

Our Contributors.

CAN NOTHING MORE BE DONE?

BY KNOXONIAN.

The vast majority of our pastors are doing the best they can. Judged by the figures in the blue book some of them may not seem to be doing much, but go into their manse and congregations, estimate their discouragements and difficulties, note the lack of sympathy and efficient help they have to contend against, and if you are an intelligent fair man you often wonder they succeed as well as they do. The blue book merely tells what a minister does, it never shows what he endures or endeavours.

There is a little army of elders, deacons, managers, Sabbath School teachers and officers, missionary women, Christian Endeavorers and other active Christian people the great majority of whom are doing about all they can reasonably be expected to do. Most of them have to earn their bread and their Church work has to be done after working hours. Many of them work for other people and cannot give a moment to the Church until the employer is served.

Of course it goes unsaid that there are many people in the Church who do no work of any kind and some who might do much better work. We all know that, but still the fact remains that many are doing the best they can.

There is an unpaid body of business men in the Church who handle two millions of money every year, more successfully than loan companies or banks handle money. They do their work well and do it without cant or snivel. All honor to them.

The eldership is the main stay of Presbyterianism the world over. The elders are in touch with the people, they feel the pulse of the Church, and if they are wise men, as they usually are, they can direct the mind of the Church as no other body of men can. Elders have an enormous power in Presbyterianism for good or evil and to their everlasting honor be it said the power is nearly always exercised for good. A really wicked elder is as rare a sight as a really wicked Presbyterian minister.

Presbyterianism is usually considered a staid, solid, dignified kind of system. It has, however, its comic side. See that clerical lad just out of college, where he perhaps was plucked once or twice and should have been plucked half a dozen times lecturing the Presbytery on "the field" and the "the work" and all that sort of thing while a solid elder of sixty, who has done more work in a day than the youth will perhaps do in ten years sits humbly at his feet.

There is one sight more comically humiliating than that, and that is the familiar spectacle of a Presbyterian sustained by the Church patronizingly addressing an elder who helps to sustain the Church. That elder's wife or daughter—to say nothing about the man himself—may have done more for the Church in a year than the patronizing Presbyterian may have done all his life. Surely a weakling who is carried should not patronize the people who carry him.

Assuming, then, that many in the Church are doing in their individual capacity all that can reasonably be expected of them, why is not more good done? Why are so many ministers so dissatisfied with their surroundings that they are anxious to move? Why are there seventy or eighty applications for a "hearing" in congregations not in any way especially attractive as fields of labor? We honestly believe that the Presbyteries as they are seen in meeting are largely to blame. A Presbytery is called a spiritual court. What spiritual help does an average Presbytery give to its members. Does it strengthen their faith? Does it increase their love? Does it stimulate their zeal? Do members receive any spiritual tonic at an average Presbytery meeting? Do they

go home braced up, brightened, and braver for their life work. Do they feel that they have had a fresh start and can go on with renewed strength? Does the brother who is struggling hard against special difficulties in his congregation go home feeling that he can meet them and bear them with more faith, more patience and more hope because he has been at Presbytery. Notoriously the reverse is the case in too many Presbyteries. Not only does the meeting do no good in a spiritual sense, it may do harm. It may send ministers home chafed and wearied, and, worse than that, send good elders home utterly disgusted.

Is that all and the best the fundamental court of the Church can do. Surely not.

Improvement, however, is no easy matter. At the first step toward reform you will be met with the cry, "Business must be done—we come here for business." Certainly business must be done, but is the business all about the machinery to the exclusion of the only motive power that can drive it? Must the business be as secular as the business of a county council? Need the business ever be characterized by methods that suggest the political caucus.

The first step taken and you are met by the people who act as if anything spiritual is contrary to "use and wont" in a Church Court—the same kind of people who used to fight against the dispensation of the Lord's supper in the General Assembly. If they do not openly oppose they try secretly to throw cold water on the proposal and mutter about "Plymouthism," "Evangelism," or something of that kind. The very people who need help most are, as a rule, just the very ones who resist any attempt to go as a body to the only source whence help may be obtained.

