

## Our Contributors.

### THE MINIMUM IN MEN AND THINGS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Dr. Dods has raised a storm in Scotland by discussing in a sermon the fundamental question, What is a Christian? In one part of the sermon he tried to define the minimum of faith and show just how little a man may believe and still be a Christian. A good many people think that kind of preaching is not for edification. One of Dr. Dods' most ardent admirers calls it "Theological Blondinism." Theological Blondinism is a good term, highly suggestive and happily descriptive of a kind of teaching and preaching that seems to delight in going as near danger as possible. For hitting upon this happy and suggestive term the *Dr. ish Weekly* should have a vote of thanks.

When Blondin crossed the Niagara River on a tight rope he performed a feat that was difficult, dangerous, and for every good purpose, useless. Preachers who try to say just how little a man may believe and yet find his way to heaven are trying to do something that is exceedingly difficult and as dangerous as difficult. Whether that kind of preaching can under any circumstances be useful is a question that those who engage in it must answer for themselves. Perhaps some clerical Blondin may career on the tight rope until he attracts the attention of his Presbytery and then we shall have a decision on pulpit Blondinism. A finding on Blondinism of that kind if come to by the right kind of men might help to put an end to tight rope performances in the pulpit.

Many years ago Dr. Ryerson and a Western editor were discussing the privileges given to Canada when England conceded Responsible government. The Doctor expounded the new constitution in a restrictive sense and the editor tried to show that it meant a great deal. Leonidas was rather too able for the newspaper man when they came down to minute details of interpretation but the press man shut him off cleverly on general principles. "Doctor," said he, "I think it is the duty of every patriotic Canadian to make as much as he can of our privileges rather than as little." A good many people, not by any means fools, think it is well for a preacher to make as much of faith as he can rather than as little.

Comparatively few Protestants are in any danger of having too much faith, while a large number are sure to have too little without any encouragement from the pulpit.

But whatever may be said about the minimum of faith nobody wants the minimum in any other good thing. Nobody wants the minimum of service, or the minimum of business, or the minimum of comfort, or the minimum of money, or the minimum of any earthly blessing. Why should we desire the minimum in matters of religion.

Minimum men are not the kind of men we care for. Nobody wants a minimum lawyer or a minimum doctor, or a minimum minister—or a minimum man of any kind.

A minimum lawyer is one who gives as little attention as possible to your business, never spends any time in preparing your case and when he goes into court knows little or nothing about it and says little or nothing for you. You don't want a lawyer of that kind. Do you?

A minimum doctor is one who pays just as little attention as possible to his patients, calls to see them as seldom as possible, takes as little trouble with them as possible, and does the very least he can to help them. That is not the kind of doctor you want in your family. Is it?

The meanest of men is a minimum minister. He is a mere official who preaches as seldom as he can, visits as little as he can, reads and writes as little as he can, in fact does as little of everything as he can. His whole life is a wretched experiment to see how little he can get off with. His most frequent utterance is, "I'm not bound to do this, I'm not bound to do that. I'm not bound to do the other." Instead of trying to do as much as he can for his Master his constant effort is to do as little as he can and keep his place. Who wants a minister for pastor?

A minimum worshipper is a man who never goes to church if he can find an excuse to stay at home. There are too many minimum church-goers.

A minimum student is a lazy young man who studies hard—to find the least that he can pass his examinations with.

A minimum contributor is one who earnestly strives to give as little as possible to every good cause. He nearly always succeeds. In fact minimum contributors are among the most successful men we have. It rarely happens that one of them fails in giving as little as he possibly can.

A minimum Christian is one who prays as little as he can, worships as little as he can, believes as little as he can and works as little as he can. A minimum Christian never does much good and may do a great deal of harm.

It has been suggested that discussing the minimum of faith is just as unwholesome as discussing the minimum of morals. If that be so, preachers ought to be very, very careful about trying to say just how little faith may possibly save a man. What preacher would care to stand up in his pulpit and say how many moral lapses a man may make and still be saved as by fire? How would it do to tell sinners all too prone to sin without any encouragement that they may possibly get to heaven in the end though they get drunk so many times, or steal so many times, or break the seventh commandment so many times? The idea of preaching in that way is absolutely revolting. Well, if trying to fix the minimum in morals is such an unwholesome thing fixing the minimum in matters of faith can hardly be anything.

## CAVADIAN PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY.

BY H. S. MCCOLLUM, OF ST. CATHARINES.

