

## Our Contributors.

### GOOD SOCIETY FOR MINISTERS WHO WORK IN THE COUNTRY.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Rural Dean of the Presbyterian Church has just returned to his comfortable manse. Vacation is over and he must begin work again. The manse seems very quiet. He has just been on crowded trains and crowded steamboats, in crowded hotels and big cities, and now that the sound of the cars has died away and the motion of the steamer left his brain, he feels a little like the man who said: "Oh solitude, where are thy charms?" In fact, the rural manse seems a trifle lonesome. The evenings are becoming long and the Rural Dean longs for society. As he sits in the twilight and toasts his pedal extremities (No. 12's perhaps) at a nice glowing fire he soliloquizes thus: "On the whole I am very comfortable in my present position. My people are very kind. They have provided me with a very comfortable home, and meet all their engagements with me promptly and cheerfully. I have nothing to complain of in that way. They are regular in their attendance at church, and I think honestly endeavour to profit by the services. They are good solid people. I have great reasons to be thankful when I think of the manner in which many ministers are kicked from pillar to post by callous, quarrelsome, fault-finding congregations. But I do feel just a little lonesome in this quiet corner. I would not go anywhere as a candidate; but if it should please the Head of the Church to offer me a congregation in a town or city, I think I would accept. I feel the need of society. I am almost certain to become rusty here. I need association with congenial spirits to keep up my intellectual tone."

Now, brother, let us join issue on this point and "have it out" if we should take all winter to settle it. The point is that you have no society of a professional type and for the want of such society you are lonely and in danger of becoming rusty. Did you ever hear what D'Arcy McGee said on that point. A prominent public man of this country, more given to sporting than reading, called him a book worm. The genial Irishman replied that he always did like the society of good books better than that of middling men. How would the maxim of the eloquent Irishmen meet your case, brother? You have a good library. Each book in that library, worth a place there, may be a very entertaining and profitable companion.

Supposing you lived, we shall say, in Toronto, for you know Toronto is the centre of everything good and great in Canada. The National University is there, and Osgoode Hall and the Art School and half-a-dozen colleges and the Parliament buildings (a perfect gem of architectural beauty) and many other institutions which have been established and are maintained by the people of the Province, but which the typical citizen of the Queen City always refers to as Toronto institutions. It is a way he has. The reason why his mind works in this way is probably because he believes there is nobody and nothing of much consequence in Ontario outside of Toronto. Now, brother, suppose you lived in this city which the *Globe* and *Mail* always refer to as a "great city"; suppose you lived there and enjoyed the society of all the distinguished people of this great city; suppose you were blessed with the companionship of the Chalmerses and Guthries and Spurgeons and Whitfields of the Toronto pulpit, it is very doubtful if even then you would gain anything in the matter of society.

You wish to converse with some great man on a point of Theology, do you, brother? Well, look at these three volumes on the first shelf in your library. These volumes were written by Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton. Take one of them down and have a talk on the point with Hodge. If there is any point that Hodge can't throw light upon, you may find some difficulty in getting light even in Toronto. Brother, you will excuse us for saying that if you were on more familiar terms with Hodge, you might perhaps not sigh so much for society. Cultivate an acquaintance with Hodge.

There are some knotty points of Exegesis you would like to discuss with some one. Well, that is good work for a minister no doubt. Just take down Alford and Ellicott and Eadie and Hodge and go on with the discussion. If there is any better exegetical company in

this country than these men this contributor has not heard of it.

Oh, but you want to speak about Homiletics. You want an occasional talk about texts and divisions and the best methods of making, delivering and applying sermons. That's right, brother. Stick to that. If some of our ministers talked more about sermons and less about committees it would be better for themselves and for the Church. "What did you preach on last Sabbath?" is a far more important question than "What committees are you on this year?" "How did you handle that subject" is a far more encouraging question coming from a minister than a question about some "case" because it shows his mind is working in the right way. All the old veteran ministers who worked thirty or forty years in one place were great on texts and divisions and talked very much about preaching. The typical Church lawyer always talks about preaching in a half apologetic way. He belittles the main part of his work and the people invariably belittle him. They do right in so doing. Now it must be admitted that it is a very stimulating and refreshing thing for a young minister to have an occasional talk with an enthusiastic sermonizer. Undoubtedly it is. A young preacher with any soul could not talk to Dr. Ormiston half-an-hour about preaching without feeling the fire burn. You always left him feeling that preaching is a great business. You leave some ministers feeling that preaching is a small business which should be proceeded with in an apologetic way. A minister who produces that impression should perhaps be expelled. Then the Hamilton Doctor could rattle off any number of good divisions in a few minutes. Every shake of the bushy locks was good for a first-class division. Dr. Gregg, Dr. MacVicar and Professor McLaren were enthusiastic sermon makers at one time and always had a good long list of capital sermon plans.