More to follow.

"HISTORY, PROPHECY AND THE MONUMENTS."

REV. J. C. MACKEE, A.M., BRIDGEN, ONT.

In the midst of the manifold duties of our respective parishes, there are those of us who love to browse over the fields of the literature and philology of the Northern and Southern Semites and to be charmed with Prof. Sayce's brilliant "speculations" on the marvellous discovery, in 1887, of those clay tablets at Tell-el-Amarna, in Upper Egypt—"these letters," as a writer says, in the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1892, "which give us the language of the Semitic population of Palestine about the time of the Hebrew conquest. From this language—not Hebrew we are shown that the Hebrews did not, as Wellhausen supposes, adopt the Canaanite language, but the speech of a pure desert tribe, which through isolation had grown to differ from that of the settled Semitic peoples of Palestine, and which, in later times, stood to the vernacular of the lower classes in the same relationship which pure Arabic now holds to peasant dialects in Syria and in Egypt." In this speech "a rich vocabulary is present," that belongs not to the adjacent country, but to Palestine itself, "and older than the earliest date ascribed to the Old Testament." To all who enjoy the accounts of such investigations and discoveries the recent work of Prof. J. F. McCurdy comes with its heavily and richly laden treasures of the professor's ripened and sound scholarly mind as almost a gift from heaven.

Emphasizing the importance of the historical, as this gifted author does; showing us that "to understand anything we must know its history;" looking on the entire "evolution of Semitic life and thought" so grandly; taking the meaning of the history of those remarkable peoples in its "long perspective,"—he clearly demonstrates the mental and political wealth of the present that in the main comes to us as an heritage from the Aryan mind, whilst the moral and spiritual have largely come from the Semitic. The one, the Aryan, trying to take in its comprehensive sweep the whole analysis

of Man; the other, the Semitic, majestically rising to the heavens, to try to "apprehend and comprehend God." The one, the Aryan, broadly grasping and classifying and generalizing matter and spirit; the other, the Semitic, confining itself to the narrow spheres of that which is "close at hand, and of direct practical moment." The one, the Semitic, comparatively unprogressive, whilst the other, the Aryan, is ever keen, nervous and ready to march forward, we see that, notwithstanding all these differences, as the writer beautifully and tersely puts it, "*the Semitic mind has done as much for the world through its intuitions and postulates as the Aryan mind has achieved through reflection and demonstration.*" (The italics all mine!) We do not pretend to know whether the critics, whom the professor so graciously invites, will agree or not with all his conclusions. Probably they will not, but one thing we do know: that the reverence of Prof. McCurdy for the sacred scriptures of God is most marked. The volume is dedicated to his mother in a dedication at once graceful, tender and kind. The paper and typography of the book are excellent. At this holiday season it would be a most noble act on the part of the people of every Presbyterian congregation in this entire Dominion if they would hand their pastor a copy of this admirable work—one which we think, to be a credit to the patient research and scholarly diligence of our day and country. We await the publication of the second volume with the deepest interest.

THE AIMS OF OUR CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.*

It is proper that I should join in offering congratulations to the Principal of this College on the completion of this spacious and beautiful building on which he has spent so much thought and energy. It is a credit to his engineering skill and an ornament to the capital of H. H. Maharajah Holkar, through whose liberality the site was furnished, rendering its erection possible. Whenever the eye of the Maharajah rests on the building he will feel no regret that he gave its site to the Canadian Mission.

