

SOME EXPECTATIONS NOT REALIZED IN 1886.

This year will die next Friday night. When its closing hours come a goodly number of people will find that some of the things they expected at the beginning of the year, to occur during the year, have not occurred. Their expectations have not been realized.

Here is a good man who expected to make some money during 1886. When he struck a balance the other day he found that he had barely held his own. The expected addition was not made to his little pile. He feels bad. Brother, don't worry because you did not add anything to your little pile. Thousands of good men in this country have no pile, little or big, to add anything to. Some of these people are almost as good Christians as you are. Possibly, indeed, some of them are better. There are a great many good people even in this money-making country who have no pile. If a man has a comfortable home, and plenty to eat and wear, he is doing fairly well. He should be thankful for a good overcoat this weather, even if it has not twenty dollars' worth of fur on it. So let the man who has barely held his own this year stop complaining, dry up the tears, and wind up the year's transactions in a grateful mood. Perhaps he expected too much. Possibly he got quite as much as he deserved to get.

Here is a brother who expected that this year would bring him a call. For several reasons, quite satisfactory to himself, he wishes a change. No call has come during the year. The brother is disappointed, perhaps a little soured. Brother, don't feel so blue. It may be quite true, as you say, that you were kept out of a good congregation by the ignoble tricks of ecclesiastical wire-pullers. It may be quite true that some men whine sanctimoniously about partyism in politics, and at the same time do dirty tricks in the Church that any politician of average cleanliness would be ashamed of; but these schemes are soon found out, and always come, sooner or later, to an ignoble end. It may be quite true, brother, that ministers occupy prominent places whose abilities are not equal to yours. That will always happen in a Church in which ministers are called, and calls are too often "fixed." Ministers can never be placed according to their merits in a Presbyterian Church as they are in the Methodist Churches. But never mind, brother. Perhaps if you had got a call your position would not be much better than it is. Perhaps a better call than the one you expect may soon come. So cheer up and begin the year with a capital sermon next Sabbath. Throw yourself into your work. Preach better and visit better and study better next year than you have ever done before; and if you really need a new field, it will be pretty sure to come. The best way to

get a better congregation is to be conspicuously useful in the one you have.

Here is another brother who is a little depressed because his congregation has not done so well during 1886 as he expected. The membership has not grown so fast as he thinks it should have grown. On the first day of the year he expected that certain persons who seemed interested, perhaps anxious, would be in full communion before the close of the year. They have never moved. Perhaps their cases do not seem so hopeful now as they did a year ago. Their pastor is disappointed, depressed. His most cherished expectations have not been realized. Brother, did you do your best? If you did, worrying will not mend matters. Paul was not always successful. The people were not all converted even by the preaching of your Master. If you have done your best, leave the result in hands stronger than yours. Worrying unfits you for duty, and does no good to the people you worry about. Begin the New Year cheerily, hopefully, prayerfully, and the end of 1887 may see better results.

And here is a congregation disappointed with their new pastor. They expected a great deal from the new man, but their expectations have not been realized. Quite likely they expected far too much. Nearly every congregation does. If they expected the new minister to do impossible things, and are disappointed because he did not do impossible things, they are to be pitied; that is to say, they are to be pitied because they have no common sense. People without sense are always objects of pity. Whether people are to be pitied even when a new minister does not do possible and reasonable things depends entirely on how they got him. If two or three men in the congregation arranged the call with two or three men outside—probably wire-pulling ministers—and the people allowed themselves to be handed over like so many sheep, they deserve to be disappointed. May the disappointment teach them self-respect and several other things that men should learn, who are privileged with self-government in ecclesiastical affairs. If fair and reasonable expectations are not realized in the case of a new pastor fairly called by the people, perhaps the best plan is to help him for a time, and give him a good chance. Sympathy, help and prayer may make him a first-class man by the end of next year. Try this plan.

And here is a lonely fellow who thought that during 1886 he would be able to make domestic arrangements that would lessen his loneliness. He didn't. She has not seen proper to tell this contributor the reason why, and therefore he is not able to tell others. Cheer up, young man, and you may have better luck next year. Try again. Try often. Keep on trying. By the end of 1887 your expectations may be realized.

There is a remote possibility that somewhere in