

## A MINISTER WHO FAILED AND WHY.

By Arthur Dox.

They'd sent me to Presbitry to persecute the Call to that young chap, Upsen Downs, who'd been to our place a-cander-datin' to foller Dr. Steddy.

They know'd I didn't like the stuff he preeched, n'that I'd spoke agin' the Call, n'hadn't voted fer it, but they seemed ter think it'd flatter me n'bring me over friendly-like if they sent me to push it, n' so I was fool enuf to go.

Well, the Presbitry was all new to me, n' I felt like a cat in the rong barn till I heerd the moderator a-readin' my name in the Committy on Theology.

After a little I heerd the moderator say "The examination of Mr. Upsen Downs fer ordination is now in order, n' an old chap, an elder, that sot beside me, n' was friendly-like, he says, "I guess yure turn's a-comin'."

I soon seed what it was. They was tryin' to find out what the young chap beleaved, n' that wus jist what I wanted ter know, fer, when he was down to our place a preechin'—ye coodn't make head nor tail uv what he was tryin' to say, n'if he was goin' to be deer, good Dr. Steddy's successor, I wanted to know jist where he was goin' to be at.

But I jedged that the ministers misdouted his orthodoxy even more'n I did, fer they was askin' him if he beleaved there was a God, 'n 'if he beleaved the Bible, n' so fourth.

He sed he did beleave these here things, n'a few others, n'they was jist on the pint of puttin' him thru with a sort of whoop, when I jumped up an' hollered: "Mr. Moderator, didn't ye say I was on the Committy to examen in theology?"

"It's too late now," says the moderator, "the brethren is reddy to vote on the examination."

"They may be reddy but I ain't," says I, "n'I want to ask some more questions, specially as this man is called to be our pastor."

"I call the brother to order," sez two or three.

"Question, question," sez some more.

"The question is called fer," sez the moderator.

"I can't help it if it is," sez I. "I'm a member of this heer Presbitry, I'm cimmissioner from our church to persecute the Call, n' I'm on this heer Committy on theology, n' Im bound to speak."

"Yure individool jedgment as to this brother's theology will not nullify the call of the congregation," sez the moderator; "yure only thare mouthpeece."

"That's all rite," sez I, "but if I'm a mouthpeece, then I'm heer fer speekin'."

After they hollered "order," n' some more things, I started in.

I sed, "Now, young man, what was it ye sed about the Bible?"

"The best book in the world," sez he.

"Good," sez I, sort uv incurrigin' like, "Can ye beleave what it sez?"

"That depends," sez he.

"On what?" sez I.

"Whether it's reesenable or not," sez he.

"How be ye goin' to know?" sez I.

"I'll hev to jedge," sez he.

"Wall, for instance," sez I, "do ye beleave in the Divinity of Christ?"

"Certain," sez he, "n'we're all divine, only not so much so."

"Wasn't He God?" sez I.

"God was in Him," sez he, "same's He's in us all, only more."

"What do you make of the Atonement?" sez I.

"That Christ gave us a good example n'teachin' to live by," sez he.

"Not that 'His blood cleanseth fer all sin?'" sez I.

"That's figger of speech," sez he.

"Do you beleave in futer consekenses, good an' ill, accordin' to our lives here?" sez I.

"I think it probable there'll be some punishment in anuther state," sez he.

"Probable?" sez I. "Hain't ye got the Word of God fer it?"

"It depends on how ye inturpret the Bible," sez he.

"Be yer a-goin' to solemnly give yure assent to the Confession of Faith of this here Church?" I continered.

"Yes sir, I be," sez he.

"Well," sez I, "hev ye red it, that Stand-erds ye're required to assent to and defend?"

"I don't give a rap fer the Stand-erds," sez he.

"Ye may not give a rap fer the Stand-erds," sez I, "but do ye give a rap fer yure own honesty, when ye've this minnet denied the Stand-erds, n'yet propose to assent to them before the fathers n'brethering of this heer Presbitry?"

"Order! Order!" they all begin hollerin', n'some mooved the examination be arested, n'I made no objection, feelin' my dooty had been done.

