

perfection will avail little if your Churches are known for the most part to present a very ungenial home to the Christian pastor.

I scarcely need say, that if the spiritual interests of men, of individuals, and of parents and families, infinitely transcend their temporal interests, then the function of the man who ministers specially to those interests must be in its issues the most momentous of all functions. To apprehend Christian realities as they are, and to think lightly of services of the truly Christian pastor, is impossible. In proportion as men are insensible to the greatness of the ends for which the Christian ministry is instituted, they may be insensible to the value of the ministry as means to that end, and only in that proportion. The denomination, accordingly, which lays itself open to the charge of neglecting, more or less, the reasonable claims of its ministers, exposes itself to the suspicion of being wanting, in the measure of that neglect, in Christian intelligence and Christian life. Churches may betray this defect in many ways—in two ways especially.

We read in the New Testament that it pertains to the Christian pastor to rule as well as to teach—to rule wisely, indeed, Christianly, but still to rule. We find it enjoined on Churches also, to obey those who have the rule over them, to obey, of course, within definite and reasonable limits—still to obey. It is true we are Independents, but our institutional Independency does not render us independent of the moral deference due to age, to wisdom, or to office. It belongs to our Churches to choose their own ministers, to support them, and the danger naturally and easily besetting such organizations, will be on the side of under-rating the ministerial office, and of evincing that state of feeling so as to cause it to be often felt, and sometimes very painfully felt, by the men who fill that office. Where there is a high order of ability in the minister, tendencies of this nature may be easily checked; but I scarcely need say that a high order of ability is not so much the rule in our ministry as the exception. Thoughtful young men often anticipate trouble in this form, and not without reason. Some, to my knowledge, have been scared from serving among us by such apprehensions—cultured and sensitive men, who have come to feel that it became them to leave it to more hardy natures to face probable difficulties in this form which they dared not themselves encounter. Schism—the severance of affection among professed Christians—may be rife in a Church where there is no separation, and until we see the schism more as we ought to see it, our ministry and our general reputation will continue to suffer from this cause. Not only do Churches nourish schism in their midst as they ought not, but neighbouring Churches and pastors often make light of it as they ought not. Until many of our Churches, especially our smaller Churches, improve in this respect, our ministry will be sure to fall below its proper level. The Established Church promises protection from this kind of trial, and many they are who choose their religious home there mainly on this ground. It may be that such men soon find that the human nature which they feared to meet in the chapel, comes face to face with them in a manner hardly more agreeable within the pale of the Establishment. But appearances were in favour of the Church, and they have been lured by them. Still, it is to me beyond doubt, that on the point under consideration our Churches must improve if our ministry is to be improved.

Another change must come—our ministry generally must be more adequately sustained. Concerning our large city and suburban Churches, in relation to this point, I need not say anything. Generally they do their duty, and for very obvious reasons. But how is it in your second-class and smaller towns?