

The Foolishness of Preachers

By JAMES B. BELFORD

IN the following article the old question of ministers' salaries is raised in a somewhat new way. The two difficulties which the preacher meets are, first, a small salary, and, second, irregular payments. Some congregations expect the minister to contribute to his own salary whenever there is a shortage. The Presbyterian Church has met this by guaranteeing all salaries; the others do not.

In the Methodist Church minimum stipends are fixed for Old Ontario and the East as follows: For unmarried unordained men, \$500.00; for unmarried ordained men, \$700.00; for married ordained men, \$900.00.

West and north of New Ontario the schedule adds just \$100.00 to each of these to make up the higher cost of living. In each case horse-keep up to \$100.00 a year is added; and in the case of married men a furnished house.

In the Presbyterian Church the individual stipends raised by the congregations often run very low in remote and rural districts. But the minister is guaranteed a minimum by the church. This minimum is as follows:

For ministers of augmented charges, aided by the church funds:

In Old Ontario and Quebec: Married men, \$1,000.00 and a house; unmarried men, \$950.00.

New Ontario and the West: Married men, \$1,200.00 and a house; unmarried men, \$1,150.00.

Ordained missionaries get respectively: Married men, \$950.00 to \$1,000.00 and a house; unmarried men, \$900.00 to \$950.00.

No convenient figures are obtainable for the Anglican Church. But the difference of scale between the various denominations is only a relatively small percentage.

It may be added that the best salaries paid by the leading denominations run up to \$4,500.00 and \$5,000.00, to which in most cases is added the use of a furnished or partly furnished house.

AS a body there is no class of men, with the exception of journalists, who are themselves preachers in a wider field, who are doing more or better work for humanity, than the class whose individual members style themselves, rectors, parish priests, ministers, elders, etc.; but who are broadly grouped by the man in the street as preachers. But there is an inherent tendency in all men who devote themselves to the public good to allow, at times, the idealistic to overcome the practical, judged by the standards of the business world. What an unpractical ass must Chinese Gordon appear to that able adjutant of the Goddess of Peace, the Laird of Skibo? That is, if the worthy Andy has ever heard of him. And how John D. must shake his shining poll over the gross remissness of Abe Lincoln, who emerged never a penny the better from the Civil War?

We would hesitate to entrust our case in the King's Bench to a Doctor of Medicine, or vice versa, our recovery from Grippe to a legal practitioner; and to do these gentlemen justice they would refuse to undertake anything foreign to their own line of work. But among preachers of a certain type no such faltering is found. Gentlemen who cheerfully confess their ignorance of Shakespeare, sit in judgment on our plays. Other gentlemen with the shell of the theological college still sticking to their heads arbitrarily decide our ethical code. Still others, whose Biblical investigations have landed them in the shoals and fogs of an uncharted back-water shout for a coalition of forces on the basis of lack of conviction.

Much of the foolishness of preachers is directly attributable to their native innocence. Taken at an early age and placed in the forcing-beds of a theological seminary; carefully shielded from the rude blasts of a material world, is it any wonder that the plant should appear thrifty and verdant, and yet withal lack something of stamina? It takes some knocking about in the rough-and-tumble of life, before the gifted graduate can learn from the deep experiences of sorrow and joy the way to the hearts of men. And some never learn. And among these latter we find the men who confound notoriety with influence, lack of conviction with broad-mindedness, and a smattering of German agnosticism with intelligent research.

They are to be found in every denomination, and in all parts of the country, although Montreal and Toronto seem to be exceptionally favourable to their growth. They can be known by two unfailing symptoms, first a perfervid desire to interfere with

what is none of their business, second, by the itch for notoriety. When one or both of these signs appear, a new chapter will shortly be added to the long scroll of the foolishness of preachers.

But happily the great majority of preachers do learn in the school of life something of their business in spite of their theological training. Their foolishness is of the kind which injures themselves, but is not offensive to society at large. It is the foolishness which Carnegie would see in Gordon, i.e., the rendering of services without an adequate recompense. The average yearly wage of the preacher, who is not a stage censor, or who obeys his bishop, or does not subsidize a reporter, is, in this Christian country and in this year of grace, something nearer \$800 than \$900. Foolishness—there is the proof. Mr. Deacon Jones, Mr. Church Warden Bull and Elder MacTavish quite understand. Far be it from these saintly men to allow worldly riches to corrupt the sanctity of their pastors. One can imagine the leer that lurks behind their sanctimonious eyes as they hand the Rev. E. Z. Mark, M.A., his quarterly cheque. But who is to blame? Not the worldly-wise Deacon, etc., but the foolish preacher. Not only is he sinning against God in failing to provide decently for his own family, sinning against his flock in allowing them to cheapen God's service, but he is sinning against the dignity and honour of his profession and ruining his influence. Men value most things in this world by their cost. Just as long as the preacher is the worst paid of professional men, just so long will his influence be below par. Of course, the preacher says and believes that he is not working for pecuniary ends. Quite so! But he is worthy of his hire, a living wage on which he can support his family. He can't do it on \$800.

