

## Our Contributors.

### STUDENT PREACHERS AND MINISTERS' WIVES.

BY KNOXIAN.

A Free Church minister's wife writes an interesting article in the *British Weekly* on "My Student Preachers." It is a companion article to one recently published by another minister's wife on "My Probationers." The good lady seems to have found the students rather nice young men and the duty of entertaining them somewhat pleasant. But let her tell the story herself:

When I was about to take up the role of entertaining preachers, I was warned to take good care of them, as the receptions at different manses were sometimes the subject of gossip next week at college. I have tried to keep this in mind, and have never found it a difficult task to make friends with those who were filling my husband's place. I think where the minister's wife is left behind during a prolonged holiday, it is a welcome break, as the days go on monotonously, to have a temporary head to the house and priest of the family during one or two days each week.

The good lady does not say who gave her the warning, but whoever it was, he knew something about the talents of students at college. It is a fact we believe that divinity students do sometimes rest themselves after heavy work at Home and Hodge by a little pleasant talk about their receptions at manses and other hospitable places. Why shouldn't they? Older people, yes, even grave Doctors of Divinity, do occasionally so far forget their dignity as to make remarks about how they are treated in places they visit. Not long ago we saw a Superior Court judge in a "state of mind" because he had been put into a cold room. Why should an over-worked divinity student not be allowed to make a casual observation if he is half-frozen to death in the north-east room of the house? This minister's wife was a good sensible woman, and she took good care that when her student preachers got back to college they would have a favourable story to tell.

We cannot pass from the foregoing extract without noticing the domestic duties that devolve upon the student preacher in Scotland. Besides supplying the pulpit he is supposed to act as "temporary head of the house and priest of the family." When Principal Caven wishes a student to take an appointment he may perhaps address the young man in this way: "Mr. A., would you kindly go out and supply for Dr. Boanerges and act as "a temporary head to the house and priest of the family."

The students who visited this lady's manse were fairly attentive at table. That is to say they were not more inattentive than most ministers are which may be a rather doubtful compliment:—

Ministers, as a rule, are rather absent-minded at table. I find, and now and then need to be reminded to attend to the wants of their neighbours, but the students are not more inattentive in this respect than the older brethren, and some bright exceptions cannot have this fault laid to their charge at all.

And they were not very hard to please in the matter of diet only one giving any trouble on that line:—

They are not fastidious in their tastes generally; and wisely, too, since they are visiting Free Kirk manses. Only one, that I remember now, was at all troublesome with his diet, but, as I consider that they need all possible indulgence, because of the nature of their work on the Sabbath and their newness to it, I did not look on the extra trouble as so very dreadful after all.

Reading between the lines here we think we find a suggestive question which members of the clerical profession might take into consideration. Why should a minister's work on Sabbath entitle him to give people extra trouble any more than the work of a lawyer or doctor, or any other man entitles him to give trouble? Is it because the typical minister is supposed to be so soft, so effeminate, so delicate, that he needs to be cooked and coddled before he can conduct an ordinary service?

The young men who visited this excellent lady's manse made good use of Saturday evening and Sabbath morning:—

Most of my friends—wisely, I think—take advantage of a good deal of quiet time in the study on Sabbath morning and at lunch time to go over their work for each service, but few are so shy or studious on Saturday evening as to prefer the study to a friendly chat at the dining-room fireside. They generally make use of this to learn something of the people they are to address next day, as well as to get a few hints about the usual order of the service when the minister is at home.

But none of them were as confidential as the probationer who told the manse lady about his engagement:—

Some of the reserved, studious youths I have entertained were not very communicative as to their history, but others were happy to talk of their own home life, or of their experiences in lodging; while all could find some topic of conversation—sometimes in their work at the New College, or often in some ecclesiastical news gleaned from the last number of the *British Weekly*. I have never yet, however, been made the confidante of any of their love stories, perhaps because my visitors are too wise to entangle themselves in engagements before the Manse and the Sustentation Fund are sure to them.

There is not much use in discussing the question of engagements in the abstract. Most students and other young men will get engaged when they feel like it if the other party is willing, whether the step is a wise one or not.