### ADDITIONAL MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.

At the date of the publication of the *Narrative* the number of ministers had increased from three to five, Mr. Goodell having been ordained, and he and Mr. Sessions having united with the Presbytery since its organization. Rev. Joseph Marr arrived at Oakville in the spring of 1835, and preached there and thereabout till December, 1836, after which he went to Beamsville, and preached there and at "The Forty" about three years. Before going to Beamsville he supplied, for a time, Gore and Trafalgar. Rev. Josiah Partington and Rev. John Axtel also came in 1835. The former was installed at Drummondville March 10 of that year. His preaching circuit embraced the Old German Church under "the mountain," in Thorold, and St. David's and Allanburg. The latter supplied Dunville and Louth for about two years.

Some time in the latter part of 1834 Rev. Charles Jones came on the field, and laboured as an evangelist within the bounds of the Presbytery for about six months, during which time he officiated, with Rev. Mr. Eastman and the pastor, Rev. Mr. Buell, at the dedication of the "brick meeting-house" in St. Catharines, October 23, 1834, and was ordained to the Gospel ministry at a meeting of the Presbytery held at Clinton, January, 1835. From this section he made his way to Belleville, where he commenced, March 3, 1835, preaching at a protracted meeting. Afterwards he had charge of a Church for a season, then drifted into the United States, and successively filled several pastorates with marked success. He was a seepson of Rev. William Smart, born at Yonge, U. C., in 1809, received his classical education at Williams and Union Colleges, and his theological training at Auburn and New Haven. He died at North Abingdon, Mass., September 3, 1889, at the ripe age of fourscore years.

At the January meeting of Presbytery in 1835 a unanimous request came up from the Church at Hamilton to organize those members who reside upon the mountain into a separate Church, to be known by the name of "The Presbyterian Church of Barton." The Presbytery having so ordered, 105 members were dismissed from the Hamilton Church, and on May 17, 1835, the Presbyterian Church of Barton was duly organized by Rev. Edwards Marsh,\* who accepted its pastorate, leaving the pulpit of the Hamilton Church vacant until the arrival of Rev. Charles E. Furman, from near Rochester, N. Y., in December, 1835. Mr. Furman took up the work at Hamilton as successor to Mr. Marsh, and carried it forward faithfully and successfully for two years. Stephen Blackstone, William Macklem, David Hess and Frederick Holtrum, who had been elders in the old Church, were assigned to the same positions in the new.

No records of Presbytery having been preserved, no particular information has been obtained in reference to the organization of new churches or the advent of other ministers. It is doubtful, indeed, whether there was anything to report on those subjects until January 11, 1837, when Rev. R. H. Close a licentiate of the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, was ordained and installed as pastor of the Church at St. Catharines, after serving as "stated supply" since the 9th day of the previous July. He succeeded Mr. Buell, who retired, in consequence of ill-health, late in 1835.

Rev. W. F. Curry, who came with others in 1831, to assist in revival work, and who organized the Church at "The Forty" in 1832, supplied Brantford for several months in 1833-4, but never connected himself with the Presbytery. He went from this section to Montreal as secretary of the "Canada Education and Home Missionary Society."

### MINISTERS IN 1834—BISHOP MARSH.

At the date of the installation of Mr. Close the active members of the Presbytery were, Rev. Mr. Marsh, Rev. Mr. Marr, Rev. Mr. Eastman, Rev. Mr. Goodell, Rev. Mr. Furman and Rev. Mr. Partington. Mr. Marsh preached the ordination sermon from the text: "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke." In March, 1837, Mr. Marsh withdrew from local pastoral labour and entered upon general missionary work, becoming, in fact, pastor or bishop of the Presbytery. April, 1838, in a report of his labours, he said: "Many feeble Churches have been visited and refreshed; but plans for their relief have been defeated by the disasters of war."

### THE MACEDONIAN CRY.

At least as early as 1832 it became evident that the ministers could not be adequately supported in this wilderness field, without help from some source, and, after prayerful consideration and conference, Mr. Marsh and Mr. Buell severally and unofficially presented their earnest appeals to the American Home Missionary Society, and with some measure of success. An extract from one of the letters addressed by Mr. Marsh to that Society under date of April, 1834, was published in the Society's magazine, with this note by the secretary, viz.: "He (Mr. Marsh) has made his way to the upper province of Canada without missionary aid, and seems to have been greatly blessed in his labours." A portion of the extract is as follows: "And now, dear brethren, I know that every feeble, destitute Church can place their claims before your Society with the eloquence of starving children. I know that the heart-breaking cries awaken the sympathy of

\* In former chapters of this history of the Niagara Presbytery, Mr. Marsh's name has been erroneously printed with S. as a middle initial. The first name requires a terminal s, making the name as printed above. He had no middle name.

the elder Churches, and, as they ask for bread, they do not receive a stone. But we fear that you will not own us as children. We live in another country, under another Government; but we cry like the Macedonians, and stretch forth our hands for help, knowing that if we fail we can but fail, and it may be that our cry will be heard."

