

Our Contributors.

DR. STALKER ON THE MINISTER AND HIS MODELS.

BY KNOXIAN

Dr. Stalker's contribution to the Yale course of lectures on preaching makes a well-written, searching, powerful book. Coming after such men as Beecher, Hall, Taylor, Phillips Brooks, Simpson, and other pulpit princes, one opens the book wondering what this Scotchman can say on the subject that has not been well said already. You have not gone far until you find that this Scotchman says some new things, and puts many old things in such a fresh and striking way. The book has a grip. It makes you think, and pray, and resolve; makes you wonder whether you ever did preach a really good sermon; makes you determined to do better next Sabbath; makes you stop thinking about modern and uninspired pulpit models and sends you right back to Isaiah and Paul; makes you get up earlier in the morning and begin your sermon earlier in the week, for the author says that one of the main things in pulpit preparation is to begin in time and get done in time.

Dr. Stalker gives his readers pause, and pause is a good thing for a preacher to have on the threshold of a new year. Having spent your holidays in Dr. Stalker's company you are pretty sure to take your pulpit bearings, and begin your work for the year a little more in the spirit of Paul and Isaiah than you have been doing it in the past. Of course no minister will begin the year in this way if he thinks he has nothing to learn from books and little from Isaiah or Paul. We refer to ordinary specimens of clerical humanity, who feel their need of light and leading in the great struggle against sin.

About the middle of his introductory lecture Dr. Stalker gives his reader the first pronounced, prolonged, saddening pause. Like every other minister whose eyes are open, he knows that the modern church has a large amount of complicated machinery, and, like every other earnest man, he asks if practical religion is increasing in proportion to the machinery. He says:—

The machine of religion is large and complicated, and it is manned by so many workers that they get in each other's way; but, with all this bustling activity, is the work done? This is the question which gives us pause. Has the amount of practical Christianity increased in proportion to the multiplication of agencies? Are the prospects of religion as much brighter than they used to be as might have been expected after all this expenditure of labour? Is Christianity deepening as well as spreading?

Now let every reader of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN pause for a moment and think of the amount of machinery that is being worked in the name of religion, and ask himself if the results are anything like, in proportion, to the machinery. Is the real work—the work of saving souls and deepening piety—being done more successfully than at any past time? Dr. Stalker answers for his own city and country:—

In Glasgow, where the proportion of churches to population is so high, they speak of two hundred thousand non-church-goers, that is, a third of the inhabitants; and if you go into one of our villages with a population of two or three thousand, you may find three or four churches belonging to different denominations, but you will find even there a considerable body of non-church-goers.

It almost takes one's breath away to read that in the city of Glasgow one-third of the people never attend public worship, and that in the towns and villages of Scotland the state of affairs is not much better. Some of us were taught in early life to believe that nearly everybody in Scotland was a church-goer. Scotland was kept before our youthful minds as the model country. There the people read the Bible and attended church and prayer-meeting regularly and did everything that was good. So thoroughly was that idea drilled into our minds years ago that we almost think Dr. Stalker is astray in his statistics when he speaks of one-third the population of Glasgow never darkening a church door. But then Dr. Stalker is a man of affairs, a man who writes much and is in the habit of sifting his facts and testing his figures. "They speak," he says, "of two hundred thousand non-church-goers," and he does not seem to think the estimate too high.

But let us leave Glasgow to those more directly responsible for her spiritual welfare, and come right home. "One-third the people never attend public worship." Is this true of Halifax, of Montreal, of Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Brantford, Guelph, and other Canadian cities? Is it true of Canadian towns and villages generally? Must we admit that with all our ministers, evangelists, elders, colleges, church courts, committees, conferences, societies, associations and machinery of one kind and another, one Canadian out of every three never hears the gospel? Is it the shameful fact that of every three men you meet on the street under the very shadow of your church spires all the gospel influence in the place can induce only two to listen to the gospel?

Almost any Canadian city is pretty sure to be in a worse condition than Glasgow. If there are two hundred thousand people in Glasgow who never hear the Word, there is probably a larger proportion in any part of Canada. Now, would it not be well to stop vapouring about "this great church" and ask ourselves if only two-thirds of our population go to church, and many of them irregularly?

Dr. Stalker easily finds a much worse place than Glasgow in the matter of church-going. He says:—

Not long ago I heard a London clergyman state that if, any Sunday morning, you went through the congregations belonging to the Church of England in the district of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants in which he labours, you would not, in all of them put together, find one man for every thousand of the population.

