

Our Contributors.

THANKSGIVING HINTS FOR THOSE WHO WERE NOT AT THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE.

BY KNONIAN.

No doubt the great majority of those who luxuriate in the green pastures of this corner went to church on Thanksgiving Day, entered devoutly and heartily into the service and put a respectable portion of their surplus on the collection plate. If they did so the chances are that they enjoyed their thanksgiving, that their turkey was tender and that the work of assimilation went on kindly. A man with a grateful spirit nearly always gets on better in this world than a natural born grumbler. Ingratitude causes dyspepsia and dyspepsia is the father of a thousand ills real or imaginary, and if imaginary all the worse on that account. A dyspeptic man suffers tremendously from things that never take place.

There is a remote possibility, however, that a few good people who glance at this corner were not in church on Thanksgiving Day, and there can be no harm in mentioning for their benefit a few things for which Canadians should be thankful. As Abraham Lincoln used to say, let us begin with a little story.

Some years ago the individual who loads up this column took a trip in the Western States. The country was at that time over-run with tramps, and the railway people had no little difficulty in keeping them off the trains. Near St. Paul they found an unfortunate fellow who had neither money nor ticket in one of the first class coaches. The conductor and brakeman hustled him out of the car and pushed him down the bank in a manner that might possibly have been construed into a breach of the constitution of the United States. The doctrine that all men are free and equal may be all very well as a theory, but it was made painfully evident then and there that if a citizen of the United States has neither money nor ticket he cannot ride on a railway in that Republic any more than he could in one of the effete monarchies of Europe. The only Jeffersonian simplicity we noticed was displayed by the officials in putting the poor fellow off the train. They just pushed him down the steps. A nice looking young man on the train who watched the operation evidently with pity for the unfortunate tramp, turned to his companions and said —

BOYS, IT'S A GREAT THING TO HAVE A NICKEL.

It is a great thing to have a "nickel," understanding "nickel" to mean a little money. If you have any doubt about the truth of that proposition just try how far you can ride on the nearest railway without money or ticket. If you are not then satisfied, try how long you can board at a first class hotel without money or credit. Try how much money your cheque can rake out of a bank if you have no money in the institution. Try anyone of a thousand things and you will soon be thoroughly impressed with the fact that it is a great thing to have a little money. You never know how great a blessing a little money is until you try to get along among strangers without any. Even in Toronto the good a total stranger without a nickel might be forced to the conclusion that the city is not quite as pious as some of the Pavilion orators used to say it was.

If anybody forgot to give thanks last week for the little money he has, he should do so yet. As a preliminary exercise, let him meditate for a while on the position he would be in if he had no pocket money. What could a man do in a world like ours without a little money? That question goes to the roots, and yet we venture to say thousands of men never give it a moment's consideration. The only thing they do is growl because they have not more money.

There are few Canadians without a "nickel." Of course young people who have not begun to earn money, preachers and various other kinds of people never have much, but the great majority of our people have a little, and, let us repeat, even a little money is an unspeakably great blessing.

There are various ways of getting a little money in this country, several of which do not square well with the decalogue. About the best way is to earn it, and then you know how much it is worth, and you feel a kind of self-respect in handling it, that you never can feel in handling money earned by somebody else.

Now let all those people who were not at the Thanksgiving service give thanks for the little money they have, for, we repeat, it is a great thing to have a little money. It is also a great thing

TO HAVE ABUNDANCE OF ROOM.

Not long ago we asked a young man who had just returned from a tour in Great Britain and several other countries in Western Europe how he would like to live over there. "Too many people," "Too many people," "Too many people" was his emphatic reply. There are too many people for comfort in all the older civilizations. They trample one another down, and so many of them want work that in many lines wages barely keep soul and body together.

We have any amount of room in Canada. Room and food may be found by untold millions between Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains. Why human beings should trample over one another in the older countries and almost starve to death when they can have homes in the North-West for nothing and abundance of food for tilling the prairie, is one of the mysteries not easily explained. We heard a man in

the North-West explain it by saying that people "love their native soil." No doubt they do, and that is all right, but we like to see a man have as much love for his children as for the soil of any country. The best soil for a poor man is the soil that gives his children bread and a good chance in life, and their mother a decent gown and bonnet to wear when she goes out to call on the neighbours. We back that kind of soil for a poor man against all the hills that ever pastured sheep and all the islands that ever starved a crofter. Sentiment is all very well, but the love of wife and children is surely as noble a sentiment as the love of rocks and mountains. Let us give thanks for room.

