

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN

BY GRACE YE ARE SAID.

BY MINNIE G. FRASER, KINGSTON.

By grace—no claim had I to show
That God should set me free,
Yet in the person of His Son
He spake His peace to me.

By grace—while justice cried aloud
For wrath on me to fall,
Christ took the guilty sinner's place,
It fell—He bore it all.

By grace—'tis mine the perfect gift,
He bought it with His blood,
Beside the altar of His love
A great High Priest He stood.

By grace—the years that swiftly glide,
Are all too short for praise,
With awe I grasp that altar's thorns
And songs of wonder raise.

By grace—His beauty robes my soul,
A diadem I wear,—
On Bethel stand, and, trusting, mount
To heaven on steps of prayer.

By grace—there eyes shall see my King,
I'll kneel before His throne,
I'll view the Saviour's image bright,
I'll know as I am known.

Sweet harp resound in solemn tones,
Soft echoes sweep thy chords,
Ascribe all honour to His name,
The glory is the Lord's.

THE DEAD LINE.

Much is said, and more has been written for the press about the dearth of ministers, and the many pulpits that are vacant from the lack of men to fill them. Many reasons have been assigned for this lack, but one of the most important reasons, I think, has not been stated of late; at least we have not seen it mentioned, though many worthy and useful men have had the sad experience of it. I mean the fact, that some of the evidences of age appear in those who are called to preach as candidates.

It matters not how eloquent, or logical, or orthodox (perhaps the orthodoxy is the chief obstacle in many cases), the candidate may be—he may be eloquent as Apollos, and logical as Paul, and orthodox as the Lord Jesus Christ himself, but if a few gray hairs show themselves—which, however, are some of the evidences of wisdom and experience—a black ball is cast against the candidate at the church meeting.

Churches, of course, have the right to choose those who are to be their pastors and teachers, but it has occurred to us, whether, in basing the choice on such grounds, it is right or even expedient. It may cater to a class who, perhaps, on account of their financial status in the church and congregation, have great and commanding influence, but the question arises, Is it the best thing to be done for the cause of Christ?

"Old age is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Such is the declaration of inspiration. But our churches, in looking for a pastor, seem, oftentimes, with the greatest nonchalance, to reverse this truth, and throw the greatest indignity on many who have made some progress in life, though their age would never be objected to in the physician or the lawyer.

We have known men of large experience in the pastoral office—men of unexceptionable ability in the pulpit—men well-read and up to the times in literature and scientific discussion, who have been set aside on the first hearing simply because it is found, even after a most powerful discourse which captivated the whole audience, that they had reached the dead line."

I think I will not be betraying confidence if I quote a sentence from a letter which lies before me, received from a friend who has recently preached as a candidate in a large metropolitan pulpit.

He says: "I understand they were well pleased," but adds, perhaps from something which he overheard, "if I fail to get a call, age will be the reason," and he still adds: "What a sin it is for a man to have any experience!"

And this friend, not yet fifty, has filled with the greatest acceptance for years some of the most im-

portant pulpits in the land, and has been successful, in a remarkable degree, in winning souls to Christ.

Well may this friend and scores of others who are just in their prime exclaim, "What a sin it is for a man to have any experience!" I think such cases reveal the reason why so many churches are vacant, and continue vacant, they allow a certain class in their communion to control their choice of a pastor by the clamour for young and inexperienced men—novices in church work, and oftentimes wholly unqualified to take upon them the great responsibilities of the pastorate. Said a committee who had heard a popular preacher in his own pulpit with great pleasure and even satisfaction. "We don't want any man as our pastor who is over forty-five years of age."

Forty five years of age! Why, this committee might have been reminded that the majority of men in the pulpit scarcely reach their best even at that age, and the most successful preachers and the most efficient pastors now in active service in the prominent pulpits in our large cities are far beyond the "dead line."

Forty-five years of age! The Church that would would send a committee with such a message, must either be far gone in dry-rot, or it has probably reached a point where the next move will be for it to send a telegram to Angel Gabriel for some one who has been endowed with immortal youth. What are the Churches coming to? What will they want in the next generation? If the present state of things should continue the next quarter of a century will exhibit in the statistics of the Churches an increase of vacancies that will be appalling. How, then, is this crying evil to be remedied? What can be done to fill the pulpits already long vacant with men of unquestionable ability and piety—workmen that need not be ashamed of the service they are qualified to render?

What should in all honesty be done for the recognition of that large class of God's faithful servants, many of whom are ready to accomplish a quantity and quality of work for which many of the favourites of the new regime are wholly unfitted?

Two things here: First, Churches need to review most prayerfully the course which they have adopted in the past in the selection of their pastors, and ask not whether Mr. A. or Miss B. will be suited, or whether the candidate will find favour in the eyes of those who reside on L—avenue, and who occupy the chief seats in the synagogue—not this, but a vastly more important question. Will the candidate be the best man for the building up of the Church in holiness and sound doctrine the best man for the old and the young, the best man to promote the honour and the glory of God in his relations to the people?

