

house, and this is specially applicable to the poor. The service seems to them to be complicated, they cannot always find their places, and they shrink from appearing among their wealthier neighbours in shabby clothes. Too often, also, they meet with anything but an encouraging reception when they present themselves at the church door.

It would be easy to extend the list of the causes which all tend towards the result which we so greatly deplore, but we have noticed sufficient to indicate the difficulties which we have to meet.

The following methods have been found helpful in bringing about a steady increase in the number of habitual Church worshippers:—

1. Services in mission halls. These, if made bright and attractive, with plenty of hymn-singing, and short, telling addresses, are very valuable in drawing the careless and indifferent to listen to Christ's words, and may be used for leading them on to regular church attendance.

2. Special services (for men only, for women only, for children, for postmen, for shop-assistants, and the like) bring many to their first knowledge of the truth, and gradually build them up into faithful and devoted followers of our blessed Lord.

3. A system of welcoming strangers at the church doors by the churchwardens and others, finding them seats, and offering hymn books and prayer books, will induce many timid disciples to return again and again to worship God, instead of making them feel that they are not wanted.

The laity can do much to help in this matter by striving to realize within themselves, and to give expression to their realization, that all baptized Christians belong to the brotherhood of man in the great family of God, and by acting accordingly. We all desire and pray for a greater ingathering of the careless and sinful into the fold of Christ's Church. We must all use our utmost efforts to bring about this consummation.—*Montague Fowler, in Church Bells.*

RESPECT FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

SPECIAL SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. J. H. MOOREHOUSE, RECTOR OF ST. JAMES' CHURCH, INGERSOLL.

Text—"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."—I Thess. v. 12-13.

It is not easy to speak of one's own calling without appearance of egotism. But our text is a part of God's word, and as it is the office of the pulpit to expound that word, this portion may not be passed by. Hence, I need offer no apology for setting before you the duty of a Christian congregation towards the ministry of Christ.

The spirit and duty inculcated by the text is to "esteem them very highly in love." And the ground on which the duty rests is "for their work's sake." This places the esteem in which the ministry is to be held upon its true basis. Ministers are to be esteemed for their work's sake. There is a false basis upon which a minister's standing is placed very frequently, viz., that of personal popularity. This is greatly sought after by some congregations, and greatly pandered to by some ministers; but it is much to be feared that while minister and people are resolving themselves into a "mutual admiration society," the real work of the Lord will be left to care for itself—the truth of God will not be preached for fear of giving offence, and people will go to church to be entertained rather than spiritually benefited. Ability to please is set above learning, piety and zeal. The burning question of the hour is, "How do you like him?"—not, "Does he preach the truth?" Is he a faithful minister of Christ? The minister is to emulate the qualities of a buffoon or a courtier, rather than those of a prophet of the Lord. And so it goes on, leaving us to mourn over the degenerate conception of the Christian ministry which places foremost a quality in which an unconverted or a worldly man might enter the lists with far greater prospect of success. The minister who is "hail fellow well met" with every man for the mere sake of popularity, degrades his calling, and the congregation who set up such an ideal, and call for such a course, help him to degrade it. I this day enter my solemn protest against the carnal, worldly spirit which would make the minister's success depend upon his ability to please. The Lord grant Church members may rise to a higher ideal. Such a spirit is wretched child's play in connection with the most solemn things. True, the minister should be courteous and kind. In common with every Christian it is his duty to "please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. xv. 2). I am not speaking of esteem, respect, love and public confidence, for these are conducive to usefulness and will be prized by any right-minded man. But this spirit is as different from mere popularity and its accompanying vainglory as gold is from brass.

Our text contains three things, excluding mere

popularity, as a standard. St. Paul describes ministers as those who

(1) "Labor among you."—Is he diligent in his calling? Does he devote himself with zeal to the work to which he was ordained?

(2) "And are over you in the Lord."—He is a person vested with some authority. His office is not a mere empty name. Those who understand their position as members of the Church will respect the clergyman's office.

(3) "And admonish you."—When he stands in the pulpit to declare God's truth he will not be expected to soften it down or dilute it. He should speak in love, but that love is false and unfaithful that withholds the truth.

The minister himself must respect his office. He should endeavor to conform his life unto the holy office he bears, for he has no more right than anyone else to degrade that office. But such is the greatness of the undertaking that he needs to be helped and not hindered in it—his hands held up, not pulled down. As every soldier in the regiment gathers around and upholds the standard-bearer, so should Church members uphold the true dignity of that office, which the clergyman may be bearing with trembling hand. And when the clergyman has not himself degraded his office he will receive the respect of every noble-minded man and woman—others may be excused and pitied for their want of nobility of mind.

Yes, "for their work's sake." Around their office cluster holy associations—sweet, sad, sacred memories—all that is tenderest and deepest in the human heart. It is the minister who baptizes your tender and innocent children in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is he who joins you together in holy matrimony. He dispenses to you the sacred memorials of your Lord's dying love. He proclaims to you God's message of mercy or of warning. He visits the sick and tries to convey to them words of healing and hope; and when the last scene has come—when skilful doctor and patient nurse and kindly neighbour can do no more—it is again the minister whose voice sounds out the words of the Christian's hope, "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord."

"For their work's sake!" Shall anyone take this holy office that ought to be robed with the silken garb of highest reverence and esteem, and cast around it the coarse hempen of worldliness, the shoddy of the carnal mind and unholy, contending passion? Let him who does so, beware. It is written, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. cv. 15). Because superstitious reverence has at times invested the ministerial office with undue power, there is no reason for rushing to the opposite extreme in degrading it. God's word describes ministers as "ambassadors for Christ," as "stewards of the mysteries of God"; and those who respect God's word will respect their office. Said St. Paul, "I magnify mine office" (Rom. xi. 13).

