

THE MINISTER AND THEOLOGY.

In view of recent discussions the following wise words by Professor F. G. Peabody, (Unitarian), Harvard University, are well worth pondering.

They occur in a sermon published by "The Homiletic Review" for October, 1906. The position taken by Professor Peabody seems to us to be the only rational one. Unless a man is well trained in theology he will lack strength in his preaching; and very much that is pretty and interesting will fail of great effect if intellectual energy and Spiritual power are lacking.

Professor Peabody says:

"A minister stands for a speciality. His office is the maintenance of the religious life. He is to preach about God. Now it is possible that he should strengthen his own religious conviction through the literature of art or science or bell-letters, but he is certainly not thus approaching most directly to his theme. He is not doing what other specialists do, or what commands the respect of other specialists. Knowing little of theology he will easily fall into the ranks of those who think there is little to know, just as smatterers in science are the first to offer hasty judgments and easy ridicule concerning scientific affairs. Add to this the strength contributed to any mind by contact with quiet and comprehensive thinkers in one's own calling. Whether one is to agree or not with the great philosophers and theologians, it is from them that he will get both his intellectual grasp and his intellectual modesty. Still further, no mistake could be greater than to suppose that devotion to professional studies is what makes dull, metaphysical or essay-writing preachers. The simple fact is that the great preachers of the Christian church have been its great theologians. Augustine, Anselm, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Maurice, Chalmers, Newman, Channing—these men at the same time revived the preaching of the church and re-modeled its theology. The one function did not exclude the other. On the contrary, ample learning permitted simplicity of speech. It is so with every preacher. He must have a background not of sentimentalism or poetry, or of the affairs of the day, but of well ordered knowledge concerning the proper themes of his calling; and if he has not habitually addressed his mind to these themes, then he may sent, imentalize or entertain or discuss as he will, but he will not for any length of time mislead a community into the belief that he has a right to stand before them as the interpreter of the ways of a living God."

These are golden words and need the careful attention of young ministers. There is many a man who became weak and poor as a preacher because in the early years of his ministry he neglected hard, steady and severe thinking.

We notice that Premier Whitney is being bitterly assailed for appointing Dr. C. B. Couaghan, a Roman Catholic, as Superintendent of Belleville Institute for the Deaf and Dumb. The attacks, in our judgment, are unwarranted. If the new superintendent is a capable man his religion should be no bar to the position. It is claimed that Dr. Couaghan has unique qualifications for the office, and later on it will probably be found that the appointment is a good one, notwithstanding the noise at present made by interested parties.

SPAIN AND THE VATICAN.

It is a singular coincidence that what were once the two strongest Catholic Powers in Europe should now be synchronously in conflict with the Roman Church. We have already explained the situation in France, says the Christian Work. As to Spain it is to be noted that the Concordat, which established the relations between the Catholic Church and the Spanish State, provides for a much more intimate union than did the Napoleonic document whose abrogation has created such a storm in France. There is as yet no movement in the Peninsula for the adoption of a policy at all analogous to that of the present French Government, but there are ample signs that at the coming session of the Spanish Cortes proposals will be introduced on behalf of the Liberal Ministry which, without the exercise of the most prudent statesmanship and moderation, may plunge the country in to a bitter controversy, and may ultimately lead to a severance of the historic bond between the Bourbon dynasty and the Church. As matters stand at present, friction has arisen between certain of the ecclesiastical authorities and the secular arm of the State over questions comparatively trivial. Some of these relate to the regulations governing civil marriages and to the control of cemeteries. Under the Spanish Constitution the Church is constrained in certain rights of control, but it is claimed that the Liberal Cabinets have nullified these privileges, and are intent on rendering others of no effect without the formality of constitutional amendments. It is easy to see now such a policy might provoke friction, and an instance of the bad feeling already existing was given a few days ago, when one of the Spanish bishops protested so vehemently against the position of the State on the question of the legality of civil marriages that he was threatened with prosecution. The proposed new law of associations, a name which has unpleasant associations in the minds of churchmen, a summary of which has been cabled from Madrid, and which is to be laid before the Cortes, which assembles this week, sounds about as drastic as it well could be. The point which has yet to be established is whether the Spanish Cabinet is strong enough to carry through a policy so markedly anticlerical as indicated by that program. The trouble may yet be adjusted, but existing indications are that in Spain is to be involved in a struggle no unlike that in progress across the Pyrenees. The situation is serious. Certain it is, the unsatisfactory status of the questions at issue, and the steps which the government has recently taken against the religious orders which have not complied with the legal formalities as to the registration and nationality of teachers, the holding of property, etc., have created a state of tension extremely dangerous to the good relations which should exist between two arms of government so intimately united by the fundamental law of the realm and the traditions of the Spanish nation.

FIFTY YEARS A MINISTER.

The Reverend Dr. Wm. T. McMullen, for forty-six years minister of Knox church, Woodstock, yesterday celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. There are few of the fathers of Presbyterianism in Canada who have wielded a wider influence than the minister of Knox. Especially in the introduction of Bible readings into Ontario schools and in the preservation of the Sabbath as a day of rest has his work been of great value to the people.

Dr. McMullen was born in Monaghan, Ireland, in 1831, and when a lad of twelve came to Canada with his parents. He was educated at Fergus and in Knox College, from which he graduated in 1856. He has had but two changes in the fifty intervening years. Millbank and Knox church, Woodstock. He was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in 1888. Dr. McMullen retires from the pulpit of Knox with the knowledge that he has the love and esteem of his people in a degree only possible in the case of those bound together by life-long relations.—The Globe.

In speaking at the opening of a Sanitary Association Congress, held recently at Blackpool, England, Sir James Chrichton-Browne, a celebrated English physician, touched upon the vice of gambling in Great Britain. Seldom has the great vice of the Englishman received a more scathing rebuke than he gave it, especially when we remember that he spoke, not from the moral or religious point of view, but altogether from the hygienic and physical. We quote a sentence or two: "Outside of a convict prison, the next best place in which to see the English physiognomy at its worst was the platform of a metropolitan railway station on the day of a suburban race-meeting, when the special trains are starting. There one beheld a pushing, chaffing crowd of bookmakers and betting men, with features more forbidding than were to be seen in any other voluntary assemblage of Englishmen. On most of the faces could be detected the grin of greed, on many the leer of low cunning, on some the stamp of positive rascality. One turned away convinced of the demoralizing and dehumanizing effects of betting. Apart from any puritanical prepossessions but out of a conviction of its mischievous consequences from a sanitary point of view, he would do his best to eliminate that adulteration from wholesome recreation." Does not this description of the habits of the race-course fit such gatherings wherever they are seen?

Dr. D. E. Knowles, whose new book "The Undertow" has just been published in ready to a representative of the *Post-Register*, said:

"Where has the 'Undertow' its origin?" he was asked.

"It is a story of Canadian life."

"What is the meaning of the name?"

"The 'Undertow' is intended to represent the struggle that all nobler natures have against the perilous drift of hidden passions. I had the book nearly half written before I hit upon the name. I felt at once that no other could be so suitable."

"Is the book the same size as St. Cuthbert's?"

"About sixty pages larger."

"Do you think it is likely to go?"

"I don't know. You can never tell, but the publishers and their critics seem to think it is superior to 'St. Cuthbert's.' The first edition in the States is to be ten thousand copies."

By the thousands who enjoyed 'St. Cuthbert's' there will be no little anxiety to see 'The Undertow,' Mr. Knowles' second bid for a large constituency of readers.