

## The Dominion Presbyterian

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### Ministerial Success.

At this season of the year a number of young men are saying farewell to their respective colleges, and looking forward to a career of usefulness as messengers of truth, and ministers of mercy. They are told that they have chosen a noble profession, and that life is before them; so that all they have now to do is to go forward and make great conquests. They may be told at the same time that they must be men inspired with a great message, and that there is much "clerical driftwood" on the one hand, and on the other important congregations that hardly any man in sight is competent to teach and guide. They will thus see the situation is complex, but with the hopefulness of youth they are expected to go forward in the face of difficulties, and make a brave fight. Let us not say anything to discourage them, but rather let them understand the real conditions of the case and be ready to take a noble view of what is meant by ministerial success. In the Presbyterian ministry we are supposed to have free trade, and the survival of the fittest. A man may have a good character, fair reputation, and average power of service, but the Church does not take any responsibility in providing him with a sphere of labor. Our Methodist brethren have protection and regulations. It is not for us to say which system produces the noblest type of ministers: it is sufficient for our present purpose to note that the two systems are radically different. It is hardly possible to have the advantages of both without the disadvantages of either; every system has "the defects of its qualities." And we are afraid that those who think that a little tinkering can take the place of a revolution are doomed to disappointment. Any system

of itineracy must involve some such over-sight and regulation as is given by the Methodist Conferences. Our Methodist friends have been known to use drastic means for the purpose of equalising supply and demand. We are not prepared to classify the whole spirit and method of our ministry at present; and if there is unsettlement, and other evils, they can only be met by the cultivation of a deeper spiritual life on the part of both ministers and people. We may, however, note that the "survival of the fittest" here, as elsewhere, does not necessarily mean the ideal fittest, the noblest and best in any lofty spiritual sense. In the old time the prophets failed because of their lofty spirituality and their real loyalty to God and truth. This was the case, not only with a few great men, whose names have come down to us, but with numberless, nameless lives that constituted the true Church at that time. And, unless we are prepared to maintain that congregations are perfect, and the Church absolutely pure, we must admit at least the bare possibility that men sometimes fail because of qualities that are of the highest rank, viewed from the standpoint of Christian character. A fine well-tempered blade might fail to do the work of an axe, though, considered in itself, it might be the purest steel. We express, then, our conviction that, even in the Christian civilization of today, noble men sometimes lack what we foolishly call success, because they refuse to pandor to vulgar demands, or to play fast and loose with the cause of truth. Such men have been bowed down in spirit and broken in heart, because they could not meet the hard, cold Christians of their day.

What, then, is success in the ministerial sphere? We do not presume to dogmatise; but, in a spirit suited to the solemn subject, we venture to offer a few suggestions. Success in this sphere does not mean exercising one's ministry in a large city, as in that case, seeing that we have few large cities, it would be confined to very few. Neither does it mean ministry to a specially large congregation; some of the most faithful ministers have worked in small places and ministered to comparatively small numbers. But they have sent out young men who in larger spheres could show the union of real thoughtfulness and real piety. These external measurements, then, are of little use; there are some splendid men in our cities, and some noble men who have the power to reach the crowd, but these have no monopoly of true success.

The successful minister continues to be a student of life and literature; he does not allow all his energy to be consumed by Church business or needful pastoral work. He seeks to carry all through life the noblest ideals of his youth. He seeks to provoke thoughtfulness in others, and will not sacrifice

principle for the sake of popularity. He comes through many failures and disappointments without giving way to a cynical temper. The truth that man cannot live by bread alone, which is the keynote of his ministry, is also the guiding principle of his own life; so that he ever distinguishes between the mere display of life, and life itself. Thus the minister who is really successful is one who not only maintains his faith in God through Christ, but also applies its healing power to the service of his own and other lives; and whether his sphere is large or small he is able at last to rejoice that by God's grace he has been true to his vocation.

The hearing of the Hughes libel suit against The Herald has resulted in a verdict of not guilty; and on this outcome of a long and impartial trial we heartily congratulate our contemporary. The Herald has fought a good fight for honesty in civic administration, and has earned hearty commendations from all citizens who desire good government in municipal affairs. The judge, in giving the case to the jury, expressed the hope that the trial would mark a new era in the management of city business. We trust this utterance from the bench may prove a prophecy of a change for the better. That such a change is urgently needed is quite apparent to the most casual observer; and should the Hughes trial prove the beginning of a new era in which righteous dealings shall take the place of "ways that are dark," all right-thinking citizens will rejoice—even if The Herald's outspoken defence of the city's interests has been a costly one for its proprietors. There is a pleasing feature to this unanimous verdict. It proves conclusively that differences of race and religion do not necessarily prevent citizens uniting in a vindication of the freedom of the press, and in demanding that our fair city shall be well governed.

Prof. J. Clark Murray, of McGill University, contributes to the current issue of the International Journal of Ethics a fine essay on "Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice as an Exponent of Industrial Ethics." It is a re-acting of the play from an interesting point of view, and shows us how wonderfully suggestive the work of a great poet is. "In some respects," as Dr. Clark Murray says, "more philosophical than philosophy itself." Those who have enjoyed the great drama will enjoy it all the more after reading this appreciation. We do not think the interpretation at all strained historically or psychologically, and if there seems so much more suggested than the poet saw or stated clearly, "it does not seem irreverent to reply that, that this spoke he not of himself, but being a great high priest of humanity at the time, he prophesied for the guidance of that industrial era upon which the world was entering."