

THE BEECHER SCANDAL.

has now we trust pretty nearly exhausted itself. Whilst we have been obliged to read the statements of the several parties, as they have come to us from day to day, we have felt that the press with all its advantages has its many drawbacks also.— Whilst we may wish for ourselves and families to read the daily newspapers, that we may know what is passing each day, yet it has been painful to find in doing so that a very large portion of them for some time past has been filled with a subject unfit for some of the members to read, and on which there could be no free conversation in the family circle, the very mention of the subject being calculated to bring the tone of moral feeling down below what should prevail in Christian families. We hope now to be able to breathe more freely. We have not cared to give the case the close attention required to make a fair summary for our columns, yet our readers may not object, now that it is through, to have an epitome of what has come before the Investigating Committee. Our St. John contemporary has about as clear a synopsis of the affair as we have seen, a portion of which we here copy, and hope that this may be the last that we shall see or hear of the matter:—

“The labors of the Investigating Committee of Plymouth Church, have nearly come to a close. Theodore Tilton has laid down his charges of treachery and immorality against the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher; Mrs. Tilton has told her story of domestic troubles and wifely sufferings; Frank D. Moulton has rehearsed his determination, as “peacemaker,” to withhold a full statement of all he knows and has in his possession relating to the circumstances upon which the scandal is based; and, having left the committee room, poured into the ear of a reporter of the Chicago Tribune a long succession of charges against Beecher infinitely more disgusting than anything Tilton has dared to utter. Many others have given evidence on both sides, setting the prurient curiosity in morbidly evil minds agog for fresh developments; and lastly, Henry Ward Beecher has taken the stand to defend his character and position, and to ward off the blow aimed by plotters and schemers against the Christian ministry and the Christian church.

Mr. Beecher's statement is full, but extremely simple. He rehearses the whole matter, from his first acquaintance with Tilton, to the present time; and while he stands firm upon his claim of innocence of the charges brought against him, discloses a plot, only now understood, by which he was to be cast down from his high position, or satisfy the demands of his enemies for money to seal their mouths against the circulation of infamous stories touching his character. For four years has he been struggling in the meshes of this hellish net—all the while burdened with the conviction that he had been instrumental in bringing discord and strife into the family of his friend, and by his influence brought that friend to poverty and wretchedness.

Briefly, the facts in the whole case appear to be these: Beecher and Tilton were for years associated in journalistic labors, during which period the latter imbibed Unitarian and free-love ideas, which he promulgated in the Independent, so that Beecher felt it his duty to urge his removal from the position of editor, which was done without for a time, breaking up their friendly intercourse or severing their church connections. One day, Mrs. Tilton informed him that she was in the direst poverty, and besides was a great sufferer by the hands of her husband, and disclosed a state of domestic affairs which caused him to remark, that she ought to seek a separation. The conversation was reported to her husband, who subsequently extorted a confession from his sick and suffering wife, that she had been in immoral and illicit intercourse with her pastor, H. W. Beecher. Armed with this confession Tilton obtained an interview with Beecher, at the house of Frank D. Moulton, at which he charged Beecher with making improper proposals to Mrs. Tilton, but willing to show his magnanimity tore the paper he held in his hand in shreds and declared that no evidence of the charge then existed. Beecher denied the truth of Mrs. Tilton's statement, but discovered that his kindly leaning toward her and Tilton's cruelties had combined to nourish tender sentiments toward him. Leaving Tilton he hastened to see Tilton's wife, from whom he obtained a written retraction of the story she had told her husband. That night, Tilton learned this

