

## Our Contributors.

### SOME THINGS THAT LESSEN THE PREACHER'S INFLUENCE.

BY KNOXIAN.

The new Professor in the Presbyterian College, Montreal, has begun well. His opening lecture gives promise of solid, sensible and timely work. In the lines and between the lines there is satisfactory evidence that Prof. Ross is a man who does his own thinking, and who, while a pastor in the good old town of Perth, had good books on his table and kept his eye on the outside world as well as upon the books. The Professor seems keenly alive to the fact that he has not gone to Montreal to train men to preach to the "fathers" who are in their graves. He fully realizes that his business is to teach men who will have to preach to this generation and the next, and he seems determined to govern himself accordingly. Like a wise man the Professor has been finding out what people think about the profession he has to train men for, and he says:—

The common conception of the ministry, especially among irreligious young men, is that it is not a vocation. They seem to have the impression that there is an element of mean, sneaking, effeminate insincerity about it; that it is a calling whose members form a third sex, so that the human race is composed of men, women and clergymen (enumerated in the descending scale). They have imbibed the notion that the preacher must be coddled by a different mode of address, a different kind of diet and a different method of treatment from that which they accord to other men. They imagine that he is a soft, putty kind of a man on whom every passer-by can leave the mark of his knuckles if he be so minded, but whose unspeakable weakness it is generous to treat with the very greatest consideration. They fancy him one who lives on public charity, and who rarely gives a *quid pro quo*, who requires a special rate when he travels, and when he buys goods and over whose property the State must suspend its right of taxation, because it is a decent and tollgous thing to do so. It is only a short step from all this to regard the preacher as subscribing a creed which he no longer believes, and preaching doctrines repugnant to his own reason for a morsel of bread. If there have been individuals whose character evidently belied this conception these critics said, "What a pity such a fine fellow," etc.

"Common conceptions" even among "irreligious young men," rarely arise and become common and permanent without some foundation. If the impression described by Prof. Ross exists to any considerable extent and has existed for any considerable length of time, the chances are a million to one that the clergy, or some of them, have created the impression. A third sex cannot exist without a basis of some kind any more than either of the other two.

Many of the mean things that Prof. Ross says the public charge ministers with, may be summed up under one general head.

#### LACK OF MANLINESS.

The public, especially the "irreligious young men"—by the way, the very people that a conscientious wide-awake minister wants most to reach—seem to think that there is an element of mean, sneaking insincerity about the ministerial vocation; that ministers need to be coddled by a different mode of address; that they should have a different kind of diet; that they are effeminate and always complaining, and that in business they insist upon and receive a kind of treatment different from that given to other men, even to the length of asking the State to suspend its laws in their favour. Genuine manliness would cast out all these mean devils, but let us first ask how many of them are in.

It may be frankly admitted that a certain proportion of ministers have been and are a long way from model men. Either that is true or something worse is true. The common conversation of ministers, or at least of many ministers, is about other ministers, and if you listen what they say about many of their brethren you must conclude that some ministers are mean men, or that some other ministers are hopelessly given to saying what is not so. Not long ago we heard a noble Presbyterian woman say that she nearly lost all respect for ministers by waiting on a number of ministers at an ordination dinner. The whole conversation—save the mark—consisted of low, vulgar, envious fault-finding gabble about other ministers, some of whom do more honest work for Christ and the Church in a month than the whole party ever did in the best year of their envious lives. Judging ministers by what they often say of one another when the reporters are not present there must be some rather poor timber in the profession. The most cruel things, the most unjust things that we have ever heard about ministers came not from that something called the "world," not from "irreligious young men," but from brother ministers.

