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Margaret Ethel MacDonald: A Religious Study.

To be perfectly in order, in writing for a preachers' magazine, one should, I suppose, open with a text. Were I a preacher myself, I should experience no difficulty nor hesitation in taking as the foundation of what I have to say at present, the verse, "Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout." The sentence came to me of its own accord (as we say), as I was pondering over the Memoir* of Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald, issued recently by her husband.

Notwithstanding that Mrs. MacDonald's earthly life ended at the early age of forty-one, there is yet a sense, not only of conquest, but of completeness; not merely of strenuous labours accomplished, but of rest richly won. This found expression in her own words, uttered on her death-bed: "I am ready to go. God has been very good to me in giving me so much work. The day is ending, and I go to Him for rest and shelter at the close." And we do not get the idea of complete-

* It should be explained that for some of the references in this article I am indebted to a smaller Memoir, issued privately by Mr. MacDonald shortly after his wife had passed away.

ness in the sense of fulfilment alone: we also feel the beautiful oneness and unity of her life—"woven throughout" of one piece. There is no lopsidedness, no warring, or wavering of purposes or ambitions, no fret or fume—still less any sameness or staleness. Like all great souls, Mrs. MacDonald's character presented contrasts and contrarities; but these formed one charming and effective amalgam. To the grace of the Cavalier she added the solemnity of the Puritan, and to the unconventionality of the Bohemian the deep quietude of the Quaker. Reticent and reserved to a degree, she was yet full of the spirit of *camaraderie*, and flung herself into the maelstrom of life with rare *abandon*. "She saw life placidly and without crookedness," says her husband. "You always knew where to find her. She was not like a brawling stream, dry in summer and flooded in winter. She was like a spring, the source of which lay far below those surfaces that are sodden one season and parched the next."

The primary aim of these lines is to present a study of the distinctively religious side of Mrs. MacDonald's nature. But the greatness and the completeness of her character is manifest from the fact that it is quite impossible to separate her life into compartments or departments. Everywhere we touch it, it is instinct with charm and suggestiveness, but each point of contact is so linked with every other point that no partial or one-sided survey could do justice to any consideration of her life and work. If one might venture, out of a wealth of material, to take a sentence or two of her husband's as the *keynote* to her personality, it might be these: "No one regarded Time as a moment of Eternity more than she did. . . . The awe of the Eternal was never out of her mind, the

love of Christ guided every step she took; her work was one continued sacrifice, one continued prayer." The marvel is that, although the name of Christ occurs scarcely half-a-dozen times in the course of the 265 pages to which the Memoir runs, yet the book is saturated with the spirit of the Master, and the fragrance of His presence greets the reader like a benediction.

It is just the same with the political aspect of Mrs. MacDonald's life and work. Ardent Socialist as she became in the process of time, the term Socialism hardly finds a place in the Memoir, and yet one cannot help feeling, "If this is Socialism, would God that all the Lord's people were Socialists!" With Mrs. MacDonald, religion covered politics, and politics embraced religion. "My Socialism," she says, "grows entirely out of my religion, and though that may not prevent me making many big mistakes, still I cannot do more than ask God to direct me in what I do and think."

I have remarked already that the personality of Mrs. MacDonald presents diversity in unity, and contrasts as well as completeness. I can but refer briefly to two of the more striking of these contrasts: I call them two, but even as I think of them I feel they are but dual aspects of the same principle, namely, that in the truest and deepest sense every soul is and must be solitary.

The first thing I draw attention to is that, notwithstanding that "she really cared for nothing but the life of the spirit," and that "the sources of joy for her were in the inner recesses," she appears to have spent the greater part of her working life without definite association with any particular church or denomination. To trace her religious development, fascinating as the task is, would be impossible here; but to Nonconformists, to whom

Socialism is almost the *ne plus ultra* of democracy, it comes with almost a sense of shock to find that Margaret Ethel Gladstone (brought up as she was in an atmosphere of demure and dignified Presbyterianism) should, on the borders of her seventeenth year, submit herself to Anglican baptism. "Mr. Glyn," she writes, "read the service so impressively and kindly, and each of us stepped up to him to be sprinkled and signed with the water." On the next page to this her husband remarks, with happy irony, that "she came dangerously near to that useless life of pottering about in ecclesiastical matters, from decorating churches on holy days to dispensing charity to 'the poor,' as a superior person." For some years she took the Communion once a week regularly, and often more frequently. She also became a Sunday-school teacher, but as time went on she abandoned first of all the dogma of eternal damnation, and after that she found that, in regard to social matters, she could be limited no longer by the conventional Anglican standpoint. So she separates from the Church of England, and apparently, from that time onward, she had no formal, or even informal, tie with any body of Christians. But this, so far from meaning the impoverishment or weakening of the spiritual side of her character, seemed but to deepen and broaden it, and by freeing her from all ecclesiastical and denominational demands, left her the more able to follow her chosen way of ministry to the distressed and the oppressed.