That is to say the non-church-goers were a thousand to one against the church-goers! And, be it remembered, the State pays the Church of England immense sums for bringing the people to church.

Dr. Stalker's picture of things inside the church is not much more encouraging than his statistics. His most important factor in the solution of the problem—better preachers—we may discuss next week. Meantime it is a matter of gratitude that a strong honest man like Dr. Stalker comes to the front office in a while and gives the churches a powerful dose of truth.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM CHINA.

Mr. Hamilton Cassels has kindly forwarded the following letter, dated Hsin Chen, Hunan, November 9, 1891, for publication:—

Your faithful correspondent, Mr. MacVicar, has left for the coast, and as you must be anxious to hear from Hsin Chen at present I send you a line.

It is now ten days since the riot, and we are still in quiet possession of our barricaded compound. Mr. MacGillivray's visit to the Hsin magistrate was not productive of any good result. Two runners from the Yamen arrived last night, bearing only an order to drive the beggars away. A proclamation has not been issued nor has any action been taken about those who incited the tumult. Foreseeing this Mr. MacGillivray returned from Hsun Hsien last Monday, and on Tuesday morning before daylight Mr. MacVicar left by cart to lay the matter personally before the Consul.

We can now look back upon the riot with more calmness than when the excitement it caused was still fresh upon us, and we feel assured that the disturbance, though doubtless sinister enough in its purpose, was not so serious as we at first supposed. Our landlord was evidently one of the leaders, and this is a serious feature as it touches our future relations with him. The mob was thoroughly under control of the leaders and held back by a strong hand from going beyond a certain point. Instructions had evidently been given not to injure property, and we now believe not to inflict any bodily injury upon our two brothers. It was probably simply an attempt to levy blackmail with perhaps the hope that in future the threat of a similar disturbance would force us to carry on all business transactions through those who incited it and at their extortionate prices.

The fear upon the people still continues and the form it has taken helps to confirm us in this view. During the last few days Dr. Smith has been entreated by some of those most deeply involved to open the compound and receive patients in order to help quiet the abominable stories told on the street about us. Accordingly we have masons at work preparing a room in which he can treat patients without giving access to the compound proper. Since making this purpose known we have had several offers of materials and workmen, though before the riot Mr. MacVicar found it almost impossible to secure either.

Our arrival at the very hour we were most needed was evidently providential. Our boat captain for some reason of his own had made up his mind to reach a certain town on the way in time to remain over night, and for two days we chafed at the slow progress of the boat even during favourable winds. But now we see there was a guiding hand in this, for our arrival earlier would not have averted the riot, whereas occurring at the moment it did it may have prevented the booty secured whetting their appetites for more.

And I do not think any of us will soon forget the lesson we received of the power of prayer, for our request that all should withdraw while we knelt before "the one true Father of heaven," brought an awe upon the crowd and proved the turning point in our favour. We rose from our knees already assured that deliverance was at hand. Sincerely yours,

JOHN MACDOUGALL.

DOWN THE CARIBBEAN.

BY REV. JOHN MACKIE, M.A.

V.—ANTIGUA.

We are now anchored in the Bay of St. John's, about three miles from the town of that name, the capital of the island. We cannot go nearer because of the shallowness of the water; and we shall not stay long because of the smallness of the cargo to be discharged. Within a stone's throw are the rocky shores, with here and there beautiful little patches of golden sand under the shadow of feathery palms. Beyond them are gentle swells of cultivated land, and rounded hills mostly covered with wood. There is nothing strikingly picturesque about it: it is simply a pleasing scene. The length of the island is twenty-one miles and the breadth the same; and there are about 60,000 acres of arable land. Discovered by Columbus in 1493, the island has been in the possession of the British since 1632. The soil is remarkably rich, and the sugar estates, here unusually large, are skillfully cultivated; but, save the rain from heaven carefully caught in cisterns by every household, there is no water supply. It is doubtless owing to this that the island has got the name of being the most unhealthy in the West Indies. A frightful earthquake visited it in 1842, leaving St. John's a heap of ruins; and five years after when restored, it was completely destroyed by a terrible hurricane; and in 1850, owing to a protracted drought, there was a total failure of

crops. Still it contains a population of 35,000 negroes and two or three hundred whites.

SLAVERY.