The following extract from an article published in the *Home Missionary Magazine* for February, 1835, explains the position of the Society in reference to work in Canada: "The claims of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada demand the attention of Christians of the United States, not merely on the ground of common benevolence, but because many of their own sons and daughters have become residents there. The common language and the similarity of nearly all social customs, together with the facilities of intercourse, afford an argument to prove that, though political boundaries now mark the inhabitants of the Canadas as belonging to another nation, the time is coming when this will be the only evidence that they are not one and the same people with ourselves. The American Home Missionary Society is bound, in duty to its great object, to care chiefly for the destitute of the United States. Still, as opportunity has offered, it has sought to promote missions to Canada."

The *Home Missionary* for January, 1837, says: "The ministers belonging to the Niagara Presbytery of Upper Canada have formed an auxiliary to the American Home Missionary Society under the title,

### DOMESTIC MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF UPPER CANADA,

and presented the following appeal, on behalf of the Churches under their care: The Presbytery is made up of six or seven ministers, who have the charge each of from one to three Churches, of which there are not far from twenty-five, and the number of members may be from 600 to 800. The question whether these Churches shall be sustained in maintaining their denominational character is one we have tried to decide under the influence of a prayerful spirit. Shall they be disbanded. . . . Shall we leave here and fill your vacancies [in the United States] or shall we remain, hoping that God has many people to be brought under the influence of the Gospel through our agency? . . .

In publishing this appeal the secretary adds a note as follows: "In answer to the foregoing these brethren have been assured of the cordial co-operation of the American Home Missionary Society, as well as our deep sympathy with them in the state of their feeble Churches and waste places."

### DISASTROUS EFFECTS OF WAR.

The *Home Missionary* for October, 1838, contained the following:

"A little more than a year ago there was a Presbytery by the name of the 'Niagara Presbytery of Upper Canada,' comprising seven or eight Presbyterian ministers, twenty-five Churches, and having an aggregate of 700 or 800 communicants. These were situated in the vicinity of the head of Lake Ontario. But when the insurrection commenced in that neighbourhood many of the ministers, from their being emigrants from the United States, fell under the suspicion of disaffection to the Government. This rendered their situation so unpleasant that many of them returned to the American side of the line; congregations were broken up, and their members compelled to emigrate to more peaceful regions. One, whose circumstances had detained him in Canada, writes as follows: 'I know of no American minister now in Canada, with the exception of Brother C. and myself; nor am I certain that he has not left—he talked of it some time since. The country is in a very unsettled condition, and affairs wear a threatening aspect. I sometimes feel afraid to stay here, and wish I were on the other side of the line. But I reflect that the same power is engaged for my protection here that would save me anywhere else. And when I consider the moral condition of the country I seem to be called to remain and blow the Gospel trumpet, looking for rest and reward in another world.'"

### MINISTERS WHO STAYED.

Though the writer's name was not given, circumstances seem clearly to point to Rev. Mr. Marr as the author of the foregoing. "At the breaking out of the rebellion he had to leave Beamsville. He then went into mission work, and settled near Fingall, on Talbot Street, and laboured through all that region for three years; then went to Long Point country, near Port Dover and Simcoe, and continued there twelve years, when he left the country." The "Bro. C." referred to was, undoubtedly, Rev. R. H. Close, who continued officiating as pastor of the Church at St. Catharines until June, 1839, though from May, 1838, he had charge also of Lewiston Academy. He did not wholly abandon the Canadian field, and as soon as the condition of the country would permit, he was again at work there, though not in his old charge. It can hardly be said that he left Canada because of the rebellion except as the rebellion affected the means of personal and family support. One more—Rev. Mr. Eastman—remained but he had been a Canadian for about a generation, and he was rooted in the soil of the Peninsula.

### PRESBYTERY SUSPENDED.

All the other ministers left for "the States;" the excitement of the rebellion absorbed all the public attention; the Presbytery, with its Domestic Missionary Society, necessarily suspended action; church doors were closed, and the work auspiciously begun and so successfully continued for about five years, was brought to a premature end, to be revived however, after the war-cloud passed.