The preacher is foolish in his coddling of his flock. He runs after Mrs. Brown, because it tickles that lady's vanity to have her neighbours see him call. He kow-tows to Mrs. Lawyer Smart, because the Smarts could be such a help you know. He worries over the Smith children, because the Smiths are too lazy and careless to do anything for their

well-being. He is trying by the power of his own personality to drag people into righteousness. The seeking should be the other way about. When the preacher substitutes common-sense for foolishness it will be.

What is wanted is a preachers' trade union. An iron-clad association which will ostracize censor-fakers and notoriety-seekers; and demand proper recognition for itself. Will we have it?

Perhaps. When the preacher ceases to regard himself as a universal entertainer, a sort of glorified vaudeville artist; and recurs to the Pauline conception of the ministry, there is hope that men in general will take him and his mission seriously. When our religious services cease to be a competition in sensationalism, and the Gospel of the Nazarene is once more the burden of the preacher's message, the material conditions of the preacher will be bettered.

The present day conditions of society fully demonstrate that our modern substitutes for the Gospel are inefficient. The world will never be saved by Lord's Day Alliances, or Committees on Social and Moral Reform. The preacher's work should concern itself with the inward, the spiritual life of man. But when he abrogates the functions of the prophet, for the duties of the policeman, he need not be surprised if he loses all his dignity and much of his influence by the exchange.

The hearts of men are still calling out for the eternal verities of God, and will not be satisfied with a crusade against ice-cream stands in its place. The world is seeking God, crying out for God. While the preachers of to-day, the descendants of the men who fanned the flames of righteousness in days gone by, seek to satisfy the soul's longings with competitive quartettes and pulpit clownings.

Herein is the great foolishness of preachers. Charged with a message of salvation to a perishing world, they deliberately discard it in favour of frothy mouthings on all manner of things of small importance, from theosophy to hobble-skirts.

The business of a preacher of the Gospel is to preach the Gospel.

A Marvel of "Movies"

Pictures of the Scott Expedition Now on Tour

THE expedition of Captain Scott to the South Pole, as seen by the moving pictures of it lately in this country, must have been the most remarkable that ever went to sea or travelled over land. The pictures themselves have never been equalled for humorous and scientific interest. The pictures shown by Captain Amundsen and Sir Ernest Shackleton were a more or less interesting attempt to give an outline of the wonderful no-man's land south of the Great Barrier. Those secured by Captain Scott were marvels of daring and endurance in the cause of science.

The cinematographer apparently carried his machine into places that to most tourists would have been impossible even with a pocket camera. He drew near to the mother seal and pried into the haunts of the kitler whale. He hung himself and his machine over the side of the Terra Nova by a rope to get a record of the ship's prow ripping up the ice-floes. He followed the harum-scarum skua gull right to the nest and photographed the young skua hatching by the hour. He got in among the gawky and polite penguins as they sat on the eggs that the skua gulls didn't steal—and when the gull thief came swooping down for the penguin eggs he got that also. He showed how the men pitched their tent in a high wind and how they settled down to "hoosh" and a smoke and a snooze in the deerskin bags at 35 below. He described the hitching of the dogs and the tramps over the glaciers and the weird eruption of Mt. Erebus.

In the name of science and adventure and novelty of interest he left nothing out of his records. These pictures are the most remarkable ever shown in this country; a convincing proof that the Scott expedition was a 20th century marvel of organization for scientific purposes. The South Pole discovery was to be a scientific attainment; one big item in a great programme of adventure and research. The Antarctic was to be ransacked for new material—and it was. Beside the Scott Expedition

all other adventures to any part of the world were mere amateur attempts at scientific discovery.

Which, as has been said before, is the main reason why the expedition ended as it did. There was too much science. The thing was too splendid. Too much was attempted. The price paid was too—

But was it too great? Aside from the South Polar discovery, did Captain Scott or any of his men begrudge their lives in the interests of science? Had they left out the Pole the expedition would have been impossible. To leave out the science was to rob it of all that made it different from other expeditions. Science was successful—a never before under such conditions. And it was proved, not only that the Englishman knows how to die for a cause, which has been proved often enough, but that he knows how to keep abreast of the times in the march of organized science.

New Books Received

Scouts of Empire, by Lawrence J. Burpee; cloth, 50 cents: The Musson Book Co. *The Story of the Discovery of the Great North-West*.

Humour of the North, by Lawrence J. Burpee; cloth, 50 cents: The Musson Book Co. *Selections from Howe, Haliburton, Drummond, Mrs. Cotes, McCarroll, Lanigan and Derville*.

The Law Bringers, by G. B. Lancaster; cloth, \$1.25: Hodder and Stoughton. A novel of Prairie Life, introducing the R. N. W. M. Police.

Looking Forward, by Rev. Hugh Pedley; cloth, \$1.25: William Briggs. A story designed to show the value of Protestant church union.

The Outlaw, by David Hennessey; cloth, \$1.25: Hodder and Stoughton. The second prize novel in a \$5,000 competition held last year.