

BAPTIST NOEL ON THE MAINTENANCE OF CHRISTIAN PASTORS.

[Having cited from the New Testament a series of passages relating to the maintenance of Christian pastors, Mr. Noel thus contrasts the opposite system]:—

“Upon a review of these passages it appears,—

- 1. That it is the will of Christ that there should be pastors for the churches, and evangelists to preach the gospel to the whole world.
2. That Christ has commanded each church to maintain its pastor when possible.
3. That if a church be too poor, other churches ought to aid.
4. That the churches should likewise support evangelists who preach to the heathen.
5. That Christ has committed to his universal church the duty of supporting his ministers throughout the world.
6. That if in any case a pastor or evangelist cannot obtain adequate support from his Christian brethren, that he may labour in any secular calling for his own maintenance.

It is obvious that there is a marked contrast between the system which Christ has ordained for the maintenance of His ministers, and that which has been preferred by the Anglican churches under the Union.

According to the law of Christ, the pastor is to be maintained by the zeal of the church; according to the Union, he is maintained by Act of Parliament.

According to the law of Christ, he should be maintained by the believers; according to the Union, he is maintained by persons of every class, including Roman Catholics, Unitarians, infidels and profligates.

According to the law of Christ, he should be maintained by those who contribute of their own property; according to the Union, the state has voted away the property of others to maintain him.

According to the law of Christ, all the offerings made for his support should be free; by the Union, they are paid under the terror of distraint.

The moral influences of these two systems for the support of the ministers of Christ are very opposite.

The system appointed by Christ is the most just, because, according to it, those only pay for instruction who receive it; while, according to the Anglican system, all must pay, whether they receive it or not.

The system appointed by Christ calls Christians to pay, who pay freely, because they have a debt to discharge, both to Christ and to their pastors; whereas the Anglican system forces many to pay who would refuse it if they could.

The system appointed by Christ exercises the faith and love of believers, who thus make a grateful offering to him; but the Anglican system extorts from unbelievers, by fear of the law, a tax which is reluctantly paid to the State.

The system appointed by Christ is much more for the comfort of a pious minister, because he can receive with thankfulness and joy what his brethren contribute with liberality and affection, in duty to Christ and in justice to him; while, under the Anglican system, he must extort his income, by force of law, from those who, possibly, cure both him and his religion while they pay it.

The system appointed by Christ tends to attract both ministers and people to each other, since, under it, ministers receiving their support from the affection of their flocks, feel grateful for it, and the people find that to do a kindness is as much a source of affection as to receive it; but the Anglican system alienates both parties, the pastor having to complain of arrears and of evasions of payment, while the flock are tempted to think their shepherd selfish and severe.

The system of Christ, demanding the support of the pastors from those only who appreciate the value of the truth and contribute freely, attracts ungodly persons to hear the gospel without money and without price; but the Anglican system, which taxes them for what they disbelieve or despise, shuts their ears against the truth.

The system of Christ manifests to the world the power of religion, which they can in some degree measure by the sacrifices which Christians freely make for its support; while the Anglican system makes the world believe that Christians are as selfish and as covetous as they are themselves, and would not support their pastors unless they were forced to do so.

Lastly, according to the system appointed by Christ, the best ministers are generally the

best supported, because Christians can appreciate grace as well as gifts in their pastors; but, under the Anglican system, the richest livings go to those who are related to patrons, and thus the worst ministers are frequently the best paid, and the churches are beset with those who have sought the ministry only for its emoluments.

If these observations are correct, Christians who allow their pastors to be paid by the State, disregard the will of Christ; impeach his wisdom; neglect their duty; injure their Christian characters; manifest a worldly selfishness by seeking to escape from a just remuneration for services received; beg alms for Christ's officers from Christ's enemies; excite prejudice against the gospel in the minds of irreligious tithe-prayers; impair the use of the ministry; place the ministers of Christ under the pay and influence of ungodly persons; and proclaim to the world, that the disciples of Christ cannot maintain his worship and publish his truth, unless worldly men and unbelievers of every class will help them. It deserves, therefore, the most serious consideration of Christian ministers and of Christian churches, whether they should not at once abandon a system so dishonourable to the gospel, and return to that which rests on the authority of Christ.

WOMAN'S SPHERE.