The other thing: The Church, looking for a pastor, should, after prayer for guidance, be prepared to accept him whom God shall send, irrespective of age, if he preaches with unction the great doctrine of Christ and Him crucified.

Some men never grow old, though gray hairs are upon them. Dr. Lyman Beecher was a young man in his old age. And there are many now who, having borne the burden and the heat of the day, are prepared, if called, to do the best work of their already long and useful lives. Why not let all such, in the name of God and the best interests of the Church of Jesus Christ, have the opportunity?—*Rev. James Cruikshanks, in New York Observer.*

POINTERS.

The advertising department of the pulpit is still being run for all it is worth. I step into the pulpit and find lying on the Bible an envelope containing complimentary tickets and an enticing notice of Professor Grandiloquent's Unparalleled Lecture and Magic Lantern show. Beside it is a notice of a supper to be given by the "Ladies of the Great International Association for sending kid gloves to the Fiji Islands," etc., etc. By the time the minister is through with the advertisements he is tired as well as the people.

The minister was right who said, "Brethren, I find here complimentary tickets and the announcement of a show. It is an insult to this pulpit. We are not running a bulletin board, and I will announce nothing except religious meetings and matters pertaining to the Church."

The tramp preacher is abroad in the land. Look out for him. Our western Presbyteries have suffered

enough by taking in, and being thereby "taken in" by, unworthy men, to learn wisdom by this time. We occasionally find a crooked Presbyterian minister, but what about the stranger of some other denomination seeking admission to a Presbytery? Forged credentials, or certificates obtained in haste have been presented, and the man hastily admitted. The safe plan is for a Presbytery to admit no man from another Church till his record has been thoroughly investigated.

"Charity covers a multitude of sins, Dr. Leo, and you are not charitable." "Yes, I am, but charity will not cover the injury to a Church that falls into the hands of a man who proves to be a libertine, a drunkard or a fraud. Better look carefully after a man's record as well as his credentials. This cannot injure a true minister, and will keep frauds always out."

These remarks are not intended to cast any slight or disrespect upon the many faithful and able ministers who have been reared in, or come to us from other Churches. Many of our best and most successful ministers belong to this class. I am warning our Churches and Presbyteries against those peripatetic preachers who are like Josh Billings' flea, "when you put your finger on him, he ain't there."

One preacher of another sect, to the certain knowledge of the writer, was dismissed from the pastorate of two churches, in each case, for "tarrying long at the wine," and something stronger. He sought admission to our church. One Presbytery refused to receive him. He went on candidating in different States, writing his own recommendations, till at last he gained admission to a Presbytery. I repeat "Look out for tramps."

The great wail is our many vacant churches and lack of ministers. I suppose we need several hundred ministers. It is very difficult to find a pastor for a field of one or more small churches, paying with or without missionary aid, a salary of from \$600 to \$900 a year. Many such fields are dying because we cannot give them pastors. A thousand men for these fields would reap a glorious harvest in the salvation of souls and the building up of our beloved Zion.

A church paying \$6,000 a year was vacant not long ago. A friend, an elder in that church, told me that they had over 200 applicants for the pastorate. A church paying \$1,800 a year, situated in a pleasant little city, had almost 100 applicants, and a church paying \$1,500 a year in a city of 6,000 population has sixty applicants for its vacant pulpit.

The last two paragraphs would indicate that the supply of ministers in our beloved Zion is in proportion to the salary a church can pay. From minus for weak churches and Home Mission fields it rises to plus a large number for large and wealthy churches. There is food for much thought right here. Perhaps most of these numerous applicants for the larger churches are pastors who are seeking a change. The majority of them have been in their present charges from two to six years.

To my mind these facts and figures show several things worthy of the most careful and prayerful attention of ministers, churches, and Presbyteries: These are a growing restlessness on the part of both ministers and churches, an unwillingness to do missionary work and "endure hardness as soldiers of Jesus Christ," as well as the need of more ministers. Is there not a great problem here, that the sooner we face the better?—*Rev. Ahasuerus Leo, B.A., in Mid-Continent.*

HOW TO MAKE A HAPPY HOME.

Learn to govern yourselves, and be gentle and patient. Guard your tongues, especially in seasons of ill-health, irritation and trouble, and soften them by prayer and a sense of your own shortcomings and errors. Remember that, valuable as is the gift of speech, silence is often more valuable. Never retort a sharp or angry word. It is the second word makes the quarrel. Learn to speak in a gentle tone of voice. Learn to say kind pleasant things whenever opportunity offers. Study the character of each, and sympathize with all in their troubles, however small. Do not neglect little things if they can affect the comfort of others in the smallest degree. Avoid moods and pets and fits of sulkiness. Learn to deny yourselves and perfect others. Beware of meddlers and tale-bearers. Never charge a bad motive if a good one is conceivable.