxious to learn how we are getting along. We feel that God has helped us so much that we don't know how to thank Him enough. We give Him the glory for all that has been done. Where He leads me I will follow."

In a letter dated February 14th, he says: "I am pleased to receive your letter. Glad you are enjoying good health. It is such a blessing to be physically well, we can certainly enjoy life better and serve God with great energy. I am never sick as a rule. I don't know whether I told you of further prosperity I have enjoyed since coming here. Last spring I received an invitation to visit a neighborhood about 8 miles from here and conduct some services. I went, preached in their schoolhouse, and have ever since; the interest increased, and now we have a church ready to dedicate in May, worth about twelve hundred dollars. It will be a very nice addition to our denomination. The people were just starving for the Bread of Life. The other evening after preaching I gave the opportunity for any desiring to lead a better life to stand, and 12 rose for prayers. The Lord is working. We thank Him. I am very busy all the time, and it pays while you are in the Master's cause."

In a letter on Mar. 4th, he writes: "The Sabbath will soon be here and no doubt you as well as myself will welcome it. It seems to be a day that we can do extra work for the Master and I am sure it should be a day of welcome to all Christians." At the close of this letter one would think by the way he wrote he had a premonition of soon closing his works and labors of love upon earth, when he says: "I will be pleased to meet you again. It seems a long time since we saw one another. I trust that you are enjoying the very best of health and that you are prospering in the service of God. Our time is short here and I am glad that this is not our home. We have many sorrows and troubles, but they will surely make us strong in His service if we take Him at his word."

In his last letter he wrote to me on March 17th, he writes in this admonishing manner: "I trust that each one of us will continue to live at the

feet of the Master and by thus living we are sure to lead a successful Christian life. The pastor's work is surely to lead sinners into the fold and build up the cause of Christ, and ministers cannot afford to forget their mission. Life is too short. I am not laying any plans for future work. May the Master lead us in the way of life and truth."

Strange as it may seem in answering this last letter of Bro. Morgan's I gave expression to a few thoughts about death, which letter was mailed to him the morn of the day of his sudden departing to be with Christ. I will here try as best I can to reproduce them. After calling his attention to the prevailing epidemic that has raged this winter, and the sudden deaths all over these provinces, I wrote among other things. Truly in the midst of life we are in death, many whom I knew are now with their Lord. Heaven is richer and earth is all the poorer, because of these dear departed ones it can be said, of whom the world was not worthy. Although there is no hope or consolation in the ravages that death is making in this world of ours, and no apparent silver lining to the dark cloud which overhangs us in the bitter bereavements that come to us in the loss of loved ones, still independent of Death and its surrounding there comes a voice from the heavenly world freighted with the welcome news "thy dead men shall live again;" and, although in some cases loved ones go down to the dust of death when

"No earthly friend was there to wipe
Death's cold sweat from the brow,
Or loving hand to close those eyes,
Which sleep in darkness now"

faith hears amid the wreck of all earthly hopes, "for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Personally I shall miss him, and the denomination loses by his death a worker in the cause of Christ who gave promise of being a useful ambassador of Christ. What is our loss is his gain, and in humble submission to an all wise Providence we can say "Thy will be done."

H. S. COSMAN.

St. John, N. B., March 26th, 1899.

How to Kill a Church.

ALBERT C. APPLGARTH, PH. D.

NO. 1.

Ours is a humane age. We are horrified at the modes of execution prevalent in heathen lands. To be sure, America still clings to the law of capital punishment. But sentiment runs strongly against barbarity. Popular opinion has, therefore, declared that hanging should be abolished. Milder methods are to be substituted. Some legislatures meditate adopting suffocation by gas. In other states the electric chair is employed. But all these modes result in death.

We find similar diversity of thought concerning the church. Anarchy waves its red flag and screams, "Away with the church." The worldling scorns or is indifferent to the Lord's house. Such an individual admits it to be a good police agent. Nobody can doubt that it brings order into a community. But the unconverted person has no use for the church. He would shed few tears at the funeral of Christianity. In fact, he hates the holy precepts of Jesus because they oppose the gratification of his sinful desires and the lawless propensities of his nature. There is still another class of persons. These are the humanitarians in religion. They say, "The church—why, yes! we could not get along without it. Why, bless you, I belong to it." In spite of such protestation, however, they are doing their best to kill the church. Sometimes they succeed. Of course, such action may not be intentional. Perhaps it may arise from thoughtlessness. Yet the result is the same—death to the church.