It is particularly striking that Mrs. MacDonald, keenly alive as she was to the communal side of life, should not have been drawn to the socialistic aspect of public and united worship. There was certainly no lack of true and deep religious feeling

in her nature; indeed, her husband says that in spirit "she was never away from the Communion table," and every Sunday, when they returned from their country cottage, "she liked to sing hymns with her children, and then she would always choose, amongst the others, one of death and departure." Even the Sunday reading was always separate, because she did not like to have the weekday books read on Sunday. Once, in reply to someone's criticism, she exclaimed, "I am never out of church."

That this separation from the Church visible was not owing to any dissatisfaction with the ethical or spiritual content of the religion of Jesus is clear from her wonderful passion for *reality*. "There is a tremendous difference," she avers, for instance, "between admiring and believing in Christianity, on the one hand, and on the other, putting ourselves into the Divine influence." Only one other notable passage can be quoted bearing upon this point. Her husband writes: "She once heard that a certain lady, a friend of the family, had stated that we had no business to employ, on a certain mournful occasion, Christian rites, because we did not go regularly to church and carry out all the formulæ of church membership. 'I never doubt Christianity,' she remarked, 'except when I hear such views. Will these people never understand Christ?' She certainly did. Awe and veneration for Him who gave His life so that all might live, was her habitual and not her occasional attitude of mind."

The second note of contrast I wish to refer to is that, although no one in recent years excelled Mrs. MacDonald in her enthusiasm for humanity (especially for womankind and children) and in her personal and passionate devotion to the poor

and the wretched and the desolate, and although, further, she was an ideal wife and mother, and although, still further, after her marriage she became the centre of a great companionship of men and women doing work in the world, yet she was characterised by an elusive aloofness—or, rather, aloneness. Here, again, we are reminded of the teaching and example of the Master Himself: “Whenever you pray go into your own room and shut the door.”* Her husband writes thus, with a touch of even more than his usual pathos: “Her Dweller in the Innermost was very shy. . . . I always thought of her, when I knew she was worrying, as one standing alone doing penance in the secret silences. She left everyone behind her when she entered her Gethsemanes.” “When our boy of five died, she seemed to withdraw into the most lonely and the darkest places of her temple. . . . She bade everyone ‘Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.’” This holy withdrawal into the innermost was no strange thing to Mrs. MacDonald. Communion with, and waiting upon, God was the very breath of her life. At the age of twenty-two she prays: “God, make me to know Thy will and give me strength and wisdom, and above all, Thy Holy Spirit—that I may be led by it wherever it takes me.” At this time of her life, says her husband, the question, “What ought I to do?” hummed through her being like a haunting chord of sad music. Presently she found her work, and her work found her; but as the claims and demands of life increased, and the cares and sorrows of the mother of a family came to her, she fell back the more upon the Everlasting Arms and shut to the door. “She had within her being a Holy of Holies, where she sat alone, and where

* Dr. Weymouth's translation.

the presence of her dearest was forbidden." And the end of her earthly pilgrimage was in full keeping with this aloneness. When she was told that her life was done, "she just settled herself down as an obedient child told that it must sleep." There was no repining, no querulousness, no tremulousness, no misgiving. She thought of her little ones and of their future, of her husband and his heavy work and approaching loneliness, but for herself there were no regrets and no fears. She was asked if she desired to see anyone to speak to about what lay before her. "That would be but waste of time," she said. "I have always been ready. Let us praise God together for what has been." "Of death," writes her husband, "she was never afraid. She was convinced that life and time were not the sum and substance of experience, and she went away as though but starting upon a journey which, begun in darkness, would proceed through light. She would hold my hand, she said, till those who had gone before gave her greetings."

Fain would I have dwelt upon other aspects of this winsome and wholesome life, but I am compelled to break off here because I want to add a few words by way of "application." First, I strike a chord of sadness, then a note of gladness. Every reader of this magazine is directly associated with the Church of Christ, and it will therefore be with some sense of regret and pain that one realises that a life such as has been delineated (albeit with such inadequacy) should have been lived to so large a degree in separation from organised religion. While it may be true that Mrs. MacDonald suffered no lack because of this, it is nevertheless the fact that the Church, as such, was the loser because of the missing of the en-

thusiasm and devotion and Christlikeness of Mrs. MacDonald's personality. Apparently there was no antipathy on her part; certainly there was no lack of sympathy with the ideals of Jesus and with the interests of the Kingdom of God. Yet one feels that the Church of Christ should be so attractive that it should be impossible for one of her character to remain outside its borders. And the lack is realised all the more acutely when we recall how many there are in the ranks of the Church who fall inestimably short of the standard set by Mrs. MacDonald for herself and before the world. Over and over again has this note of lament as to the low ideals of church members been struck, and were it necessary or desirable, I could fill pages of this magazine with expressions of this nature from various quarters in the Church.

But I end by touching the chord of gladness. We remember, first, that Mrs. MacDonald was consciously a veritable daughter of the Lord God Almighty, and one in whom the spirit of Christ dwelt in much fulness. We remember, too, that, not only during her early and formative days, but even after she got out of touch with the Church visible, its influence abode with her as a blessing and an inspiration. And finally, we are glad to know that Mrs. MacDonald was but one of a great host who, whether or no they own formal allegiance to any organised body of Christians, are striving to bring about the dawning of a brighter and better day for the man and the woman, and particularly for the child, of the people; and to help in the building of

"Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

PHILADELPHOS.

