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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1884.

REFERRING to the efforts that are being made by two or three of its contemporaries to obtain subscribers on the ground of "cheapness," the N. Y. *Evangelist* says:

But that is their own affair, to which we should not allude were it not that these circulars have been sent to many of our friends, who forward them to us with the inquiry whether the *Evangelist* intends to follow the example? To which we answer, NO. If we felt rich enough to give away two-thirds the price of subscription to one class of subscribers, we should rather give it to old friends than to entire strangers. But we have a more radical objection to this whole "operation." We believe that any honest business is to be conducted on business principles—giving honest value, and asking reasonable return. The policy of "cutting under" is not highly esteemed among business men; nor do those who resort to it improve either their moral or financial standing. It demoralizes legitimate business, and in the long run is sure to react upon those who undertake it. When a tradesman tries to entice away his neighbour's customers by offering his own wares at a nominal price, it is only a question of time before he comes to grief. If the spirit of competition has got into the religious papers, so that there is to be a scrub-race in cutting under and bidding low, we desire to be counted out.

The "scrub-race" and "cutting under" business which, according to the *Evangelist*, has such a demoralizing effect, is generally resorted to by men who lay claim to a very superior type of piety.

We know nothing about the correctness of the report that the late Mr. Bethune contracted typhoid fever in a hotel in which he was a guest for a few days while on circuit, but we do know that there is foul air enough in court houses, churches, schools and other public buildings in Ontario, to poison half the population. Probably there are not a dozen court-rooms in Ontario in which the air is fit to be breathed after court has been sitting a few hours. A man with a reasonably sensitive nasal organ who happens to drop in for a moment late in the afternoon wonders that there is a living lawyer or judge in the Province. Many of our churches are not much better. A church building that has had no fire in it for six cold days and is suddenly heated up on the morning of the seventh, and has no provision for ventilation, is simply a place unfit for a human being to live in, even for an hour and a half. The air in many of our country churches during service is highly poisonous. By actual figures it would be easy to show that in some churches the people must have breathed it several times though it was none too pure at the first. Probably there is not a minister in Canada who has not suffered severely from being roasted in country school houses and then turned out into the frosty air. Bad ventilation is one of the chief hindrances to the gospel. Bad air makes hearers sleepy, stupid, sick. Bad ventilation causes more than half the sleeping in church. Men who live in the open air six days cannot bear the poisonous atmosphere of the seventh and they go to sleep.

The following "story" contains about forty words in almost daily use that are often mispronounced by persons who claim to know something about the English language. A writer in the *Homiletic Review* says it has been submitted to bishops, doctors of divinity, editors and professors on the other side, and that it has rarely been read by men of even national

reputation with less than five errors. Of course a man who pays no attention to pronunciation can read it right through without any difficulty, just as some men can spell in a very independent spirit, but we fancy that those of our readers who are particular about their pronunciation will find several places where the shoe pinches.

A sacrilegious son of Belial, who suffered from bronchitis, having exhausted his finances, in order to make good the deficit, resolved to ally himself to a comely, lenient, and docile young lady of the Malay and Caucasian race. He accordingly purchased a callopie, and a necklace of a chameleon hue, and having secured a suite of rooms at a leading hotel near the depot, he engaged the head-waiter as his coadjutor. He then despatched a letter of the most unexceptionable calligraphy extant, inviting the young lady to a *matinée*. She revolted at the idea, refused to consider herself sacrificable to his designs, and sent a polite note of refusal; on receiving which he said he would not now forge letters hymeneal with the queen. He then procured a carbine and a bowie knife, went to an isolated spot behind an abode of squalour, severed his jugular vein, and discharged the contents of the carbine into his abdomen. The *debris* was removed by the coroner, who from leading a life in the culture of belles-lettres and literature, had become a sergeant-at-arms in the Legislature of Arkansas.

The reading should of course be done at sight and there should be a candid friend near with a copy of Webster or Worcester. Now, ladies and gentlemen, read.

OFFICE-BEARERS in our congregations should learn at least one important lesson from the Moody Conference, and that is that good missionary meetings, in fact good meetings of any kind, are large y matters of arrangement. Every detail in connection with the late conference was arranged before the meeting was held. The same should be done with every meeting. If a meeting is worth holding, it is worth holding in the best possible way. Dr. Ormiston used to say that he would much rather not hold a meeting in his church than hold a poor one. The Doctor was right. A meeting that makes everybody present wish they had stayed at home, does far more harm than good. The persons responsible for holding the meeting should arrange the programme beforehand in the way that they think for the best interest of the meeting. The chairman should be in his place punctually and keep the meeting well in hand. His duty is to preside—not to put in a speech at every opportunity. The musical people should know just what they are to sing and be ready to sing it. When there are several speakers they should be limited to a given time. No small part of the success of the Montreal Anniversary meetings arises from the fact that they apply the time limit to every speaker, no matter who he is nor where he comes from. The best speakers rather like the arrangement for they know just what is expected of them; bores never like it. No man should be put up as a compliment, or because he may take the sulks if he is not asked to say a word. He may go on for half an hour and kill the meeting. Better have him sulk than spoil a good missionary meeting. Too many rules, says some one. Well if it is better to spoil your missionary meeting than keep a few common sense rules we suppose the cause must suffer.