Food and raiment are great things. If you don't think so, try and do without them for a while. The trouble with too many of us is that the most valuable blessings—the blessings without which life would be an impossibility—are just the blessings that many never dream of giving thanks for. The every-day mercies are taken as a matter of course and too often taken with a growl.

Prophesying is a poor business, and prophesying evil is the poorest part of the business, but if the ingratitude shown by thousands of people in this country does not sooner or later bring national punishment of some kind, it is perfectly safe to say that the divine procedure towards Canada will be different from what it has been towards many other countries. Ingratitude is perhaps our national sin. It is the basest of all sins. There is no country under heaven in which a larger number of poor men have done fairly well than in Canada. Every ill we suffer from day to day is largely if not wholly of our own making. Let us stop growling, humble ourselves, behave better and give thanks. If we don't we may soon have a day of humiliation instead of a day of thanksgiving.

ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D., PH.D.

THE MINISTER'S TEMPTATIONS.

All Christians are subject to manifold temptations. As men and women called unto holiness they could not live in a world lying in the wicked one without temptations. And if this be true of the ordinary Christian, how much more true must it be of the minister who is a leader in the host, and therefore a shining mark to the enemy. His calling exposes him to temptation. He should not fear the face of man, and yet he may pay respect to persons. He should declare the whole truth, and perchance he may accommodate his teaching to the prejudices of his people, and keep off the unwelcome portions that would expose their sins and condemn their conduct. And so the very thing they need most they do not get. He should preach the Word, but because that has too great power of discovery and exposure and conviction, making men uneasy, he may turn aside into other realms and preach something outside of Scriptural truth. It too may be truth, but alas! not the truth that saves. It may entertain, but at the same time expose men to everlasting loss; for who knows when their appointed time will run out, when their opportunities will be all gone, and gone forever. Who knows? And who should dare to lose an opportunity of saving a soul. He should be instant in season and out of season; yet he may at times neglect his duty. The conditions may seem unfavourable, there is no desire for the wares in which he deals. He thinks he is justified in omitting that the Lord calls for. He should be a man of prayer, but he may consider his official acts as sufficient and so neglect the command "Enter into thy closet," etc. Why, temptations beleaguere the minister. On every side they assault him and harass him. He may be enthusiastic, but a cold formal congregation will soon cool him off; chill him almost to death. Oh, it takes the consciousness of eternity and the judgment seat to keep a minister enthusiastic in such conditions.

Rowland Hill was a man of enthusiastic nature and warm temperament—he loved Jesus and the souls of men and preached the gospel as one who believed it. Once when preaching at Worton, he exclaimed, "Because I am in earnest, men call me an enthusiast. But I am not, mine are words of truth and soberness. When I first came here I was working on yonder hill. I saw a gravel pit fall in, and bury three men alive. I shouted so loudly for help that I was heard in the town a distance of a mile. Help came and the men were rescued. No one called me an enthusiast then. And when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon sinners I must beseech them with cries and tears."

The minister may be sensitive and fear criticism. Many think that is the end of preaching. They conceive the sermon to be a cadaver laid out for the play of their scalpel. And a strong temptation lies here to overlook the true object of preaching to save souls and not to serve sermons. A sermon may be polished so fine that it may simply charm the ear, and never touch the heart. Dr. Cuyler of Brooklyn, one of the truly great men of our time, speaks to the minister in this way, "It is your business to stand up as the ambassador of the King of heaven, and to make your hearers afraid of you, or rather of your solemn, heaven sent message. In my early ministry I preached at Saratoga Springs; and the next day a plain working-man met me and said, 'Are not you the young man that preached in our meeting-house yesterday?' 'Yes, I am.' 'Well, I never felt so sorry for anyone when you got up, for I thought you did not know what a lot of cultured and critical people come to Saratoga. But I have noticed that if a minister during the first five

minutes convinces the people that he is trying to save their souls, he kills all the critics in the house." "That profound remark," says Dr. Cuyler, "of that plain Christian did me a world of good. When we are tempted by the dread of criticism, the only way is to realize that we are messengers of Jehovah, and to give our auditors so much reason to think of themselves that they will have no time to think of us." Most excellent advice is this!