THAT there is a sphere of action peculiar to woman, and for which she is specially adapted, is what but few doubt, and what fewer openly deny. There are those, indeed, who assert that she is adapted to the sternest hardships of commercial life, and that she is entitled to the highest honors of civil government. They would have her display her powers in the pulpit, at the bar, and on the forum; and exercise an intellectual sway by the unfolding of her thought, and the flash of her wit, and the glow of her eloquence, in public assemblies. They would place her in the councils of the State, and in the halls of legislation. They deny that there is anything peculiar in her relation to the duties of active life,—that she is entitled to all the civil rights, political honors, literary stations, and social pre-eminence, which have hitherto been exclusively awarded to man. We have seen woman acting on this strange and almost monstrous assumption. We have heard her voice in the public gatherings of the people, and while we have been forced to admit, and admire, her intellectual strength—to see the sparkling of her wit, and to thrill with the power of her eloquence,—no fascination which she has been able to impose upon us has succeeded in impressing us with the conviction that that is the appropriate sphere of her operation. We look upon her as a brilliant star, wildly shooting from her orbit, dazzling the beholder, and yet tarnishing and destroying her own lustre. The woman who takes such a view of her position must not forget that, if she be entitled to the public distinctions of man, she must also be subject to the more humble and degrading toils which our social system assigns him. If she teach in our temples, and shine in our courts, and deliberate in our legislatures, and decide in our cabinets, she must also delve in our mines, sweat in our fields, tunnel our mountains, and excavate our canals. If she stand on the eminence of our political distinction, she should not shrink to stoop to our social humiliation. The right to enjoy our honors, involves the obligation to bear our burdens.—And in this view who would claim that the sphere in which we move, is the appropriate sphere of woman? and what woman would wish to assert her right to be, to society, what man is?

But in the material organism of woman,—in the structure of her body—in her physical weakness,—we can see clear and unmistakable evidence that nature never designed her for the pelting storms and rude jousts of the outward world. She was intended for more quiet and secluded scenes, though not for less responsible duties. The teaching of revelation only seconds and confirms the indications of nature. The instructions which St. Paul desired to have communicated to young women in reference to their social position and theatre of duty, was, that they should be “discreet, chaste, keepers at home.” These words unfold the true sphere of woman's influence and action. Her theatre of exertion is the Home. This is her kingdom; and here she may erect her throne, and sway her sceptre. For such a dominion Providence

designed her, and for this the Creator has richly qualified her. And what a sphere of action is this! How grand in itself, and how imposing in view of its tendencies and results! Home! What associations gather around that word! With what a power it thrills the soul! What an impress it stamps on the intellectual and moral man!

Let not woman say that we have assigned her a narrow, restricted, and insignificant sphere of action. It is unbounded in its influence on the social and civil institutions of mankind. It takes hold of the deepest consequences, and leads to the sublimest results. Who rules here, presides over the fountains of thought and intelligence, and touches the springs which give motion to the world. Who controls the homes of mankind, fixes their destiny. Here woman wields a sway mightier than the sceptre of earth's lordliest despot.—She implants the germ of those principles which are to give character to society, and to fix its institutions. For the influences which are to perpetuate or to destroy our national blessings, we should look, not to virtue or corruption in high places, but to the elements which are developed in our homes. Our security is not to be found in the efficiency of our navies, nor in the impregnableness of our fortresses, nor in the valor and discipline of our armies: the salvation of this land is to be the result of the principles inculcated and fixed in its homes. Every home is a fortress; and until these are subjected to ignorance, and lawlessness, and passion, there is safety; but when these seeds of anarchy and ruin are allowed to grow here, all is lost. Of all these interests,—the interests which cluster around the home—woman is the appropriate guardian, and the only efficient conservator.

The sphere of woman is, then, in the walks of social life. Amid the scenes of this life she is to move, and here her potent influence is to be felt. She gives the touch which sends the impulse of life and action along the electric wires of thought through all the ramifications of communities and nations.—Rev. J. N. Murdock's Address at Albion.

THE SPIRIT OF TRADE.

One of the causes conducive to the low state of religion in the churches, is the spirit of modern trade. The truth and caution of the following passage from James' 'Church in Earnest,' illustrating this point, are commended to the reader:

Now there never was, in the history of the world, an age or a country, in which the spirit of trade was more urgent, than it is in this land, and in our day. We are the greatest trading, manufacturing, and commercial country, not only that now is, but that ever was. Tyre, Carthage, Phœnicia, and Venice, were mere pedlars compared with Britain.—Ours is the mart of nations; the emporium of the world. Such a state of things affects us all. Scarcely any stand so remote from the scene of busy activity as not to feel the impulse, and to catch the spirit. All push into the contest for wealth; and hope to gain a prize of greater or less value. Education has raised up many from the lower walks, and wealth has attracted many down from the higher walks, to the level of the trading portion of the community; while population, as is natural in such a state of things, has gone on increasing. What is the result? Just what might have been expected,—a keen and eager competition for business, beyond any former precedent. Every trade, every profession, every branch of manufacture, or of commerce, seems overstocked, and every department of action over-crowded. See what must follow—time is so occupied that men have scarcely an hour in a week for thoughtfulness, reading the Scriptures, and prayer—the head, the heart, and hands, are so full of secular matters, that there is no room for God, Christ, salvation, and eternity—competition is so keen and eager, that to get business, the whatsoever things are true, and just, and honest, and lovely, and of good report, are trampled under foot, and conscientiousness is forgotten or destroyed. If these efforts are successful, and wealth flows in, and the tradesman rapidly rises in society, then he is, perhaps, destroyed by prosperity. In addition to all this, what an inconceivable amount of mischief has been inflicted by the gambling system of speculation, which, though not set up, has been stimulated by the railway schemes. What multitudes have plunged into the gulf of perdition, which yawns beneath those who have taken up the resolution of the men that will be rich, and who are determined to en-

counter the many foolish and hurtful lusts which beset their path! Religion becomes a flat, insipid, and abstract thing, amidst all the excitement produced by such pursuits. Even the Sabbath-day hardly serves its purpose as a season of respite and repose, given to arrest the eagerness of pursuit after wealth, and to loosen, for a while, the chain that binds man to earth; and is passed with an impatience that says, 'When will it be over, that we may buy and sell and get gain?' Of what use are sermons to those whose minds and hearts are intent upon their speculations or their business? And even the voice of prayer, which calls them into the presence of God, calls them not away from their secularities.—Their Father's house is made a house of merchandise, and the Holy of Holies a place of traffic. As soon might you expect a company of gamblers to lay down their cards, and, with the stakes yet undecided before their eyes, listen with attention to a homily or prayer, as some professing Christians do to join with reverence in the devotions of the Sabbath, or to hear with interest the voice of the preacher. The spirit of trade thus carried on, is flattening the religion that is left, and is preventing more from being produced.

The great object of life to those professing Christians who have the opportunity, seems to be, to become rich. Their chief end does not appear to be so much to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever, as to obtain and enjoy the world. Wealth is the centre of their wishes, the point to which their desires appear to preserve an invariable tendency. How many who have named the name of Christ, and avouched him to be all their salvation, and all their desire, still make gold their hope, and say unto fine gold, Thou art my confidence. Jehovah is the God of their creed, but Mammon is the god of their hearts. Part of one day only, they profess to worship in the sanctuary of religion, and all the other six days of the week they are devout adorers of the god of wealth. Professing Christians! it is this worldly spirit that blights your hopes—that chills religion to the very heart—that withers your graces—that poisons your comforts, and blasts the fame of your Redeemer's kingdom. While this spirit pervades the professing people of God, vital godliness will not only be low, but will remain so. How can it be otherwise than that the church will appear covered with the dust of the earth, and robbed of her heavenly glory, while there are few to weep over the woes of Jerusalem—few who struggle for her prosperity, who are affected by her reproach, or are jealous for her honor? Let us, then, be duly impressed with the fact that in this country and in this age, trade is contending with religion for the universal dominion over men's minds, hearts, and consciences, and that, according to present appearances, there is no small danger of the victory being gained by the former. Christians, take the alarm!

The Precious Thoughts of God.

The object which interests us most, is oftenest present to our thoughts. The man to whom wealth is a primary object, has his thoughts constantly occupied with his plans for its acquisition. He who is absent from the home of his affections, finds his thoughts continually turning thitherward. How often is the distant circle thus visited! How precious the thoughts thus awakened!

There are those whose thoughts as naturally and constantly turn towards God. There are those to whom the thoughts of God are precious. Every object which they behold, and every event which occurs, awakens within them thoughts of God. The aspirations of their hearts point to the same great theme. Even amid the hurry of business, the thoughts of God will find entrance, and in the solitude they fill the soul. Such persons can say with David, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!"

Reader, do you belong to this class? Do your thoughts turn habitually and with delight towards God? Do you see him in every object in nature, and recognize his hand in every change that occurs? Are the thoughts of God precious to you, and is their number great?

There are those of whom it may be said, that God is not in all their thoughts. He who made them, and has hitherto had mercy on them, is forgotten! Will such be admitted into his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and have a seat at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore?—N. Y. Observer.