THE PULPIT AND POLITICS.

No very clearly defined idea seems to exist as to the part a minister may take in political affairs. The understanding appears to be that on all questions of a politico-religious or ethical character, a clergyman is at perfect liberty to give free and public expression to the opinions he holds, while there is a vague impression that he goes beyond his legitimate sphere when he enters the arena of party political debate.

It depends very much on the point of view from which the latter aspect of the question is regarded. It can be looked at both as a matter of right or expediency. The minister of the Gospel can in this relation apply the text, "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." In being set apart to the work of the holy ministry, a man is not denuded of any of the natural rights he possesses. He is still a member of the commonwealth. He is a citizen, and in general a good one. It is on all hands conceded that if he pays his taxes he is at liberty, and ought, as an intelligent man, to vote for the men and measures he approves. So far as right is concerned, if he can vote for others he can if he chooses become a candidate. There have been clerical members of various legislatures, but the success of their efforts has not been so striking as to make clerical candidates eagerly sought after.

As a general thing, when a minister quietly marks his ballot, and takes no active part in an election contest, he escapes criticism. If, however, from a sense of duty he has sought to influence the votes of others, he is sure to have a liberal supply of censure meted out to him. It always comes from the party against whom his vote has been cast; the party to whom he inclines usually thinks he did quite right. Like all other citizens of a free country, a minister is entitled to the possession and expression of his opinions, and he ought to be free to act upon them. Most men endowed with a moderate degree of individuality will claim this much. If they do not they usually fail to command esteem. Mr. Facing-both-ways is not respected, either in the ministry or out of it.

But the question of expediency comes in. The real demands on the Christian ministry in our time are specially exacting. The care of the sick and the dying, the almost endless organizations connected with congregations and unconnected, that claim the interest and support of ministers, the many charitable institutions that look to them for aid, ordinary pastoral visitation, committee meetings, prayer meetings, private study, a passable acquaintance with current literature, an intelligent comprehension of the theological questions of the age, and the careful preparation of two good discourses weekly, do not leave even the most stalwart minister, robust both in body and mind, much time for political study, not to speak of the cultivation of the oratory of the stump.

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher has claimed and received a large degree of toleration for his eccentricities as well as for his individual opinions. Enthusiastic admirers of his on both sides of the Atlantic have regarded him as an ideal man. He has been passionately blamed and as passionately defended in almost every variety to which at one time or other he has committed himself. Again the shadow of partial eclipse is resting upon him. In the recent election campaign he took a somewhat prominent and characteristic part. Certain of his utterances could not with impunity have been made by any other man. Many thought they were a little too much even for Beecher. Now trouble is brewing in Plymouth Church over the part its pastor took in the late political contest. Hitherto a Republican, Beecher used all his influence and much of his eloquence to defeat the Republican nominee. The election of Grover Cleveland has unchained the resentment of the defeated party, and prominent Republicans in Plymouth Church are bent on punishing their pastor. They are talking freely about withdrawing their pecuniary support. In the fashionable city church as well as in the remote rural congregation, the money power seems to be regarded as the chief controlling interest. What the outcome of it in Beecher's present trouble may be it would be premature to anticipate. This much is already discernable, that it is not always a safe thing for a minister to differ politically from the rich supporters of his church. Beecher was permitted to throw the chief articles of the evangelical creed to the winds, and his supporters looked on admiringly. He might be as heterodox as he chose on theological questions, but in their eyes political heterodoxy is an unforgiveable offence.

THE RECORD OF A YEAR'S CRIME.

A BLUE book containing the Criminal Statistics of Canada has just been issued. A glance at its pages is neither without interest nor instruction. Every lover of his country, every Christian philanthropist, desires to see crime diminished and the criminal transformed into an honest and respectable citizen. A careful study of criminal statistics would lead to measures for its speedy detection, even-handed punishment and more effective repression.

To begin then with the capital offence of murder, we find that during 1883, twenty-five persons were accused with the commission of this dreadful crime. Ontario having the largest population has possibly more than her own proportion of criminals, yet she does not head the murder list. Ten are allotted to Ontario; while British Columbia is credited with twelve. The Province of Quebec returns two, and New Brunswick one, while Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island do not appear on the list. Of the twenty-five persons accused of murder fourteen were acquitted, and eleven were convicted. When the great reluctance of juries to bring in a verdict of guilty in murder cases is remembered, it would not