The minister's life should be a confession of Christ. Vinet in his terse and beautiful way says of him, "The minister renders religion visible." Often he may be tempted to cover his light where it is most needed. An interesting story is told of the Rev. John Ryland, of Northampton, who being on a journey was overtaken by a violent storm, and was compelled to take shelter in the first inn he came to. The people of the house treated him with great kindness and hospitality. At length when the hour of rest approached, his host informed him that his chamber was prepared whenever he chose to retire. "But," said Mr. Ryland, "you have not had your family together, to read the Scriptures and to pray with them." The landlord confessed that he never thought of doing such a thing. "Then, sir," said Mr. Ryland, "I must beg you to order my horse immediately." The landlord and family entreated him not to expose himself to the inclemency of the weather at that late hour of the night; observing the storm was as violent as when he first came in. "May be so," replied Mr. Ryland, "but I had rather brave the storm than venture to sleep in a house where there is no prayer. Who can tell what may befall us before the morning? No sir, I dare not stay." The landlord still remonstrated, and expressing great regret that he should offend so agreeable a gentleman, at last said, he should have no objection "to call his family together," but he should not know what to do when they came. Mr. Ryland then proposed to conduct family worship, to which all readily consented. The family was immediately assembled, and Mr. Ryland called for a Bible; but no such book could be produced. However, he was enabled to supply the deficiency as he always carried a small Bible or Testament in his pocket. He read a portion of Scripture and then prayed with much fervour and solemnity, especially acknowledging the preserving goodness of God that none present had been struck dead by the storm, and imploring protection through the night. He earnestly prayed that the attention of all might be awakened to the things belonging to their everlasting peace, and that the family might never again meet in the morning, or separate at night without prayer. When he arose from his knees, almost every individual was bathed in tears, and the enquiry was awakened in several hearts, "Sir, what must we do to be saved?"

This day was indeed the beginning of days to that family; most if not all of them, became decided and devoted followers of Jesus Christ, and were the means of diffusing the knowledge of the gospel in a neighbourhood which had before been proverbially dark and destitute. Had Mr. Ryland yielded to a common temptation to temporize, no light had shone there, and the thought of that family would have been, ministers are no better than other people.

What a temptation there is to hide the sins of which we as ministers are guilty! What weakness the sin brings into our souls. It is said that when Origen, after his grievous falling into sin, was reading the Scriptures in the pulpit, he was silenced when coming on this passage: "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" The consciousness of his sin would not suffer him to speak. A temptation yielded to exposed him to further temptation!

What a temptation to a minister there is to stand in awe of a rich man! The glamour of his wealth fairly bewitches the man, whose eye ought to be like the eagle's, able to look into the sun. The only remedy for this feeling is to look at the man in the light of eternity and the judgment seat—then he dwindles into his proper proportions. Even great men are not above this temptation. But we are God's messengers, God's ambassadors, we represent Him. We do not go forth in our own interest, and so we may rid ourselves of the fear of man that bringeth a snare.

Let temptations come of any quarter they choose, there is for the minister the faithful promise of God: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." And this also: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—1 Cor. x. 13, Heb. ii. 18. Let us then commit ourselves and our way unto the Lord, and trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. We must be faithful unto death, that we may receive the crown of life.

JERUSALEM REVIVING.

NO XII.

THE FEAST OF PASSOVER.

Passover is the greatest yearly feast of the Jews, and most strictly kept. It commemorates the marvellous exodus from Egyptian bondage, when the Lord brought forth His chosen people after a prolonged training in the school of adversity, "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, great terrible-ness, signs and wonders" (Deut. xxvi. 8) in sight of the then civilized nations of the world.

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea,
Jehovah has triumphed, His people are free.