Is there not some ground for the charge of effeminacy continually brought against the clergy? Phillips Brooks, no mean judge, says that a gently complaining habit is the normal condition of an evangelical minister. Why should it be? As a matter of fact, the leaders among the Presbyterian clergy the world over are not whining invalids. Most of the Presbyterians who figured at the Alliance meeting were stalwart men. That Irishman who went over the side of the bridge at Niagara was a rather lively invalid. John Hall looks as though he enjoyed his meals almost as much as he enjoys preaching. The strongest men in the Presbyterian Church in Canada are strong men physically. Principal

MacVicar takes no medicine, but a cold bath every morning, and he makes and preaches better sermons than he ever did in his life. This corner will back the Principal of Queen's for a footrace against any man of his years in Canada, the loser or his friends to endow a chair in Queen's. Dr. McLaren's countenance and goodly proportions seem to indicate that his nerves and digestive organs are quite as sound as his theology, and very likely the one soundness accounts in part for the other. Dr. Reid is a marvellously well preserved man for his years and work, and every faculty of his mind seems as keen and bright as they were thirty years ago. As a matter of fact the representative Presbyterian ministers of this country are a long way from effeminacy. Is there a human being on this continent that can cover more ground in a day than Dr. Cochrane can? The trouble is here; one effeminate attracts more attention than a dozen manly ones. He advertises his ailments in a score of ways, sometimes unwillingly, and the public jump to the conclusion that all ministers are soft and effeminate and constitutionally weak. Fudge.

Let it be frankly confessed that "special rates," "clerical discounts" and "clerical exemptions" have done and are doing injury to the ministerial calling. There can be no doubt that these special privileges lessen a minister's influence with certain people. The minister who points to his necktie and asks a merchant to take ten per cent. off a bill is doing more harm than he has any idea of.

Candidating does "millions of mischief" to the Presbyterian clergy. Too many people have the impression that all you need do is nod at a minister, offer him \$50 more than he is getting and he is sure to come.

The vanity displayed by parading honours and titles does its own share in lowering the profession. It is impossible to make average humanity believe that a man whose mind is constantly exercised about so-called honours of one kind and another is deeply in earnest about the souls of his fellow-men.

The right way to put down wrong conceptions about ministerial character is to *live* them down. You cannot argue them down, or scold them down, or put them down by "whereases" and resolutions. Put them down by consecrated, manly, self-denying work. A ministry loyal and true to the Master can always keep its hold on men. Average Presbyterian humanity is perhaps more prone to over-rate than under-rate the clergy.

### DR. KELLOGG'S FAREWELL SERMON.

"Thou shalt remember all the way by which the Lord thy God led thee.—Deuteronomy viii. 2.

The command enjoins upon us the duty of remembering all God's dealings with us. However careless we may often be in this matter, the duty is one of which much is made in the word, and for the neglect of which God's people are often severely chided. Thus in Ps. cvi. 7, it is said "Our fathers remembered not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies." So, again, regarding the wilderness experience of Israel, it is complained: "They remembered not the hand of God." On the other hand we find the most eminent of God's saints, often recalling to mind God's past dealings with them, whether as material for praise, or as a substantial basis for faith. So David, in a time of great suffering, when apparently God had forsaken him, established himself in faith with the words: "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Thy wonders of old."

Further, if we compare the many places in which there is reference to this duty, we shall find that while this is always a duty, yet it becomes especially obligatory upon special occasions; as in times of great change, or crisis in our affairs. So Israel should have remembered the past works of the Lord with them when on the shores of the Red Sea; even as, in the text, when they stood on the borders of the promised land, about to take triumphant possession, they are exhorted to remember the way the Lord had hitherto led them.

It has therefore seemed to me not unfitting to follow this thought in what I trust may be on the part of us all, a thankful retrospect of the way by which the Lord has led us since the day when the Lord brought us together to stand in the relation of pastor and people.

We do well to call to mind the way in which God led both yourselves and your pastor in the matter of his first coming among you. Nothing in my life has ever seemed more distinctly providential than the combination of circumstances by which on my part I was most unexpectedly led, while resting at Niagara, to supply this pulpit, with as little thought as they who asked me, or any of you, could have had, that therein God in His providence was intending thus to bring us into the relation of pastor and people. I shall always look back to my connection with St. James' Square with a very deep feeling that, whatever be the final issues of these six years among you, the arrangement was not of man, but of God. It was as little the outcome of any planning of any among you, as it was the result of any contriving of my own. Let us, as we recall those days to mind, thankfully remember this; for it is not always thus in such cases.