The closing words of the article should suggest some serious thought not only to ministers' wives but to a good many other people:—

I think that ministers' wives should feel an interest in the future of any of these student preachers whom they have had under their care; and possibly, in this way, when a few years have passed, we may be able to claim acquaintance with some of the rising stars of our Church. I think, if we know anything of our husbands' work, we must have learned that, even after years of experience in the work of the ministry, it is no light matter to face a congregation twice on the Sabbath. How much more, then, must this be true with

young fellows—some of them but "beardless laddies"—who can count the times they have donned the gown, and most likely have been working hard at their own private work in quite another direction from the subjects they are to discourse from on Sabbath! I think, as a rule, they need all the sympathy that the mistress of the manse can offer them; and, for my part, I am generally ready to stand up for most of my student visitors against any adverse criticism from their audience which may reach me during the following week; and I can do this quite honestly, because I get to know the best of them from meeting them privately too.

May all minister's wives and other good people imbibe this excellent lady's spirit and imitate her example. If they do the life of the student preacher will be relieved from several inconveniences—to put the matter mildly.

### THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

BY A CONVERTED BRAHMIN.

My child, it is not necessary to know much to please Me; it is sufficient to love much. Speak to Me as thou wouldst to a mother, if she drew thee near to her. Are there any for whom thou wouldst pray to Me? Repeat to Me the names of thy relations, thy friends. After each name add what thou wouldst have Me do for them. Ask much, ask much; I love generous souls, who forget themselves for others. Tell Me of the poor whom thou wouldst relieve, the sick whom thou hast seen suffer, the sinners thou wouldst have converted, those who are alienated from thee, whose affections thou wouldst regain.

Are there graces thou wouldst ask for thyself? Write, if thou wilt, a long list of all thou desirest, of all the needs of thy soul, and come and read it to Me.

Tell Me simply how proud thou art, how sensitive, egotistical, mean and indolent. Poor child, do not blush; there are in heaven many saints who had thy faults; they prayed to Me, and little by little their faults were corrected.

Do not hesitate to ask Me for blessings for the body and mind—for health, memory, success. I can give all things, and I always give when blessings are needed to render souls more holy.

To-day what wilt thou have, My child? If thou knewest how I long to do thee good! Hast thou any plans that occupy thee? Lay them all before Me. Dost thou wish to give pleasure to thy mother, to thy family, to those on whom thou dost depend? What wouldst thou do for them?

And for Me, hast thou no zealous thought for Me? Dost thou not wish to do a little good to the souls of thy friends who perhaps have forgotten Me? Bring me all thy failures, and I will show thee the cause of them. Hast thou not troubles? Who hath caused thee pain? Tell me all, and thou wilt finish by adding that thou wilt pardon, thou wilt forget; and I will bless thee.

Dost thou dread something painful? Is there in thy heart a vain fear which is not reasonable, but which is tormenting? Trust thyself wholly to My care, I am here. I see everything. I will not leave thee.

Hast thou not joys to make known to Me? Why dost not thou let Me share thy happiness? Tell Me what has happened since yesterday to cheer and console thee. An unexpected visit which did thee good; a fear suddenly dissipated; a success thou thoughtest thou shouldst not reach; a mark of affection, a letter, a gift which thou hast received? I have prepared it all for thee. Thou canst show thy gratitude, and give me thanks.

Art thou resolved no longer to expose thyself to this temptation? Not to finish this book which excited thy imagination? No longer to give thy friendship to a person who is not godly, and whose presence disturbs the peace of thy soul? Wilt thou go at once to do a kindness to this companion who has hurt thee? Well, my child, go now, take up thy work; be silent, humble, submissive, kind; and come back to-morrow, and bring Me a heart still more devout and loving. To-morrow I shall have more blessings for thee.

### A SCOTTISH LETTER.

MR. EDITOR,—Perhaps a few of the impressions I have received on my present visit to Scotland, after a five years' residence in Canada, may not be unacceptable to the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. On all sides there are signs of growing prosperity during the last five years. The average range of comfort has risen. Not only are the middle classes more wealthy, but the working classes seem to enjoy a higher scale of comfort than before. Railway travelling has developed considerably, and the custom of families leaving home for the summer has become much more common. There is one dark feature in the otherwise bright picture, however. The depopulation of the country districts has grown apace. Farmers are, in many places, giving up their farms, the peasantry are moving in large numbers to the towns, and a large proportion of the arable land is going out of cultivation. This state of things is deplored by many of the more thoughtful minds, and while it is admitted that free trade has been the main cause of the wealth and growth of the commerce in the country, it is feared that free trade has seriously injured the prospects of agriculture at home and has tended to lessen the number of the farmers and peasantry, who are the bone and sinew of the nation. Thus, while it is admitted on all hands, that the old days of Protection are gone never to return, there are not wanting those, especially of the more thoughtful, who advocate the adoption of a moderate revenue tariff.

