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SENSATION IN UNITARIAN PARISH CHURCH FAIRS AND SUPPERS GRAFT AND BLACKMAIL, SAYS MINISTER

*The Rev. E. C. Davis
Has Church Give
Them up.*

*Pittsfield Man Has
\$300 Cut from
His Salary.*

[Special Dispatch to the Boston Herald.]
PITTSFIELD, Jan. 20, 1907. "Church suppers for revenue as they have been conducted at the Unity Church are a light form of graft. The sale of tickets for such suppers and fairs to those who really don't want them is a sort of blackmail."

Thus the Rev. Earl C. Davis, pastor of the Unity Church in this city, characterized the efforts made to help raise money to pay his salary.

Mr. Davis graduated from Bowdoin College in 1897 and from the Harvard divinity school in 1904, for five years was principal of the high school in Billerica, and while a student at Harvard he preached every Sunday in Wellesley.

At a special parish meeting Thursday night the Rev. Mr. Davis submitted a statement in which he asked the church to give up these "suppers for revenue" and the fairs, and it was so voted without opposition.

The minister asked to have \$300 clipped off his salary of \$1100 and to be given the privilege of doing clerical work in the production department of the Stanley Electric Company for eight hours each day. That request was also granted.

In an interview with The Herald correspondent Mr. Davis said:

"I intend to take one evening a week for parish calls, and I have an arrangement with the Stanley Electric Company which will allow me to get away for weddings and funerals. As for finding time to write sermons, I never do that now, speaking entirely without notes."

"I am accustomed to hard work. While in the divinity school at Harvard I did 2½ years' work in two years; I was president of the National Association of Unitarian Workers, preached every Sunday at a Unitarian church in Wellesley

REV. E. C. DAVIS, WHO HAS
PROTESTED AGAINST
CHURCH FAIRS.



and did a lot of work outside in addition.

"For a long time I have regarded the suppers as given at Unity Church to help pay my salary as a light form of graft. I have been anxious to make a change and was pleased with the unanimous vote of the parish. It means for the church a higher moral and ethical standard."

In a statement read by the Rev. Mr. Davis at the parish meeting he said about himself:

"I do not wish to force my own feelings upon you unduly, but it seems to me somewhat lacking in self-respect for a man 30 years old, 6 feet tall and in weight 175 pounds to have his salary paid in part by the hard work of women at church suppers and fairs."

"In the first place, you contribute about everything that makes up the supper. Then you come here and work until you are so tired that by the time the last thing is cleared away you are well nigh willing to say that you hope never to see the church again. When the smoke has cleared away you have made about \$30 or less."

"Now comes the relation of these suppers to the community. I do not know to what extent our church is guilty in this matter, but I know that the merchants of the city have found it necessary to protect themselves against such institutions in general and refuse to buy tickets. One man told me that each year in his office they spend from \$75 to \$100 for tickets to different suppers and entertainments to which they never go."

"The tickets are bought not because of any interest in the particular event, but so that the seller may not be offended. It is, in short, a sort of blackmail. I think that a church ought to support itself in some other way or cease to be."

"Now, as for the fairs. To set up a temporary store and urge people to come in to buy, whether they need the things or not, seems to me rather a questionable proceeding. For the sake of maintaining the dignity and integrity of the church let us discontinue these customs. A church that is not self-respecting and independent is a despicable institution."

By vote of the parish it was decided

*Will Work as
to Help Get
Money.*

*Believes Parish Will
Have High Moral
Tone.*

to make up by subscriptions what will be lacking now in church supper revenues. Unity Church has 110 members. Before the Rev. Mr. Davis became its pastor it received from \$400 to \$600 a year from the Massachusetts Unitarian Association, but the present pastor made it independent of that organization.

The Rev. Mr. Davis came to Pittsfield in March, 1905. He is married and has one child.

In The
Smoker's Alphabet
The Favorite Letters Are
C.C.A.
A 10 Cent Cigar
"A Little Better
Than Any Other"