Tall, broad-chested, strong-looking men these sable sons of Africa are; and with what a deafening gibberish, shrill as the clanking of tins and interspersed with a variety of English oaths, they with incredible quickness transfer the goods to their barges! One looking at them and listening recalls the past as yet not very far away, when cargoes of a different kind were carried into these peaceful waters, and scenes of another description were witnessed by those silent deep blue heavens. One sees the ebon ships, or floating hells, with their freight of human beings torn from kith and kin, carried as cattle across the Atlantic waves and emptied out, the dead as murrained beasts into the deep for the abounding sharks, and the scarcely-living into the brutalities and unutterable horrors of slavery. Shame suffuses our cheek when we remember that we are white and of the race of the oppressor; sympathy fills our hearts for these black children of men so grievously, irreparably wronged, and sacrilegiously robbed of their rights divine. The lightning words of eloquent Guthrie, consuming the insulting appeal for the sympathy and support of the Scottish Church on behalf of the Church in the Southern States, endeavouring to maintain the hellish system, come sweeping through our spirits with purifying, elevating power, and we bless our God anew that the great horror of darkness is past, and that the foulest blot on the escutcheon of our country has been wiped out. On this island alone, 30,000 slaves were set free on August 1, 1834, for \$2,129,000. No small amount of praise has been bestowed on Antigua for the enlightened and liberal policy she pursued with reference to her slaves, making herself a paradise in those islands of Egyptian bondage. Here only could they be tried by jury; here only were they allowed to marry; here only could religious instruction be imparted to them. But of this very island, the home of the slave, John Newton, once in the horrible trade but afterwards by the grace of God a minister of His Gospel, and the joint-author with Cowper of those Olney hymns that have enriched the praise of the whole Christian Church, has recorded something that, notwithstanding these touches of humanity, show it the abodes of nefarious wickedness. Into these very waters John Newton sailed with his cargo of slaves in 1751, and from the planter to whom his ship was consigned he learnt that calculations had been made by the planters on the island, with all possible exactness to determine which was the most advantageous way of managing slaves—

"Whether to appoint them moderate work, plenty of provisions, and such treatment as might enable them to protract their lives to old age? or—

"By rigorously straining their strength to the utmost, with little relaxation, hard fare, and hard usage to wear them out before they became useless and unable to do service, and then to buy new ones to fill up their places?"

He further added that these skillful calculations had determined in favour of the latter mode as much the cheaper, and that he could mention several estates in the Island of Antigua on which it was seldom known that a slave had lived above nine years. This in Antigua the paradise! What in the other islands! Surely it was an hour thrice blessed, in which the Christ Himself rejoiced, when one hundred million dollars were paid down by the British people and the shackles fell from every slave.

SHARKS.

But though the slaves are no more, the sharks are still here and in shoals. Half out of the water, and of pale sepia colour, with their caudal fins erect as the poop of some old Spanish galleon, they career around us in the wildest excitement. Such boldness have they that even repeated attempts to take their life with the rifle have no intimidating effect upon them, but contrariwise, unsuccessful attacks seem rather to increase their daring. Ferocious-looking beasts they are, and most ungainly as they make their somersault to devour their prey which never escapes. Like all fishes, the shark possesses neither ears nor nostrils, and yet the sense of smell is so strong that he can perceive his victim full many a mile away and rush unerringly towards it in the darkest night and through the most troubled waters. The olfactory nerves are said by naturalists to extend over the space between the eyes. In the case therefore of a shark twenty-five feet long there would be the equivalent of a nostril twelve square feet in size. Take it to *avizandum*, if you will; but do not deny it. The sharks here are not so large; a few are between eight and ten feet long; the most are between five and seven. "These are very young and small," says a youth, a regular Mandeville, who has travelled every where, and is an authority on every conceivable subject. "When I was up the Danube some four years ago, I harpooned a fellow over fifty feet long." One listener thought but said not, "There was ample room in that shark for a full-grown Cretian." You remember the Apostle's quotations from Epimenides: if you cannot recall it, you will find it in Titus first and twelfth.

A WATERSPOUT.

Through a sea like a burnished sheet of silver we are cutting our way in a southerly direction for the Island of Montserrat, about five hours' sail from Antigua. Midway, however, the sheen on the waters changes to sullenness, and the placid surface swells into heaving billows, and we observe on our right, and not far off, a whirling mass of cloud, black as