I spent about a week in Edinburgh, which seemed more beautiful than ever in the lovely August weather. Travelling, even amid the fairest scenes, only opens one's eyes to see new

attractions in this charming city. A good many changes have taken place in the city during the last five years. The University buildings have now been completed by the addition of the dome, the Free Library buildings, presented by Mr. Carnegie, and the National Portrait Gallery, presented by Mr. Finlay, one of the proprietors of the *Scotsman*, are now approaching completion.

Unfortunately most of the clergymen were from town, but on the Sunday I spent in Edinburgh, I heard the Rev. Mr. Williamson, of St. Cuthbert's Church. His text was John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions," which he treated in the old graceful manner and with the sympathetic voice which have won him such popularity.

In the evening I attended the service in St. Giles Cathedral, which was filled to the very door. Here the growing desire on the part of many Presbyterians in Scotland for an ornate service was fully gratified. The prayers were all read, and the service of praise was very beautiful. The voluntary played by Mr. Hartley on the grand organ at the opening of the service was very fine. I do not know what the music was, but it seemed to me like a storm among the mountains, the tempest sweeping through the valleys and the thunder rolling in the distance.

The sermon was preached by a stranger and was in some respects disappointing. The subject was "The Rewards of Religion—spiritual not material," which he dealt with in a very clever but rather abstract way. I felt while he was preaching and making point after point, that it was a clever essay that might have been written by a student of Carlyle, but it was hardly the food with which to feed the hungry souls of men and women. At the time, Dr. Pentecost was concluding a series of meetings in Edinburgh which had proved eminently successful. By his simple preaching of the Gospel he had drawn large numbers of earnest worshippers, and I believe he has left great blessing behind.

In Edinburgh a new religious movement, a development of Christian Socialism has arisen. Wealthy individuals, and in some cases wealthy families have taken up their abode among the poorer people among whom they associate and carry on classes both secular and religious. Thus Christianity is proving the true means of solving the social problems of the day.

The congregation of Free St. George's Church in Edinburgh seem to be much divided over the question of the appointment of an assistant and successor to the Rev. Dr. Whyte. An influential portion of the congregation desire to appoint the Rev. Geo. Adam Smith, author of the *Expository Work on Isaiah* which has been so highly praised by Dr. Marcus Dods. Others again in the congregation think that the views expressed in that very clever work are too advanced, and they desire a teacher who will keep to the old lines.

Last Sunday I spent in St. Andrews, the old Cathedral, City by the sea. The Rev. Dr. Boyd, author of "The Recreations of a Country Parson," preached in the evening, in St. Mary's Church. The ritualistic character of the service had become more pronounced than was the case five years ago. The prayers were all read, the passages of Scripture were intoned, and the congregation repeated after the preacher the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. It seemed to me a very unsatisfactory service in a Presbyterian Church. Surely the desire for an ornate service might be gratified on the old lines. If improvement is required in the devotional service let it become more spiritual; if improvement is desired in the service of praise, let the hymns be more sincerely sung; but that mixing of Episcopal and Presbyterian forms of worship seems to me to be the reverse of pleasing. The text on which Dr. Boyd preached was "The Captain of our salvation made perfect by suffering." The principal idea wrought out by the preacher was that Christ's faculty of sympathy was developed by suffering. The sermon was able, but the delivery was rather wanting in force. The heart of the preacher seemed to be in the preliminary services rather than in his words of exhortation.

Two movements are apparent in the religious life of Scotland at the present time in the Church of Scotland towards the improvement of the Church service, in the Free Church towards freedom of religious thought. There has been quite a development in this direction on the part of many thinkers in the Free Church of Scotland. Whether for better or worse her theology is widening, and the breach between the orthodox highlanders and the advanced theologians threatens dispeace in the near future. Alongside of these movements, however, there is another quite as powerful and as far-reaching as the other two, I mean the movement towards deeper spiritual life and more earnest spiritual work which is apparent in all the Churches. There can be no question about the fact that the Christian life and work of the churches especially in the large centres, has grown apace.

CHAS. B. ROSS, B.D.

### AN OPEN LETTER TO CARDINAL GIBBONS.

BY REV. SCOTT F. HERSHEY, PH.D.

CARDINAL GIBBONS: MY DEAR SIR,—You will permit me, sir, to say that your apparent course, in some things of late, seems (I say seems) so far in advance of the historic policy of the Roman Catholic Church, that I am at a wonder, to know how it can be reconciled thereto. And I am at a loss to know if we are to consider that you give a correct interpretation of the spirit and purpose of the Catholic Church, or if we are to take the policy as set forth in late papal utterances, and the actions of late Catholic Congresses in Europe.