

Our Contributors.

DO THE BEST YOU CAN.

BY KNOXIAN.

Long years ago it was our happy privilege to enjoy the friendship of a good old lady who had a peculiar way of saying good-bye. She was a ripe saint of God, a stalwart Presbyterian of the best type, a devoted mother, a bright, cheery, hopeful woman whose presence blest and brightened her home and helped on the congregation of which for more than a quarter of a century she has been a useful and influential member. Parting from her pastor she always said in kindly, encouraging tones "Good-bye. Do the best you can."

The voice that used to utter these words has long been silenced in death, but we hear it still. It has come back many a time and it always comes when most needed. If pressed with work and at a loss to know what should be done first, that gentle, encouraging voice often whispered, "Do the best you can." Brought face to face with difficult duty and conscious of inability to perform it aright the voice rarely, if ever failed to say, "Do the best you can."

If a man does the best he can what more can he do. What more should anybody expect him to do? If a minister preaches as well as he can he certainly cannot preach any better. If your doctor does all he can for you what more do you expect from him. Doctors cannot keep people alive when their time has come. If your lawyer does all he can for you, you have no right to complain. Perhaps your case was so bad that even Blackstone could have done nothing for you. If your tailor has done the best he can you should not complain of a misfit. Your anatomy may be so peculiarly constructed that no artist on earth could make your figure look well. Boot-men are often cruelly blamed when they have done not only the best they can, but the best possible. A boot that fits must sometimes be of a peculiar shape.

There are circumstances, however, in which a man should scarcely be allowed to defend himself by saying he is doing the best he can. If he blows and brags about his work and tries to make you believe he can do things better than anybody else and then does his work poorly, it is not for him to say he is doing the best he can. He led you to believe he could do things better than he can and by so doing put himself out of court.

If a minister by himself, or through his friends leads a vacant congregation to believe that he is an extraordinary sort of preacher and pastor that has done wonderful things in some far away place and if he turns out a very ordinary kind of man who does work barely up to the average he has no right to say that he is doing as well as he can. He professed to have done better than he can and he should be held to his own estimate of himself or to the estimate given by his friends.

If a quack pretends to be able to cure everything and if it is found as it usually is found, that he can do nothing but bleed the pocket of his patient, he should not be allowed to say he is doing the best he can. He should not have pretended to do what he knew he was not able to do.

People who push themselves into positions of prominence and fall cannot be allowed to excuse themselves by saying they are doing the best they can.

If a man schemes to get a chance to make a speech, perches himself on the most conspicuous place on the platform, puts on excruciating airs and then says nothing in a few broken-backed sentences, he should not be allowed to plead that he did the best he could. The plea may be true, in fact, but nobody asked him to do anything. He pushed himself and he should be allowed to take all the results of the pushing.

People who scheme to turn others out of positions and then do poorly in the positions themselves should never be allowed to excuse indifferent work by saying, we are doing the best we can. A man who plots to displace a neighbour in order that he may get the neighbour's place should not complain of criticism however severe. Severe criticism is the right thing for him.

Circumstances like these are, however, exceptional. In all cases in which people are regularly and properly assigned to their work the plea that a man is doing the best he can should evidently have much force. It always has much force with fair men of judicial minds. The first question, the main question about any minister should be: "Is he doing the best he can. Under all the conditions and limitations of his position; with the amount of help he has and the means and opportunities he enjoys, is he doing all that could reasonably be expected of him." That is the question Mr. D. J. Macdonnell, or Principal Caven, or Principal MacVicar, or Principal Grant, or Dr. Reid, or Dr. Lalng, or Dr. Gregg, or Dr. MacLaren, or Dr. Cochrane, or any influential Presbyterian with a judicial mind would ask. Alas it is not the question always asked even by Presbyterians. Some people supposed Presbyterians would shout "Down with him, he doesn't draw." Others would cry, "Out with him, he does not bring in the money." A third party would say, "He should resign, because if he doesn't Matilda Ann Smith, and Jemima Jones will leave the choir and then what." And some would even say, "He must go because old Twenty per cent. has stopped his subscription. The Master would ask, "Is this servant of mine doing the best he can?"

Brother are you doing the best you can? If before God and conscience you can say "yes," then go on with your work and leave the results to the Master. Let the growers grow, and the croakers croak, and the critics snarl, and the whiners whine, and the pugilists fight; let the men who have patent modes for turning sinners instantly into full-grown Abrahams, try their patents; let the shouters shout and the rounders go around and the men who puff themselves puff until the long-suffering Editor turns pale, go you on quietly with your Master's work and the Master will take care of you and yours. Do the best you can and all will be well in the end.

But, brother, be reasonably sure you are doing the best you can.

CAST-OFF PASTORS.

To the Editor:

I was glad to notice that in your last issue you called attention to the manner in which ministers yet in their prime are being cast out of their charges, and refused entrance into vacant congregations on account of their age.

Instances of this cruel treatment of God's servants might be given from many presbyteries. And these ministers find no defenders. They are helpless. They have to walk out of their homes, and lay down their livelihood at the bidding of irresponsible parties. Their sessions offer no resistance to the injustice. Their managers hope a young man will raise the finances of the congregation. It may be said that these ministers have fallen short in duty, in vigour, in sympathy with the young.

Rather the case is, that their office-bearers have not helped them in their work, they have allowed the minister to bear the heavy burden alone. The young people have gone away on every occasion to other meetings than their own, they have kept aloof from their pastor, have spoken disrespectfully of him, have disregarded his counsels, and have made a stranger of him, and because under the burden and in the tollsome effort to carry the whole con-

gregation himself he wearies, he grows faint, they turn upon him and say he lacks energy, he is too old.

