

DEACON BROWN ON THE MINISTER'S SALARY.

Elder Swan had decided to leave the church. I remember father wanted him to stay and nearly everybody did, too; but he thought he must go; so he preached his farewell sermon and went.

The church sought for a minister and finally one came who seemed to suit; but he said he could not live on the salary; and then the people found out that Elder Swan had had a hard time of it.

Father and Deacon Brown were going home from the church meeting, and father asked the deacon to come in. They got to talking about the salary of ministers and Deacon Brown said: "Elder Swan ought to have spoken up. I don't know but we could have raised a leetle more for him, and yet I don't know as we could. When it comes to the minister's salary the people have idees of their own, and their idees of salary are quite peculiar, I guess they think the parson is the Lord's man and somehow the Lord will look after him. Or else they are very thoughtful; the good book says, 'The love of money is the root of all evil; and, of course, they want to keep him from evil.

"Do you know, I've often thought I'd like to be a minister, because it must cultivate about all the graces. I heerd a man say once that humility was the last grace any of us gets; but I should think a minister'd get his before his first pastorate is through. His pride can't get very high on his low salary. He can't get covetous, for it wouldn't do no good; and to be meek and lowly would naturally follow five hundred a year. If he don't get all the graces will developed in him, the the soil is no good, that's sertain sure.

"But if I was going to be a minister, I'd want to be a Yankee one, 'cause they've got faculty, and if a parson don't know how to manage in these times, he's as helpless as an old maid at a wedding; all he can do is fuss. The old farmer that got a living on a backhill farm that wouldn't raise much but blackberries and alder bushes somehow put into his children the get-alongness that will make ends meet on five hundred a year in these times. And that's one good thing about a backhill farm.

"Do you know, I got to thinking over how much we ask of a minister after all. He must dress well, for if he don't then his people are ashamed of him for he is their pastor. They want a prince Albert minister on a cellulod-collar salary. His wife must dress well or she becomes an object of pity. His children must go away to school or he won't be doing his duty by them. He must buy books or he will get behind the times and be called ignorant. He must go to the associations and conventions or his church will feel he's not doing his duty by the state. He must give liberally to all the benevolences so as to set a good example. He must keep an open house or he'll not be thought hospitable. He must keep his hoss fed up or his sermons won't feed a soul in his audience. He must keep his bills paid or he won't have any standing. How in the world he does it is more'n I know. Guess he's a kind of magician. You know down in the hall last winter a feller come along, a kind of sleight of hand feller. Well, sir! He could do more tricks to bamfoozle ye than a smart aunt could to a fussy baby. I remember one thing he did, he borrowed Deacon Giles' hat and he rolled up his sleeves and took the hat in one hand and stuck the other into the hat and soon out came a mile and a half of fancy paper, a toy balloon, a rubber doll, about three bushels of feathers, a half dozen nand-

kerchiefs, a pack of cards and a canary cage with a bird in it. You ought to have seen the deacon's face when the cards came out. Well, sir, to this day I don't know how he got all that stuff out of that hat. And I've sometimes thought the minister, living on five hundred in these times, can put his hand in his hat somehow and whirl it around a few times and bring out his wife's dresses and his children's clothes and his new books and his weekly paper and his boots and shoes and his sugar and molasses and the candy for the baby and a happy heart with a song in it.

"And if he don't get it out of his hat I don't see where he does get it.

"And it hain't only his work, but sermons, too. They want some big preaching on some pretty small pay. Yes, sir, a lot of churches are crying for beef steak sermons on cold hash wages. I've heerd something lately about plain living and high thinking. If that philosophy is true it must be a pile of wonderful sermons being fired off in small villages in these times.

"If I was a minister, I believe I'd go up to the association and move that all the ministers turn book agents and go from door to door all over the parish, ringing door bells and pounding on front doors and peddling books, books, books; and you know next to muskeeters and bedbugs; book agents are about the biggest pest a goin'; but we'd get a living, if we did pester folks to get it.