The expression is not uncommon that the minister was "kicked out." "Kicked out" applied without a blush to the sacred office of the ministry of Christ! Which is most to be pitied, judge ye, the minister who suffers rudeness or the community where public sentiment has been allowed to sink so low that such an expression can be tolerated? Public sentiment ought to be so exalted and purified that such expressions would cease to be heard, for those who can let themselves down to speak or act so, manifest the same spirit as sneers at the Bible, profanes the Sabbath and scoffs at the restraints of religion. Then, when this spirit prevails, we are not far from anarchy and mob law. Hence, when the tendency of any spirit is seen to be evil, it should be promptly checked and overcome; crush the egg if you would not have the cockatrice hatched. In all intelligent and refined communities the office of a clergyman is respected, for he is well known to be one of the chief conservers of public morals and all that tends to well-being. He is the official representative of his church, and as such is entitled to respect just as the ambassador claims respect because of the country he represents. What is called society, with the peculiar freak that so often characterizes its wayward movements, does not, as is well-known, always include either the most intellectual or influential within its circle. But even society, when intelligent and cultured, always readily accords a clergyman his rightful position, for in so doing it but respects itself. Indeed, the social condition of any place, as higher or lower in the scale of refinement and progress, may be determined by the estimation in which the office of the clergyman is held. A man's regard for the office will, as the negro said, "depend upon his broughten up," for good breeding respects the Church and all offices pertaining to it. Church of England people are taught by their own catechism that they must "submit themselves to all their governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters," and they should set an example in this respect to their children. They will not, among other things, abruptly style their clergyman by his surname with-

out even according the ordinary title of Mr. When he is true to his ordination vows, a clergyman cannot be expected to devote himself to the ways and amusements of society, for, if for no other reason, he has not the time. But as a clergyman, he sincerely desires the highest welfare of all the families under his care, and should therefore be welcomed by all. Any other spirit in a parish is suicidal—destructive of its own best interests. A mother has often ridiculed her clergyman in the hearing of her boys. When these youths grew up they went astray; but when the heart-broken mother appealed to her clergyman to influence them, the aged man tearfully shook his head,—"Madam, I might have had influence with them, but you yourself have destroyed it by your words and example."

WAYS IN WHICH ESTEEM SHOULD BE MANIFESTED.

"Esteem them highly in love." How shall this esteem show itself?

(1) Respect their independence.—No one is independent. But there is an idea slumbering in the minds of some that the clergyman is peculiarly dependent—yes, sometimes in such a way as to rob any manly man of self-respect. Clergymen are frequently patronized when they are but receiving their bare rights. It is said the congregation "hired" them, but according to Scripture they are vastly more than hirelings, though the ignorant or unconverted may not perceive it. It is true the minister is not independent. He does not seek to be. In entering upon his sacred calling he voluntarily resigned a portion of his independence for the sake of Christ's cause. Like his Master he says, "I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke xxii. 27). But is the congregation independent? Is not any Church of England congregation dependent upon the ordained minister for the administration of the sacraments, for the public services of the Church, for the Christian and decent burial of the dead? Are they not continually accepting these services at the hands of the clergy—that which they must needs be without were there no body of men ordained and duly appointed to render such necessary services? How forlorn and desolate, like an orphaned family, may a parish speedily become that has no clergyman at its head! People need the Church far more than the Church needs them, and those who are discreet will have a care not to court humiliation by counting themselves out of the Church or interposing any barrier between themselves and the Church's kindly offices, of which they are the constant and dependent recipients. It is true that a clergyman desires the respect and love of his congregation. But ought not any right-minded congregation to desire equally the respect of their clergyman? It is a principle which applies both ways. It is true the parish gives temporal support. But are spiritual counsel, guidance, sympathy and help, rendered by the clergyman, of no value? Apply the words of the courageous and high-minded apostle, St. Paul, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. ix. 11). The extreme difficulty sometimes experienced by congregations to obtain the services of efficient clergymen should convince them that independence is not all on one side. And how often, even in such minor things as a testimonial of character required in certain business transactions, people are obliged to turn to their clergyman. In short, society would have to be reconstructed on some other basis than that at present existing before anyone can speak of the clergy as a dependent body of men. People of intelligence will abandon such a position, for it is, as we have seen, utterly untenable.

(2) Respect their reputation.—When a clergyman trusts a congregation enough to undertake work in their midst, they should feel that he has entrusted them with what is more precious than gold—his reputation and the peace of mind of himself and family. Nobility of mind will prompt a congregation to respond to his trust, and treat it as sacred. Unless where the clergyman proves himself unworthy, attacks should never be made upon him and his work by those whom he is faithfully trying to help. When a clergyman takes off his coat and thrashes a man for insolence or meanness, people say he has degraded his office. But which is the degraded—he, or the man, who, coward like, thought he could take advantage to insult the office? Clergymen are subjected to a test as regards character from which most laymen would shrink; for, inconsistent and unscriptural as it is, one standard is often set up for the pulpit and another for the pew. Moreover, parishes attain reputation as well as clergymen—whether peaceable or quarrelsome, alive or dead, spiritual or worldly, truthful or unreliable, honorable or mean, just or unjust. It is possible for parishes to let themselves get into such a snaggy, snarling condition that no clergyman who values either his reputation or peace of mind would care to trust himself in their midst. Instead of being cheered in his work, he is frozen, or his eyes, nose and mouth are filled with the dust of contention. And when parishes are making diligent inquiries as