

THE PASTOR: HIS SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

A sister writes:

"About the decline in reverence and honor that people have for the ministers; for my part I love and honor a minister just as much as ever I did. But do you not think that the ministers have a lot to do with it themselves? When I was a child, when I knew a minister was coming to our home, I had to be prepared to answer questions, not as to how I was progressing at school, etc., but how much I knew about the Lord, and my soul's needs. And it made one think that a minister was different from others. I have never heard a minister talk religion to my children, except a few times.

"Please tell us what you think of the minister's side of the question in the Highway."

In reply, the editor feels that this sister has given him a difficult problem. A good pastor needs be more than an ordinary mortal, to possess all the qualities the people expect of him. He needs to reach the standard Paul gave Timothy: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 Tim. 3-17.

Then we meet another difficulty, to find two persons, who will agree as to what constitutes this standard of perfection. Most people can tell you a few things they like in a pastor, and if you travel through ten ordinary homes in the country and write down the qualities that those families like in a pastor, you would have to ransack the earth to find one to meet the bill. And when he came if he made a mistake and displayed the qualities in one house that was required in another, the whole game would be up.

In our thirty years in the ministry we have met many pastors, an endless variety of them, every man differing from every other man. Some failed, some succeeded. Some were considered proud and formal, some too informal and familiar on short acquaintance; some too frivolous; some were of an athletic turn; some old and rheumatic and talked more about their aches and pains than religion. Some were gossipy and pleased the gossipy folks; some were big eaters, and some were dyspeptic. Some wanted to sleep all the forenoon; others would talk until midnight. Some liked children and would play with them, and tell them stories. Some were really and sincerely religious. Some seemed very slightly religious. Some were exceedingly tidy and ministerial, and others were not so much so, and at times, hurt their influence by being untidy in public places.

But do you know, that all these men, had more really good things about them, than the same number of men taken promiscuously from any other class of men.

Now there is another side to the pastoral work: that is, the homes they visit. In this exceedingly busy period of the world, in town, city, village, or country, people are busy; there are only a few hours in the day to do his work; one never can get the whole family together, except at meal time, and then only for a brief period. Then to get a chance to talk to young people, who in some cases do not care to be spoken to on the subject of religion,

especially in the presence of others, and even the children are at school, or at play, or at their studies, or at their work.

We have often sat in a home for a considerable time looking for a chance to break in for a season of prayer.

Under present circumstances, a really good pastor, who does successful work from a spiritual point of view, is a deeply spiritual man, and a real expert, a real general in the Lord's great army.

There may be cases where ministers forfeit the respect of his people, even in his effort to make a chance to speak to persons about their souls; he meets them on the plain of pleasantry as a way of approach, when persons looking on may judge him to be light, not realizing how he is warded off by those he seeks to benefit.

There is a big problem to solve in what Paul said: "being all things to all men, that he might win some." People do not realize problems that a pastor has to solve continually, differing in every home, and with every individual that he meets, his work would be a hopeless failure if the Holy Spirit was not his guide, teacher, support, comforter, and light, and power.

It has been said that our Lord died of a broken heart; many pastors have doubtless died the same way.—Editor.

DO REAL HOLINESS PEOPLE NEED THIS EXHORTATION?

We feel that asking the holiness people to suffer a word of exhortation on an important matter touching home life. It is in reference to the family altar. In former days it was such a common institution in Christian homes, being observed both morning and before retiring at night, and meant so much. There is no home of holiness professors that should, under any ordinary circumstances, fail to have the family altar where the entire family gather to hear the word of God read and prayer offered. Those who had the good fortune to be of a family where this was done while they were young and at home, whether they enjoyed it then or not, since those days have slipped away forever and the father and mother have been transferred to their heavenly home, there is naught which you could mention that they would take in exchange for their memory of the old family altar. I fear there are too many homes where holiness is professed and enjoyed where there is a remissness as to the family altar. Set it up at once and let nothing common interfere with it.

Wm. R. Chase.

It is too bad that many who preach and profess high standards of grace are severe and argumentative and seldom, if ever, get melted and broken up over lost men. If Finney and Wesley felt the need of a special season of fasting and prayer every ten days or so, lest their ministrations become powerless and fruitless how can we expect success without frequent anointings from the Lord? This alone will keep us from becoming self-centred and dogmatical.

—Rev. E. E. Shelhamer.

"Better be small and shine, than be great and cast a shadow."

JUST THREE THINGS.

"I once met a scholar," says Bishop Whipple, "who told me that for years he had read every book that he could which assailed the religion of Jesus Christ, and he said he would have become an infidel but for three things:

"First, I am a man. I am going somewhere. Tonight I am a day nearer the grave than I was last night. I have read all such books can tell me. They shed not one solitary ray upon the darkness. They shall not take away the only guide and leave me stone blind.

"Second, I had a mother. I saw her go down the dark valley where I am going, and she leaned upon an unseen arm as calmly as a child going to sleep on the breast of its mother. I know that this was not a dream.

"Third, I have three motherless daughters (and he said it with tears in his eyes); they have no protector but myself. I would rather kill them than to leave them in this sinful world if you blot out from it all the teachings of the gospel."—The Christian Commonwealth.

TO USE THE OLD PHRASEOLOGY.

From the National Tribune we learn that the Prohibitionists are not going to allow their carefully-developed stock of epithets on liquor to go to the junk pile but are now applying them to tobacco. The following is the heading of a preliminary bugle blast on the use of tobacco:

"Tobacco separates from God, pollutes the spirit, paralyzes the mind, wrecks the nerves, makes the breath offensive, destroys the body, pollutes the air, fosters selfishness, imposes on others' rights, corrupts good manners, creates appetite for liquor, unfits men for business, impoverishes the pocketbook, makes men hogs, pleases the devil, and paves the way to hell."

As a Prohibitionist, we plead guilty to the above charge and would be glad of the chance to make the indictment against tobacco stronger than the sentences quoted. Rum and tobacco are twin brothers, children of Satan, and both ought to be destroyed at the same time. They make adject slaves of the children of men and are eternally opposed to the glorious freedom purchased for all by the blood of Jesus Christ.—Free Methodist.

A FARMER'S EXPERIENCE.

"We started tithing on Jan. 1st, 1905. I must confess that it has been the most prosperous year we have had. Most everything we sell brings us our tithe extra beyond what we had expected."

The following was printed in a secular paper: "The boy Lincoln spent his winter nights with Shakespeare, John Bunyan, Aesop, Washington and the Bible; the children of today spend theirs with the moving pictures' refining atmosphere of crime and passion."

"We have no apology for being in earnest about this thing of foreign missions, and will make none until Jesus Christ tells us He made a mistake in coming to the world as a missionary."