We do well also to recall with gratitude the continuous marks of God's blessing upon the relation thus begun. When I came among you the number on the roll of communicants was 468. Since then no sacramental season has passed

without some accession to our number on profession of faith in Christ. In the six and a-quarter years which have passed 230 have been thus received, an average of thirty-seven each year. In the same time our additions by certificate have been 388; so that in all during my pastorate, 618 have been added to the church. On the other hand, a large number have left us for other churches; of which no less than four of our own denomination have been established in these six years within the territorial limits of the congregation. Other members have left, of whom we have no account, whose names have therefore been dropped from the roll and not a few have been called from the church on earth to join the general assembly and church of the first born in heaven. Deducting the names of all such, and carefully revising the roll to the date of my departure, I find our present membership to be 690; a total net increase of 222.

But increase of numbers is not in itself the highest test of the presence and blessing of God on a church. Never forget that. In the days before you, when you shall be without a pastor, days which I pray may not be much prolonged, it were not surprising if, as on a previous like occasion, your numbers should for a while somewhat diminish. But this does not necessarily afford any ground for discouragement. A more important mark of the Divine blessing and presence, as we look back, we may find in the manifest growth of Christian activity.

This has been shown in many ways.

The average contributions of the congregation for the support of ordinances for the six years preceding my pastorate, during almost half of which you were without a pastor, were \$14,044; for the last six years they have averaged \$17,228; representing an average increase of \$3,184 per annum in the congregational income. Contributions for missions, home and foreign, and other benevolent purposes, have increased from \$6,580 in 1885, to \$9,445 in 1892. In particular, the gifts of the congregation for foreign missions have risen from \$869 in 1885, to \$2,640 in 1892.

It will indeed appear, if we take into account the increase in the number of communicants, that the average given by each individual has not yet increased. But this would not justly represent the facts. For a very large number of those who have been added to our roll have been from the young, who have comparatively little to give. If we take therefore instead of the average per individual, the average amount given for the work of Christ in these years by each family, which under the circumstances is a juster mode of estimation, we find that this has risen from an average of \$32.25 per family, six years ago, to \$37.78 last year. If we could wish yet more than this, yet we do well to note with gratitude this evidence of God's grace—an evidence which in this case is of the more value, that this material increase has taken place during a long period of exceptional business depression, which many of our number have felt severely.

I mark, again, evidence of God's leading loyally followed, in another direction; though it is of a kind that cannot be represented in figures. The development of interest in the work of missions, at home and abroad, has been most gratifying. Two city missions have been established in these six years; out of one of which has already grown a prosperous young church, which in two or three years more will be quite self-sustaining; while the work in Wilton Avenue, despite interruption for a time, continues to-day to be a centre of blessing, not only to many families outside the churches, but most of all, perhaps, to a goodly number of our people who have found great joy in much self-denying labour for the poor and needy. The excellent societies for various missionary purposes which were established in the fruitful pastorate of my justly honoured and beloved predecessor, have continued their valuable work with increasing signs of fruitfulness for good; while our boys too have become banded together for the same good work, of increasing an intelligent interest in the great missionary work of the church. The best evidence of the cheering interest in the missionary work of the church is perhaps found in the fact that in the last four years, four of our members have personally gone out to the heathen, into that same work to which your pastor now himself returns; of whom, one, as all know, is supported in China wholly by the special contributions of this people. The end is not yet; for others are preparing to enter soon, if God will, on this same blessed work.

God's blessing has not been absent in these years from the work of our Sabbath school. The number for some time past has been less than it used to be; but, on the other hand, it should be remembered that it appears as the result of the accurate enquiry of the Session that the number of children in the congregation is considerably less than a few years ago. Many have left us, who had large families of children, and their place has been taken very largely by others with few or none. Meantime, it is with gratitude that we may observe that no communion season has passed since I came among you without some from the Sabbath school coming forward to confess their faith in and love to the Saviour.

I could not fail to include in this remembrance of God's gracious leading in these past years the establishment and work of the Christian Endeavour Society. The work which our young people have done in connection with this Society, like much else, can be represented in no way by columns of statistics; but as an effective aid to the pastor in the practical work of the Church, and as a training school for the young Christians among us. I am sure that I speak within bounds when I say that the organization has filled a place filled by no