Christianity has no reason to dread external attack. But internal onslaught is to be feared. The oak laughs at the storm. But, when decay eats within, then the monarch of the forest crashes to the ground.

It is time, however, to pass from the general to the specific. We must examine those rules which are guaranteed to kill any church. The first is—

Irregular attendance.—The devil has no better device for killing a church than this—telling members to stay away. No Christian does his duty unless he is a regular attendant upon divine worship. You answer, "why, I am not missed." Yes, you are. Besides, you are setting a bad example to others. Absence on Sunday is a symptom of a very serious disease. When the heart is right, like David, we will want to come. We will love God's house. As soon as the service becomes distasteful, the danger signal is exposed on the track of life. You pass it at your peril. But you reply, "I do come occasionally." This is almost as bad as staying away altogether. If you voluntarily absent yourself you are doing the church an injury—you are killing it.

Another rule is this—

Bad behaviour in the church.—If you attend at all, come late. Wear heavy shoes. Make all the noise you can. You may greatly disturb others. But, of course, that does not matter—to you. Then a word about seats. Some writer has well said, that a person's piety may be gauged by their place in the synagogue, when the pews are free. Do not imagine that the front rows were intended for you. That would be a great mistake. If you occupied them your acquaintances might think you were conceited. You know it is such an inspiration to the preacher to see empty benches before him.

When at last you get comfortably seated stare around as though you were in some first class menagerie. When you have looked everybody out of countenance, when you have observed all the styles, then breathe that touching little prayer—Now I lay me down to sleep.

When you come to church never be pleased with anything. Find all the fault you possibly can. If it be difficult to discover any proper subject look around carefully. See if the room be not too warm or too cold. Observe whether the preacher be immaculately attired. If he has any, he may have his hair parted in the middle. Notice whether his voice is not in too high or low a key. No matter what else you do, always strive to prevent harmony in the church. If you think everything is going smoothly try to engender a little commotion. Attempt to run the church yourself. There is no better way of killing it than this. Peradventure, you remember Col. Ham's story. A class leader prayed that the Lord would take a certain member and drop him into hell. When the minister asked for an explanation of this extraordinary petition he responded, "Why, if the Lord would only do that Bro. A. would break up the bad place in a week."

Never join in the singing, this makes worship spiritual, attractive. If requested to lead in prayer, refuse. Do not be as polite as the colored brother. "Yes," he answers, "I will do as well as I can, but I am a good deal out of practice." There may be more truth than poetry in such rejoinder.

Never say encouraging things to the pastor. Be sure you tell him every day the church is fast going to sticks. But do not stop there. Tell other members what you believe to be the minister's faults. If a brother has said in prayer meeting some good thing which helped you, of course, do not tell him. Mortals are too conceited any how, you know.

If you spy a stranger in the audience pay no attention to him. When the congregation is dismissed never notice anybody. Not for a moment think of shaking hands with the man in your pew. Your spotless religiosity might be contaminated. Gather your ecclesiastical robes around you and rush out the door, as though fired from a catapult. But do not forget to inform the first person you meet what an "unsociable" church yours is.

Such action is warranted to convert any church into a cold storage institution. I believe when some folks enter heaven (?) they will want the angels to introduce them to the members of their own church.

Do not wait until the benediction is pronounced. But, during the last hymn, begin to look for your hat, and shuffle into your "top coat," as though you were afraid some individual would steal them.

HUNTINGDON, PA.

The *Herald and Presbyter*, the Presbyterian paper of Ohio, says: "We do not agree for one moment that immersion is the Scriptural form of baptism, nor even Scriptural." The *Western Recorder* replies: "Then the *Herald and Presbyter* should protest against the receiving of Baptists into their churches unless they will consent to be sprinkled."