fact, and next day Moulton waited on Beecher and by intrigue secured the document, telling him that he knew Tilton to be innocent of the charges made, and that it was Tilton's belief that Beecher was the cause of all his troubles in that he had brought him to poverty by securing his dismissal. This was pressed home upon the mind of Beecher so frequently that he came to regard himself as having acted an unfriendly and ungenerous part in believing the stories of Tilton's inconstancy to his wife, in throwing the family into penury by advising Tilton's dismissal, and in, however unintentionally, won the affections of Tilton's wife. Soon the charge of making improper suggestions to Mrs. Tilton was dug up and reiterated, and immediately thereafter a demand made for Mr. Beecher's influence to secure \$7,000 from Tilton's employer for services rendered. To secure this Tilton declared that Bowen—the man against whom the claim was to be made—had told him that he knew Mr. Beecher to be guilty of immoral conduct, and particularized certain instances. Unable to refute such a falsehood Bowen paid the demand, and a paper was drawn in which Tilton, Bowen and Beecher declared that they had nothing against each other. But again and again the vile charges were made to prevent the threatened publication of which Beecher by Moulton's advice paid over at sundry times \$7,000 hush money, mortgaging his house to raise the amount. Nor was it till a further demand for \$5,000 more was made that Beecher began to get his eyes open to the fact that he was being subjected to an insatiable system of blackmail, and the money was peremptorily refused. Then the fiendish malice of his foe was let loose, and Tilton descended to the unmanly and incredible act of fouling his own home by charges of adultery upon his wife and illegitimacy upon his children, and upon H. W. Beecher as the author of the crimes. Moulton, the go-between and “peacemaker” had, to secure the success of his schemes, stated in a letter to H. W. Beecher, that if all the facts in his possession relating to the difficulties between him and Tilton were given to the public, he—Beecher—would stand acquitted of any wrongful act. And so this “honorable” man refused to place in the hands of this Committee the evidence at his disposal, because, forsooth, the letters and papers had been entrusted to him in confidence, and his fine sense of honor would not admit of his proclaiming upon the housetops what had been revealed to him in the closet. As to the main charge Beecher says:

In the latter part of July, 1870, Mrs. Tilton was sick, and at her request I visited her. She seemed much depressed, but gave me no hint of any trouble having reference to me. I cheered her as best I could, and prayed with her just before leaving. This was our last interview before the trouble broke out in the family. I describe it because it was the last, and its character has a bearing upon a later part of my story. Concerning all my other visits, it is sufficient to say that at no interview which ever took place between Mrs. Tilton and myself did anything occur which might not have occurred with perfect propriety between a brother and sister, between a father and child, or between a man of honor and the wife of his best friend, nor did anything ever happen which she or I sought to conceal from her husband.

It is a thousand pities that Mr. Beecher had not given his statement to the public long ago. Such a course would have saved him untold sorrows, and the scandal would have been strangled in its birth. It is, however, matter for surprise that he should have allowed himself to become mixed up with such a set of low and debased characters as the main parties in this world-scandal have shown themselves to be.”

The New York papers have an abstract of the forthcoming report of the Investigating Committee. The report it is said will be a lengthy document which will occupy about two hours in reading, rehearsing the evidence, and all the steps taken in obtaining it. After which would come

THE COMMITTEE'S VERDICT, briefly and tersely stating that on the one hand they find as the accused person a man of well-known character, against whom, during a ministry of twenty-five years and a life of over sixty years, not a single charge of lack of duty, much less immorality, has ever been made—a man of great Christian goodness and high principle. On the other, as the accuser is a man of bad reputation and whom the testimony has shown to be a perjurer and an adulterer, his charges are unsupported by any distinct evidence or corroborative proof. Many of his main statements are flatly contradicted by other persons of better character than the accuser, besides the accused

himself. The proof seems almost all on one side. Mr. Tilton fails to prove anything except that a wrong had been practiced toward him. Mr. Beecher manfully confesses this wrong, and shows by his letters that he bitterly regretted it. The Committee therefore comes to the conclusion that Mr. Beecher, throughout this painful inquiry, has acted in an open, undeviating manner, while his accuser's course has been subtle and underhanded, and the finding is that Rev. Henry Ward Beecher is entirely guiltless of the accusations brought against him.

WE ARE SORRY to learn that the insurance on the First Baptist church in Chicago, recently burned, was only \$30,000. The house cost \$200,000. It had been insured for 80,000; but policies were allowed to expire without renewal.

The Congregationalist explains what it means by “lightning bug piety”—bright while it lasts, but cold, and soon out.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A FAMILY GATHERING.

REUNION OF SIX “GATES BROS.” AFTER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY'S SEPARATION. LADY MEETING REMARKABLE COINCIDENCE. SOCIAL PIC-NIC AND HOME GATHERING.

Mr. Editor,— Having enjoyed an excursion with the “Gates Bros.” and other friends, on their old homestead in the County of Annapolis, I thought an account of it, with some other items connected, might not be uninteresting to many of your readers.

The six brothers, sons of the late Oldham Gates, part of whom are proprietors of the “Gates Bros., Organ and Piano-orte Manufactory,” met after an absence of a quarter of a century, by special arrangement.

On Saturday evening, Aug. 15, “Enterprise” Lodge room was filled to excess.— These six brothers, all Independent Tempnars, were present and took part in the exercises of the evening. A very interesting letter from an absent sister in Nebraska, U. S., to W. J. Gates, Bridgewater, and published in the Christian Messenger, was read.— Then followed music, speeches, recitations, and tableau songs; closing with a declamation and a song, sung 30 years ago by Willard, a Boston brother. Scenes of former years were touchingly brought to mind.

