

DIFFICULTIES WHEREVER YOU GO.

By Knoxonian.

A congregational meeting was held not long ago in a prominent congregation in the Free Church of Scotland, for the purpose of calling a minister. During the proceedings it came out with painful clearness that the friends of one of the candidates had been canvassing. A worthy elder present denounced the canvassing with becoming indignation. He said he had left the Old Kirk in '43 to escape the evils of patronage, and now in his New Church he had to encounter the evils of canvassing. The good man has sailed away from Scylla and bumped against Charybdis. Would that he were the only man in the world who has performed a similar feat, and had a similar experience. Far be it from us to say that this worthy Free Church man did not do his duty in '43. That is not our point. The point to be discussed is that, in running away from one kind of real or imaginary evil, you often run right into another kind which is perhaps more real than imaginary.

Here is a man who has become dissatisfied with the Presbyterian Church. He says that it is slow and cold and stiff and all that sort of thing. Perhaps the real reason why he dislikes Presbyterianism is because he has no office, or because the heartless Presbyterian treasurer sent him a bill for his arrears, or something of that kind. He hankers after the Methodists, and joins them. For a little while after he enters his new Zion he is very tender and effusive. He gushes. He slops over. He tells his new friends how good he feels since he left those cold Presbyterians, and came among the Lord's people. His only difficulty is with the service at special efforts. Sometimes he shouts in the wrong place. The preacher predicts that some very wicked thing will be done, and the new convert adds a hearty "amen." He is not sufficiently educated yet to sit in the amen corner. The preacher asserts that the devil goes about like a roaring lion, and the newly fledged clasps his hands and shouts: "Glory be to his holy name." With these trifling drawbacks our old friend has at first a fairly good time. Soon, however, he begins to find that Methodists are human, just like Presbyterians. He had often heard that they attain to sinless perfection, but he never strikes one of that kind. He finds too, that every man can't have an office in the Methodist Church, any more than in the Presbyterian. He finds also, that our excellent contemporary the Guardian costs \$1.50 a year, strictly in advance. Worse than all, he finds that the Methodists actually do take money, and not only take it, but have ways of collecting it that Presbyterians never dreamed of. That brother ran away from his Church to avoid things he didn't like, but he was not long away until he struck several things not any pleasanter than the things he left.

And here is a Presbyterian who does the same thing without ceasing to be a Presbyterian.

Without any tangible reason, he becomes dissatisfied with his own congregation. He scarcely knows the reason why. Very likely the principal reason is himself. Perhaps he is too well fed, and has not enough of work. His trouble may be spiritual dyspepsia. He needs exercise, but he won't take it. His dyspepsia makes everything in his own congregation seem blue. He looks across the congregational fence, and sees everything bright in a neighboring congregation. He goes over. He expects a brass band reception, but if his neighbours are respectable Presbyterians, they don't bring out any brass band. For a time, the "new man" tries to make himself believe he is up to the eyes in congregational clover. As the years roll by, perhaps before one has passed, he finds that his new friends are all human. He finds old Adam is there too. Perhaps he finds that he cannot "run" the new minister any easier than the old one. Before very long he begins to wonder if, after all, he gained much by making the change.

Ministers sometimes have a similar experience. Brother RESTLESS has become dissatisfied with his pastoral charge. The congregation has some things about it that he does not like. The people, or some of them, have grave faults. Brother Restless forgets that if the people were all perfect, his eminent services would be entirely unnecessary. He forgets, too, that he is not absolutely perfect himself. Forgetting these, and a good many other things he should remember, he puts himself in the way of getting a call. He accepts, but before he is a year in his new congregation—perhaps before he is inducted—he has very conclusive and perhaps painful evidence that some of the new people are not perfect either. In a short time he has the consideration of a rather painful problem forced upon him. That problem is: What did you gain by the change?

Some people become greatly dissatisfied with our climate. It is too cold. These Canadian winters they say, freeze all the vitality out of a man. They go south. They run away from frost, and run into fever. They are like the Free Church man whose speech suggested this paper: Escaping from one difficulty they run into another.

People who might have more sense often have a similar experience in changing their place of residence. Did you ever see an ill-balanced, poorly constructed man, when he had made up his mind that his own town was the poorest place in all creation, and some neighboring town the best. What nonsense he talks about the new place. He moves. He finds no leaves hanging to the limbs of the trees in the new place. He sweeps up no sovereigns on the streets. The people there are all human. To his utter disgust, he finds he needs money in the new town and must work to get it.

Let us have a closing word with this young man who has just concluded to take to himself a wife. Right you are, young man. That is a proper thing to do. If you have a reasonable prospect of being able to pay for double tickets on the journey, get her at once. Get one with a level head and warm heart and an industrious pair of hands. Don't forget about the hands. If she is the right kind of companion, you can work along through this world very much better with her than you could alone. But let us whisper gently in your ear that going double through the world brings some serious responsibilities. If you and she are the right kind of people, you need not be afraid to meet the responsibilities, but it may be as well for you to know they are there.

BRAINS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Brains are needed in the Sunday-school, the brains of the best men in the church. Why not? Why should not the man who puts his brains into his business also put his brains into the Sunday-school? Then he would succeed there just as he succeeds in his business. It would be amusing if it were not so sad, to see a business man who puts his brains into his business during the week come to Sunday-school on Sunday morning leaving his brains at home and going along in the same old easy, lazy way in the Sunday-school work. It is good to know that there are some of our brightest and most successful business men who are giving their best thought to the great divine business of teaching the word of God in the Sunday-school. Wherever there are such men, there you find a good Sunday-school. In fact, it is possible to have a good Sunday-school wherever there can be found even one man who will put his brains, just the brains he has, into this great work.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT.

Receipts for Schemes to Feb. 22, 1908.

The subjoined statement of contributions to the Schemes of the Church shows that a very large amount must be received by the treasurer during the present week if the Church is to do her work without incurring debt, or withholding from her laborers the amounts due. The Home Mission Fund requires \$30,000 more than last year, and is therefore \$19,500 worse off than at this date a year ago. The Foreign Mission Fund requires \$16,000 more than last year, and is therefore \$19,150 worse off than at the same date a year ago. The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund began the year with a debt of \$5,739, and is therefore \$4,739 behind last year. There will certainly be large deficits in these leading funds unless wealthy men, and our stronger congregations, and the congregations who have given nothing to the Schemes, come promptly to the rescue before Saturday, February 29th, when the books will be closed.

	1907.	1908.	Amt. required for year.
Knox College	5,854	4,381	9,900
Queen's University	2,929	2,569	8,900
Montreal College	1,549	1,065	7,500
Manitoba College	3,280	3,214	2,500
Home Mission	110,935	121,465	180,000
Augmentation	25,303	24,182	45,000
Foreign Mission	75,240	72,075	122,000
W. and O. Fund	8,775	9,283	15,000
A. and I. Fund	11,279	10,243	18,000
Assembly Fund	3,588	3,518	8,000
French Evangelization	14,474	14,514	24,500
Pointe-aux-Trembles	9,169	9,777	19,500
Temperance and Moral Reform	—	1,658	5,000

JOHN SOMERVILLE, Treasurer.

Presbyterian Church Offices, Toronto.

February 22nd, 1908.

The Presbytery of Kingston having requested each congregation within its bounds to make a pronouncement on the question of Church Union and send it to the clerk of the Presbytery, St. Andrew's, one of the largest congregations of the city, held a meeting, at which Principal Gordon and Professors Marshall, McPhail, Callendar and others spoke. A vote showed a large percentage of those present against union.

A sympathetic nature is the world's friend.