But heer we was now in a purty fix. Some was fer puttin' him rite thru. I was agin' it, n'sed so fer about fifteen minnets.

We worked away till most midnite n' then they sort o' paroled the young man in the care of our Committy, to see if before the Spring meetin' we cod git him round to sumthin' thet wood pass muster.

Our Committy, what was to bost him along till spring, had several meetin's. They was jest two ministers and me, Rev. Isaiah Deutero, D. D., and Rev. Ezra Pocypha; D. D., an' I was only an old elder, plain Arthur Dox, without any alphabet a-trailin' arter my name.

Them ministers know'd jist how I felt about this kind o' theology, n'they tried so hard to agree with me first go off that I thought I had a walkover. But leetle by leetle it come out that they was with Upsen Downs, n' was a-plannin' to outvote me.

I did my best to put up a stiff fite, n'finally told 'em that I'd carry it up to Synod if they ordained as our pastor a man who beleaved as he did.

N' when them two D.D.'s saw what they was a-facin', they had a long talk with their man, n' the result was that, when we had the next committy meetin', Upsen Downs was a gee-hawin' and backin' down on most everything he'd said in Presbitry.

"But," thinks I to meself, "a man that can change his beleef lickety-switch like that ain't any too well grounded, n'I found t'ye cood make him say first one thing n'then anuther, till ye didn't know where he did stand; n' sometimes he would ac-

toolly say that his mind wa'nt made up n'he was waitin' fer light.

Howsomever, when we held our last meetin' the two ministers agreed that we'd now got him fixt up all rite.

"He's got a gospel," says Dr. Deutero; "why not let him preach it?"

"Yes," says I, "but it ain't the gospel, and if any man preach any other gospel, let him be anathema manaratha!"

"I don't think," says Dr. Pocypha, "that Elder Arthur Dox should lose his temper an' give way to perfane language."

Howsomever, they had their way n' outvoted me, n' brought in a report to the spring meetin' that Upsen Downs' theology was now worked out satisfactory, n' recommendin' that his examination be sustained, n' so he was ordained, n' the very next week Rev. Upsen Downs was a-livin' in our manse, an' writ me a note about one o' the study winder catches bein' loose, n'signed it, "Yer sincere paster."

The church had been so long a-waitin' fer Upsen Downs, n' they'd ben so much said about his views in the newspapers, that when at last he come to town, everybody, big and little, wanted to git a look at him and the first Sunday the church was packed, mornin' and night.

Some says, "Ye can see how foolish ye was to try n'keep sech a great and good man out of our pulpit, fer he fills the church already as Dr. Steddy never could in his twelve year."

"I see," says I; "but just you wait."

The next Sunday the crowd was bigger n' the first, n'we had to fetch up chairs from the basement. Ye see, Downs had advertised a course of sermons on "The Reconstruction of Theological Belief"—about twenty discourses—n' he set it a-goin' the second Sunday.

Fer the third Sunday, Downs ordered the sexton to hire a lot of chairs from the undertaker's, n' to see that they was hauled up durin' the "rush hour," when everybody was on the street goin' home to dinner.

But on Sunday they wasn't enough folks to fill the pews even, n'before he'd preached half the course the congregation wa'n't up to what Dr. Steddy had all the time, n' lots o' members had quit comin' and was jinin' other churches.

I says to 'em, "Don't quit the ship. Stand by her. They'll be a change o' captains some day."

But it was hard work a-holdin' of 'em, an' I 'most thought I'd be the last member left. I was the last man in prayer meetin's, and jist a few wimmen folks.

After some months o' this, Downs come to me one day n' sez, sez he, "Brother Dox, things ain't a-goin' in the church jist to suit me, n' I want yure advice about goin' or stayin'. I used to think you was my enemy, but jedgin' from appearances, ye're 'bout the only friend I've got, n' I've come to ask ye what's the matter."

This sort o' moved me like, n' took all the fite out o' me; n' I made up my mind to talk to the young feller jist like I was his father.

"Brother Downs," sez I, "yer hull trouble is in preachin' a gospel instid o' the gospel."

"Ye can't git no grip on the people o' this here town or any other town, when ye cast doubt on the Scripters, when ye make

(Continued on Page 7)