

sketch, but one that in its substantial outline is true to life too many-fold. Of course the pastor in purpose should not look to such things, but unfortunately he is a man, and really needs very much what other men need to keep the wolf from the door. "Money," said an indignant deacon to his pastor, who had gently hinted that his promised stipend was fearfully in arrears, "Money! Why, sir, I thought you preached for souls." "I do," replied the pastor, whose wife's piano was a spoon scraping the bottom of the flour barrel, "but I can't live on souls." And may he be pardoned for rather indignantly adding, "and if I could it would take more than one such as yours to make a meal." Now friends, a few plain truths. Ministers do not make money. They do not; the exceptions prove the rule. They are not at a premium when old; indeed they are not. They have a fashion like other people, if they live, of growing old. What is to be done with them? Starve them off? That's not exactly Christian, and killing even "an old fool" would really in Canada endanger one's neck. Perhaps, after all, helping them to make some provision for their old age may not be such a hard thing to do, and seriously we think that about the best. Then the sad reflection of our esteemed young brother as to what the old men of sixty and upwards were to do might be bright instead of dark, and we are persuaded that the gloomy prospect we have noted is at least one of the elements in keeping many from entering the office of the Christian ministry as society exists to-day. We have a Retired Ministers' Fund, beggarly small. Will our churches read, mark, learn, and *generously bestow*?

SPEAKING of the apparent failure of an acknowledged earnest and good man, our brother, whose visit has led to our already recorded thoughts said: "I was speaking to Mr. —, and he accounted for it by the fact that the pastor's teaching could not be appreciated by the people; he was above them." On which fact—for, even if not applicable to the relation which was the then subject of our conversation, it has its application manifold—we offer the following thoughts: If a minister teaches above his people, is it his duty to come down? We are not discussing the subject of speaking plainly, and in language level to the understanding of the hearers; that is an im-

perative duty. If our National Policy put a totally prohibitory tax on words of four syllables (we have just used one; we might have said prohibitive), and a pretty heavy one on words of three syllables, it would not be cause for a change in the ministry. By all means let us speak in plain, homely Saxon. But are preachers to degrade thought, encourage the skinning over of things, level themselves to ignorant narrowness, and talk milk and water goodyism, because some call it unction and spirituality? Milk for babes indeed; but is the pulpit to encourage persistent babyhood? Plainly, Christ taught over the heads of the people, however simple to us his teachings may seem. Note their persistent misunderstandings of Him, and His own distinct statement, Matt. xiii. 11-12; and Paul's epistles—Ephesians notably, and Romans confessedly—are not skimmed milk. We may just as well hear the other side of this question of bringing one's self down to the masses. There is such a thing as catering to a taste which is not healthy, and perpetuating it; and it is not a healthy taste which shuns a thoughtful, earnest pulpit for one where meaningless platitudes are put off with bold open mouth and energetic action. Men who are conscious of the utter meaninglessness of much that passes for gospel preaching may yet remember that the persecution of the cross has not yet ceased, and that their plain privilege is to speak to a few in an upper room, whilst the pulpit demagogue has the crowd to gape at him. The upper room at Jerusalem, eighteen centuries past, moved the world. The Ephesian crowd has melted "into the infinite azure of the past." Christianity, in a world whose friendship is described as being enmity to God, must not suppose its mission to be floating with the stream, and they who are its true disciples and teachers must be content to be classed with those

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
See distant gates of Eden gleam
And do not dream it is a dream."

We need ever, and thank God in many cases we have, a pulpit truly *Independent*, free enough to speak as God giveth utterance, despite the temptation to lower the standard to the vulgarity and shallowness of a popular applause. Courage, brother, persevere; and though men may hiss failure, God says, "Well done."