"And then folks that pay the least find the most fault generally. Pay about ten cents a week to the Lord and then find fault with the Lord's servants sermons. They make me think of old Dave Ramsey's shot gun. Dave goes hunting about once a year; but he don't get nothing, for he can't shoot the pesky thing. Can't git it only one grain at a time and by the time he gits the thing primed the game he's after is over in the next country. If the parson gits the text jammed into them leetle fellars' noodles, he's doing well, let alone a sermon; and by the time he gits the text crowded into them small quarters it'll be time for the benediction. Can't put only a gill into a gill cup; and yet them leetle gill-cup fellars want a ten gallon sermon. It would bust 'em sure if it could git a leetle way in.

"You know there's a lot of them that love to sing, 'Salvation 's free for you and me; Praise God, salvation 's free.' And some folks, that never sing much and say they can't carry a tune even, sing on that and sing the loudest. Guess it touches the heart somehow. But I wonder how long they'd sing if it ran, Butter and eggs is free; butter and eggs is free; and do you suppose they'd sing the next line?

"I kind of believe God can get along somehow with a weak man and a frail man and even a stumbling man; but I jest believe old grumbler and a stingy man would have a hard time with God.

"Then some churches are a good deal like Silas Watkins. He got that leetle, backhill farm, where he lives, and started in and he didn't have nothing to start on; so he picked up a hoss—I guess that's what you could call it—and his wife's folks give him a couple of cows and he started in to break up the land and sell milk and do it all with that leetle old apology for a hoss, and when the leetle old thing wasn't running on Sile's milk route or pulling the plow or dragging the drag, his folk's was out taking a ride; till the leetle poor thing got to looking so one of the selectmen went up and told Sile to either feed that hoss or kill it one or t'ther. And some churches put the parson in 'tween the fills of the gospel wagon and set him calling all over the parish, and a teach-

ing and a preaching, and when he hain't a goin' it a calling or a preaching or a teaching, then they're all in the wagon a riding; and all the time he's tugging and pulling they're riding in the wagon singing, 'Come ye that love the Lord and let your joys be known; we're marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion.' And that's about the way they march,, too."

Father said, "Well, deacon, I guess there's some truth in what you've said."

"I guess there is, too. And do you know I never thought of it much, until Elder Swan left and then that new man came and said he couldn't live on the salary. I laid awake a lot that night and it came to me then a good deal like I've told it to you now."

"What do you think we'd better do?"

"Well, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to first to blame myself for not seeing t all before; and then next I'm going in for endowed ministers. I've heerd of endowed colleges and endowed chairs, but I'm going in for endowed ministers; and then I'm going to boost on the parson's salary, for you know I kind of think we've been a good deal like the old deacon up to the Centre; he prayed to the Lord for his minister and he said, 'O Lord, you keep him humble and we'll keep him poor.'"

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TWO SIDES OF THE CASE.

Let me tell you a little story I heard Bishop Joyce relate. At a certain annual conference a committee of about fifteen men from a prominent church waited on him and said:

"Bishop, we must have a new preacher."

"What's the matter with the one you have?" asked the Bishop.

From different ones he got these answers: "He's not much of a preacher and our church must have a strong man in the pulpit." "He dosen't visit as much as he might." "The young people don't seem to take to him." "He dosen't take the interest in the Sabbath school he ought." "He's nothing of a financier." It was astonishing how many weak points the brethren found in that poor soul. They were as numerous as his strong points would have been had he been an old spavined horse they were trying to work off on the bishop.

He listened to them attentively to the end, and then said: "Brethren, you have made me pretty well acquainted with your minister. Now I would like to know something about you."

And then he sent around the circle, from man to man, a series of truly heart-searching questions: "Do you say grace at the table?" Yeas, eight; Nays, seven. "Do you have family worship?" Yeas, one; Nays, fourteen. "How many nights did you attend the special services your preacher held?" A few had attended nearly every night, others had attended scatteringly, while the majority had been too busy to get out a single night. "Do you go to the Lord's table?" Yeas, ten; Nays, five. "Do you pray every day for your minister?" Nays, fifteen.

Then the Bishop said: "Let us pray." They got on their knees, and he said he told the Lord a lot of things about them it was not necessary to mention. When they arose from their knees the chairman of the committee who *wasn't* a bad man at heart, and who, happily, had a sense of humor, said, with a smile: "Bishop, we see the point. Send us back the man we have, and there will be a different story to tell a year from now."—*Christian Advocate*.