When Mr. Wilkie asked me to give an address as a representative of the mission staff he said that he hoped all would from the beginning realize the necessity of keeping the building sacred for the use of the Master. As a band of missionaries we join earnestly in this hope. Whatever be the form of our work, or the nature of the methods employed, our one aim is to use every agency for the purpose of bringing souls into living relation to the Lord Jesus. Sometimes it is said that education is but a trap wherewith to catch unwary youths, and that missionaries under the garb of educationalists are but proselytizers. But those who know us best know that such a charge is not true. We make no hesitation in declaring that our purpose is through education to bring scholars and students into the kingdom of God, and to fit them the better for the duties they owe to their fellows and to their God. If trap it be it is one into which they walk with their eyes open. Surely no one who looks at and understands the mottoes over the porch doors, of this building, and on the wall before you, can fail to see that the purpose of this College is manifest. A young man comes from the city, we will suppose, to attend on the classes here. He comes for instruction and guidance, and as he enters the porch his eyes catch the words written over the opposite doorway, "God's Word—Our Guide." From this he may learn that though he will receive instruction in history, science, philosophy, etc., he will be taught that guidance in life's duties will be found not in these things, but in the Word of God. As he turns to enter the

hall he will see written over the door, "Our Aim is God's Glory." With the Word of God in his hand he has the rule by which that aim may be reached. Advancing a little further towards this auditorium his eye will catch these words written in illuminated letters on the wall above us, "Holiness unto the Lord," "Ye are the temples of the living God," "The temple of God is holy." And these words will constantly remind him that by holiness alone can God be glorified, and that only in the holy heart will the holy God dwell, not in any pantheistic or material or physical sense, but in such a sense that where the thoughts, feelings, purposes and motives are holy he will in a special way reveal himself and give a blessed sense of fellowship. When our student learns the lesson of holiness he learns too that of self-sacrifice and charity. High up on that end wall he reads the words, "The Bronson Hall" and he is told of the large gift of a Canadian lady who, perhaps, never saw a Hindu or a Muhammadan, but who in her desire to make them know the blessings of Christianity gave the large donation for the completion of this hall. Having learned here, then, the great lessons of consecration to God and of devotion to the good of his fellows, he goes forth to the duties of life, and as he leaves the College walls he sees written over the door by which he departs the words, "Our shield God's love," words of comfort and encouragement as he goes forth into an unfriendly world to labor in behalf of truth and righteousness. He has the assurance that there is with him One who will with infinite power, joined with infinite love, protect him from every enemy. The young man who has the lessons of these mottoes ingrained into his being, is surely well fitted to go forth and make the most of his life.

The aim of this College, I take it, shall be none other than this,—to teach those who come for guidance how to make the most of life. Alexander, who enjoyed for a period the benefit of the instruction of Aristotle, was wont to say that Philip of Macedon had given him life, but Aristotle had taught him how to make the most of life.

At the beginning, our life is a bundle of possibilities and potentialities capable of indefinite unfolding and expansion. It is a seed which in proper soil and under favoring influences may become a great tree, bearing abundant fruit of blessing for the good of man and the glory of God. In this possibility of growth of faculties and powers lies a striking difference between man and the lower orders of animal life. The first time a bee builds its cell it does it with as much mathematical accuracy as if it had studied mathematics for twenty years. A bird's first nest is built as perfectly as its last one, and a chicken just out of its shell runs about to pick up food like its mother. But while an infant comes into the world the most helpless of creatures, and can do little more than cry, nevertheless, its powers quickly develop, enabling man to far outstrip animals, of even the highest instinct, in ability to use the forces of nature for intelligent ends. In this fact of the capabilities of life lies the possibility of making much, or making little of life, and it carries great responsibilities. And so there are few questions of more importance to any one at any stage of life than just this: How can I make the most of my life? To the young men who come to it, this College will give the answer and will help them to realize it.

(1). Through the course of study appointed it will endeavour to train their faculties. Its purpose is not to furnish mental powers but to train and to make the best of such as the young men bring to it. It is well for the young men to remember this; and if they should fail in examinations not to attribute their want of success to the failure of Ganesh to help them, or to the inefficiency of their teachers. There is a possibility that the material furnished might not be of the best quality or capable of the highest development. But they may rest

*Address of Rev. W. A. Wilson, Neenuch, at the opening of the new Presbyterian College, Indore, Central India.