On Sunday morning the “six” attended the Sunday School, as in their boyhood days, and sat in a class. Addresses &c., were delivered. Rev. Obed. Parker, an old friend of the parents, made pleasing allusion to bygone-days, showing the value and importance of early religious instruction, and that such efforts, coupled with parental prayer were never in vain.

At 3 P. M. they together listened to a sermon by the venerable Dr. Topper (aged 80 years, one of the oldest active ministers in N. S.) on the importance of “family devotion, &c.” At 7 P. M. the Rev. J. E. Goucher, (a former intimate school mate of one of the brothers,) delivered an eloquent discourse from the words, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.”

A STRANGE COINCIDENT.

The above text was the very one used on the occasion of the funeral of the mother of these boys just twenty five years before. The preacher was not aware of the fact until the service was over.

At one of the brothers' houses (Elkanah) they took dinner, the first meal together since they sat down as children at the table of their father and mother. At another brothers (Wilmot) they took tea, thus closed this pleasant Sabbath day.

PIC-NIC.

At 3 P. M. on Monday, the pines on the old homestead seemed alive with friends, gathered there to join the happy family in roaming over old scenes, dear at least to these long separated children.

Here was the old spot where once stood the “childhood home,” and where now furiously dashes past the “iron steed;” the old orchard, decrepit with age, yet surviving the parents; the never-failing boiling spring gushing out the waters of natural life; the spot where one of the lads (W. J. G.) had carefully planted the first money he ever earned, supposing it would sprout and grow, thus increasing its quantity; the level fields where the plough had been followed; the meadow from which many a load of hay had been removed; the river, still bearing its cooling waters ocean-

ward; the old family grave yard, containing the remains of the dear ones gone before; the tall waving pines, under whose shady branches the friends finally gathered to partake of the refreshments prepared by the ladies; with the happy countenances of old and young, presenting scenes long to be remembered, and which will doubtless be reverted to in after life by the survivors as an “oasis” in the desert of life, or as a cooling draught from a living spring to a thirsty traveller on life's toilsome journey. Rev. J. E. Goucher offered a prayer of thanksgiving, after which followed tea, &c. W. J. Gates from Bridgewater called the attention of the friends present to the occasion of their gathering, reviewing past scenes, and then introduced Felix McNeal, Esq., the only surviving brother of the mother of those boys (aged near 80 years), who made a very pleasing and instructive speech, referring to the progenitors of the “Gates' family” more especially to his associates, the parents of the “six” present.

Rev. J. E. Goucher next addressed the company in his usual eloquent style, alluding to the many happy hours spent behind these pines with his life friend Wellesly in the “old house at home” Here he with his friend referred to had commenced to read the Bible through at railroad speed, and succeeded.

A. J. McLeod, Esq., Barrister, of Boston, said, “the Rev. gentleman seemed to fear he would find himself preaching a sermon should he prolong his remarks, but should I attempt a pie-nic speech it might lead me to “plead a case” and imagine my hearers a jury.” His remarks were brilliant and added much to the interest of the occasion. Next followed in reply Prof. C. E. Gates, who interested the friends in his peculiar style, referring to his early life, and a number of his associates, now occupying noble positions in life, who were fed on the rye bread of Aylesford plains, &c., and closed with the following touching words, “It fell to my lot to do the driving about. Whenever I returned home late at night, and was expected, I always saw, shining through these pines, a light in the window, and found mother waiting for me. That light has long since gone out, the house removed and all is darkness there. Yet the light is still shining on the other shore. Whatever of success in life has attended us is owing to its influence. May we as a family, and you, our friends, meet the dear ones of earth, now waiting for us in that “better land” to part no more.”

Enoch Gates, Esq., spoke in a most touching manner. Tears filled the eyes of nearly all present as he spoke of the past. Among other things he said, “My intimate acquaintance with the parents and grandparents enables me to refer to their good deeds and self-denial for the comfort and happiness of others. Their house was always a welcome home for ministers of all denominations, as they traversed the valley on their mission of mercy in the early history of this country.”

Elkanah, Wilmot, and G. O. Gates declined making remarks, preferring others to occupy the time. Lastly Willard, the brother who had been absent the longest, made a short but appropriate speech, concluding by saying:—“I wish you all a safe and pleasant passage over the river to the other shore.”