But we must come back to the brother we were addressing. You want a congenial spirit to discuss sermons with? Well, find one in your library. There is Shedd. Shedd is good. Talk a while with Shedd. Then take down Dabney. We understand Dr. Proudfoot prefers Dabney to any writer on Homiletics. When you are tired talking to Dabney try Hoppin. Hoppin is one of our favourites. If you don't enjoy the society of any of these take Phelps. If you don't enjoy a talk with Phelps perhaps there is something wrong with your taste. But these are not all. If you have the Yale course you may converse with Beecher, John Hall, Taylor, Bishop Simpson, Crosby and several other eminent and enthusiastic preachers. Spurgeon has several fine works on preaching. Now if you are not satisfied with such Homiletic society as Shedd, Dabney, Hoppin, Phelps, Hall, Taylor, Simpson, Crosby and Spurgeon, we cannot say anything more. Perhaps some brother says he is a philosopher and finds the work of these men too shallow for his mighty intellect. Brother, there is no help for you.

You want some literary society, brother, do you? Well, take down Macaulay and some standard writers and converse with them. There are some very eminent literary men in Toronto, especially editors, but there are not many whose literary productions surpass those of Macaulay. Do become intimate with Macaulay.

You like to listen to good speeches, brother, and you think if you were in Toronto you might hear some fine orating occasionally at the Bar, or in the Local Parliament. No doubt the eloquence in these places is wonderful; but if you cannot enjoy it take down your old volume of "British Eloquence," and read Chatham, Mansfield, Burke, Grattan, Fox, Pitt, Erskine, Curran, Brougham and, if you are proof against the sarcastic spirit, Junius. You won't be likely to hear any better men than these in Canada. Reading the speeches of such men gives a preacher good mental exercise, and if they are read rapidly and kept well in hand the discipline is the very best for one who aims at a free extemporaneous delivery.

You would like to—well—yes—ah—I understand you like the drama. Of course you wouldn't go to the theatre, brother, if you lived in a large city. That is to say, you might drop in occasionally to see a play of Shakespeare as students of Divinity in Edinburgh are said to do, but you would not go regularly. Of course not. You would simply go once in a great while to study the elocution of a star actor just as good people go to a combination circus to see the animals. It might not be any harm if you did. But seeing you

have no opportunities in that way, read Shakespeare. Study Shakespeare. Regular, persistent reading of the dialogues in Shakespeare is the best discipline on this earth to break up a monotonous delivery. Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: a minister that has a good library and good literary taste need never lack good society; and though his library consists of the Bible and Shakespeare he may have the best possible companions.

### SCHAFF'S "TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES."

BY REV. PRINCIPAL M'KNIGHT, D.D.

(Continued.)

II. Light thrown on the early history of the Church.

The book does not formally teach what we now call doctrine. The first part is a system not of doctrine but of duty. Yet the leading facts and truths of the Christian religion are assumed, and incidentally referred to. It is to the account of Church organization and worship that we turn with deepest interest.

(1) Organization.—There is no reference to any visible centre of unity and Church authority. There is prayer that the Church of God be gathered in from the ends of the earth; and the feeling of Christian brotherhood finds full expression. But the form of organization, so far as we can infer from negative evidence, was congregational.

The ministry, in relation to a particular congregation, was partly occasional and partly stated or regular. The permanent office-bearers were bishops and deacons. But congregations also enjoyed the occasional ministry of apostles, prophets and teachers. The apostles were itinerant evangelists, whose aim was not to edify settled churches but to carry the Gospel to unbelievers. The word is used in this broad sense in the New Testament, where we find it applied to such missionaries as Barnabas, Silvanus and Timotheus. There is not the slightest hint of their possessing any prelatic authority. An apostle was to be hospitably entertained for a day or two; but if he wished to prolong his visit to a third day he was to be dismissed as a false prophet.

The prophets found the most appropriate sphere for their gift in the public assemblies of the Church. They spoke under the influence of the Spirit and enlarged the service of the Sacred Supper as the Spirit gave them utterance. Sometimes a prophet might excite curiosity, and deepen the interest in his utterances, by symbolical action. Ezekiel warned Jerusalem of its approaching overthrow by lying on his side besieging an iron pan, the emblem of the city wall. So a Christian prophet might set forth approaching trials or deliverances by giving a public performance (*ποιων*, almost *δραματιζων*) presenting a mechanical symbol of the Church and the things which should befall it. The acting might be a poor affair—the handling of rude earthly things to represent things spiritual and heavenly; but it was not to be despised as mere jugglery. One proviso, however, is interposed. Such symbolic action was not to be imposed on the Church as an ordinance to be observed in the future. The tendency to ritual development in worship may have been already showing itself when our book was written. As there were false prophets it was necessary to try the men, though without presuming to sit in judgment on spiritual utterances. The tests were such as these: a true prophet has the ways of the Lord; he is unselfish, unmercenary and practises what he preaches.

The teacher must have presented a less conspicuous figure than the prophet. His mode of instruction would be for the most part conversational, amid a group of pupils like that of the Jewish Rabbi or the Greek philosopher. But we have no details.

The interesting point in regard to these two orders is that, although normally unattached and moving from place to place, they had a tendency to settle. And the tendency is encouraged. When they find an appropriate sphere for the exercise of their gift, sustenance is to be provided for them out of the first-fruits of the Christian community. Their services promote the edification of the Church; and the labourer is worthy of his hire. On the other hand, when there are no prophets or teachers, their ministry is discharged by the permanent officers of the congregation—the bishops or inspectors and the deacons or attendants. Performing the same services, they are entitled to the