The church in which this is a common experience must suffer serious consequences from such a state of things, and as you say, I trust the attention of the Church will be directed to the subject that such a doom may no longer be the inevitable close of a prolonged pastorate.

Immediately after deploring this state of things you proceed to express thankfulness for the summer session and its results. In this I cannot agree with you. I am willing to stand alone in my view of this question. It is this policy of the church in laying the burden of her home mission work on unordained men, and often very young men, which is leading to the laying aside of the older men whenever an opportunity occurs. The people are being taught all through our Presbyteries that a young man yet in the university or beginning his theological course, can carry on church work, preach and visit quite as well, and play lawn tennis with the young people much better than the old fog of fifty years of age. He cannot of course administer the sacraments, but our people are also being taught that preaching is not so important as the sacraments, since we allow almost any one to preach, but only ordained men to administer sacraments. I find no fault with the young men. They obey orders. They do good work. At the same time the church reaps the result of her policy in the laying aside or driving out of her best men at the very time when they are most fit for and most deserve promotion. But it appears to be thought by those who lead the church and who are not always the wisest, that there is no other way in which God's work can be overtaken. That there is only one possible right way, and that it has been discovered. The young man who is to preach to ignorant heathen is, properly educated to the highest point before he is accepted as a foreign missionary.

The intelligent and well instructed people at home are ministered to by young men who have not received any training for the work. My views is that he who provides us with foreign missionaries would provide us also with home missionaries if we sought them in the right way, that to-day the burden of our mission work falling so heavily on the shoulders of our young men will affect the scholarship of the ministry already admittedly low in many instances from this very cause, and that to this enterprising policy, as it is supposed to be, we owe very largely the deplorable treatment our older ministers receive. I would like to support my position more largely, but will not trespass on your space further at present. The martyrdom which is inflicted within the Church by professing Christians is much more wicked in the sight of God than any hostility experienced at the hands of the heathen. The whole Church should unite to wipe away this reproach.

I am yours,

D. D. McLEOD.

PRESBYTERIAL VISITATIONS TO CHILLIWACK, B.C.

BY PRESBYTERY OF NEW WESTMINSTER.

On Monday, Oct. 2nd, Revs. E. D. McLaren, Vancouver, and James Buchanan, Richmond, visited the congregations of the Presbytery of New Westminster, in the Chilliwack Valley. Taking the C.P.R. to Harrison, 61 miles east of Vancouver, they rowed down the Harrison River and crossed the Fraser to Camp Slough, in an Indian canoe, which carries Her Majesty's mail. At McDonald's Landing, they were met by Mr. M. Swartoot, missionary in charge of Upper Chilliwack, who drove them to the first place of meeting. Camp Slough is a narrow stream, 12 miles long, having the Fraser at both extremities. Our church is situate midway, and is a neat

little structure costing \$800 and having only \$40 of a debt, a fact speaking volumes for the five or six families which compose our congregation there. Upper Chilliwack has three stations, Camp Slough, Rosedale and Prairie. At all these points, Mr. Swartoot conducts service every Sabbath, besides Sabbath school and Bible class at two. Prayer meetings are also maintained at each station.

The deputation delivered addresses on the schemes of the Church at all the points, better organization was urged, and where weakness was discernible, counselled the methods whereby these could be rectified. These meetings could not fail to exert a beneficial effect on the Church in Upper Chilliwack. Mr. Swartoot, who is well known in Parkdale, is doing a good work in that backwoods settlement, which lies at the furthest eastern point in the Presbytery.

Leaving Prairie at five p.m., on Tuesday, the deputation was driven to Chilliwack by Rev. Mr. Logan, the pastor, in charge there, where a missionary meeting was held in the evening.

Chilliwack has a fine church and manse with ten acres of a glebe. It struggled bravely from being a mission station, and became an augmented congregation, and under the present able pastor, will likely within a short time, become a self-sustaining charge. It has taken up the quarterly system of collection for the schemes, and although the people are burdened with their local liabilities, they are making a splendid showing for the work of the Church.

Under the fostering care of the Home Mission and Augmentation Committees, these congregations in the Chilliwack Valley are able to do good service for the Lord's cause, and it is to be hoped the Church's liberality will enable the Committees to continue their help to these sparsely-peopled districts.

THE NEEDS OF WESTERN MISSION FIELDS.

At the meeting of the H. M. C. of the General Assembly, held lately in this city, 30 missionaries were appointed to the Synod of Man. and N. W. T., and eight to the Synod of British Columbia. Among these are many who were in the field last season. Eleven Missions near Winnipeg will be supplied from Manitoba College during the winter, and Presbyteries, despairing of getting supply, decided to close for the winter a number of Missions that should have continuous supply. But in addition to these are 12 important Missions in the Synod of Man. and the N. W. T., and seven in the Synod of B. C., for which we have no supply. Will not 19 young men volunteer to supply these fields for a year of even six months? There are said to be 107 students enrolled in the College in Montreal, 115 are said to have taken the course in whole or in part, (84 of the former) in Knox and Queen's will bring the numbers up to the neighborhood of 300. This is half the number of ministers of our Church in active service in Ontario and Quebec. Could not a score of them undertake to supply these needy fields in the West? By reason of the Summer session arrangement students need not lose a day in graduating, they will be engaged in the work to which they have given their lives, and they will do much to help the growth of the Church, to prevent lapsing, and to advance the interest of true religion. The undersigned will be glad to hear from any wishing to help.

J. ROBERTSON.

544 Church St., Toronto, Oct. 14, '93.

Glasgow F.C. Presbytery have agreed to recommend the Assembly to allow Rev. Alexander Andrew, who has accepted the editorship of Drummond's publications, to remain retired minister of the White Memorial church. Some of his friends had been advising him not to "step down" to an editorship, but he replied that his sphere would now be the world.