Thanks to James Gates, Esq., and family for the use of grounds, were proposed and heartily responded to, after which the company separated, just after the sun had sunk from view behind the western horizon, feeling doubtless well pleased with the afternoon's entertainment.

Wednesday was spent in the house in Farmington, owned and occupied by the father for a number of years prior to his decease. The Rev. Dr. Topper, the old family minister, happened to be present, en route for the Convention, and took dinner with the boys; after dinner the Rev. Doctor called the family together as in former times, read a chapter, sung together “Nearer my God, to thee,” then bowed around the family altar, probably, as he said, “the last time together on earth.” Thus vividly bringing to mind scenes of childhood and early associations.—The doctor spoke of being intimately acquainted with the parents, they having been his pupils in his day-school some sixty years before.

Thus do we observe the love of home and early associations pervading the hearts of absent Nova Scotia children, even after a term of years.

What is true of this family, is also doubtless true of many more now far away from their much-loved native land.

Yours truly,

TWO TIN.

For the Christian Messenger.

BAPTISED FOR THE DEAD.

[The discussion of this subject in our columns has not, we believe, been without interest and benefit to many of our readers, but we had no idea that it would have extended to such length. We did not expect or intend to insert any further communications after what last appeared, but as we always prefer to give a good measure of liberty to our correspondents, especially to those who differ from ourselves, rather than place undue restrictions, we have concluded to insert the following. We do not apprehend that Mr. Chipman will wish to prolong the discussion—by offering anything further in reply.—Ed. C. M.]

MR. EDITOR,—

When I showed you, according to promise, my first article on “Baptized for the dead,” and asked you if you would care to insert it in the Christian Messenger, and you expressed your willingness to do so, I had no idea that it would evoke such hostile criticism, and ill-natured references to my belief on certain points, as you have published over the signature of “A. Chipman.” Will it never be that a clergyman can give his views of a sect and express his dissent from those held by another person, without the proverbial odium theologium cropping out?

Admitting that my “belief in spiritual death will not bear ‘sanctuary’ or ‘logical weight;’” that I “must squarely meet and disclaim my well known views of death and the expressed views of my sect” (?) before “discerning readers” (like friend Chipman.) will believe me consistent or sincere —in saying that I do believe in spiritual death; admitting also that I “recently expressed in print that spiritual beings” —the angels and Christ, for example—are material, substantial beings; and that I “may look sneeringly at human titles.” (a peculiar fault, that!) “or speak slightly of the learned Biblical interpreters.” that I am a “Unitarian;” do not believe in “eternal misery;” and in a good many other doctrines you and he deem orthodox; admitting that all Mr. C's statements with regard to me and my “absurd belief” were true, why should he refer to those things in criticising my article on “Baptized for the dead?” He well knows that your columns could not be made the vehicle of a defence of what I either believe or disbelieve as far as such belief or disbelief is accounted erroneous by Baptists and Evangelical christians generally. Was it then manly, or fair, I will not say Christ-like, to refer at all to matters outside of the subject under consideration?

To return now to my text: Mr. Chipman seeks to make the impression on his readers that his view is that of a “majority of the best Biblical interpreters;” and then of course, the idea of presuming to differ,—absurd! “A majority is a fine thing to be on the side of in this age; I am content, however, to be on the side of a very small minority;—a minority of one, so far as writers on “baptized for the dead” are concerned. But what a learned man Mr. Chipman must be to know so as to believe that he has the large majority of the best biblical interpreters to back him? I am curious to know who constitutes his majority. What little I have had of the people's views of the passage has led me to believe that the “learned” did not profess to be at all sure as to what Paul meant. Doctor Adam Clarke calls it “the most difficult passage in the New Testament;” and, as stated in my last communication, looks at baptized as I do.

Professors Stuart and Robinson also, according to The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, regard baptized as meaning to overwhelm with suffering. Yet they failed, as did Dr. Adam Clarke, to see the meaning of “overwhelmed in sufferings for the dead.” What it means I have shown. The same work further says: “The argument of St. Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 29). If the dead rise not at all, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, has excited many different ideas in the minds of interpreters. Bochart has collected no less than fifteen senses in which it has been understood, or rather in which learned men have confessed that they did not understand it.” The italics are mine. It thus appears that the “learned,” who include Mr. Chipman's “majority,” doubtless, have confessed by giving Paul's four Greek words fifteen different interpretations, that they have not understood them. If any one will prove that my exposition is one of the fifteen, I will confess it is probably erroneous. How strange that the learned have failed to discern the powerful argument for the resurrection in the apostle's question, “What