Editorial Notes.

As we go to press, we regret to learn of the sudden passing of one of our number, Forbes Jackson, M.A., of Aberdeen. The sympathy and prayers of every one of us go out unreservedly to the widow and family who have been so suddenly bereaved. Mr. Jackson's career was one of the real romances of life. From the lowliest of beginnings he raised himself to a position of great prominence and usefulness. In our next issue, we shall print a contribution giving his life and character by one who knew him as his minister, his deacon, and his friend.

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One of the most interesting Autumn announcements of the publishing trade will be Hodder & Stoughton's *Autobiography* of Arthur Mursell, which that well-known preacher, lecturer, and *raconteur* is busily preparing for the press. The appearance of the book will be an event in more than Baptist circles, but in none will it be looked for with greater eagerness or received with warmer welcome. Mr. Mursell's pastorate in Birmingham from 1879 to 1887 covered one of the most fateful periods in our political history, and his two chapters on Mr. Joseph Chamberlain will be read with keen interest and enjoyment.

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The past year has seen several changes in the official *personnel* of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union. Two friends, who have earned the grateful thanks of the members as Editor and Secretary, have been compelled by other

claims to relinquish their tasks. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., and S. G. Morris, who have filled the above offices respectively, have permitted their nomination as members of Committee, a fact which tempers regret at their retiral from more active service. T. J. Whitman, who succeeds as Secretary, brings to the post a great determination to make the B.M.F.U. "worth while" to every Baptist minister. That he will succeed in creating a wide extension of its borders his energy and resourcefulness leave no room to doubt.

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Editorial ambitions are very high and confident. A quarterly journal of restricted proportions does not offer a very promising field for operations, but its influence may be extended greatly. We hope to make this present volume one of the most interesting and helpful, and to that end we have invited one or two ministers' wives, and other ladies, to address the fraternity. A custom which produces such uniformly excellent results when the deliverance is confined to one, cannot fail to bear fruit when given a larger application. Other features will be introduced, and admirers of "Counsels to Clement" will be glad to know that "Benedict" has promised to contribute a further series during the year.

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For the first time in its history, we believe, the FRATERNAL appears this quarter with a number of advertisements, and, under the circumstances, we feel justified in drawing attention to those who have utilised our space in this way. The Blick Typewriter Co.'s offer is an

attractive one. We know that a number of our readers use this machine, and that they speak most highly of its special suitability for ministers. The cost, for a first-class typewriter, is remarkably low, and it can be paid by instalments. Hunter & Longhurst, whose book-store is one of the largest and best-known in Paternoster Row, have added publishing to the selling of books, and one of their ventures is referred to elsewhere in this issue. Mr. P. J. Love (who is not in any way related to your Editor!) is a specialist in poster work for churches. We can personally endorse the wording of his advertisement, and recommend these posters as exceptionally cheap and effective.

Finally, may we urge upon all who may communicate with any advertiser using our pages to mention the name of this magazine?

The Artistry of Imagination.

By Ethel M. Forbes.

This title may not at first sight suggest anything very profound or relevant to the columns of a magazine such as the FRATERNAL, which is an organ of the sterner sex, and concerned chiefly with the problems of a high calling. And yet it is open to question if much of the modern materialism the Church mourns—a great deal of the present-day craze for affluence and pleasure-seeking—is not due to the decay of imagination. The mundane mind seeks a concrete world, and “amusement,” says Dean Swift, “is the happiness of those who cannot think.” To such, an evening

with themselves . spells *ennui*. The "picture palace" which dominates our streets is a sign of the times—a sign that the mind which has no stage of its own, no limelight of fancy, no inward eye to visualise life's living pictures for itself, must ever be abroad seeking to fill its vacuum. To the visionary, alone in his two or ten rooms of "splendid silence," come visitors of fancy—sometimes "angels unawares."

Landor makes his Vittoria Collonna say: "The human heart is a world of poetry: the imagination is only its atmosphere." Most of us begin with it in childhood. All children vitalise their world. Their toys come alive; their nurseries and gardens may be everything in turn, from a forest where wild beasts lurk to a sea where go the ships—where is that great leviathan. Fairies are a constant possibility and angels a firm faith. Is it any wonder that at a time little tongues run out to tell as fact what has only existed in imagination? and prosaic parents, seeing a tendency to fabrication in the wild statements of their offspring, try to repress this strain, which is just the faculty of fancy temporarily out of proportion. Parents of this type expect naked truth from impressionable minds in the nursing-days of fairy-lore, because they, themselves, have lost the art of the child-eye, which always sees more than the obvious. Sometimes when a full-grown soul with the perpetual genius of youth challenges the mature mind, it admits the impeachment of blameworthy forgetfulness. It is decay of the imaginative faculty in the average man or woman that makes them marvel at the insight of a Stevenson, a Barrie, or a Hartley Coleridge into the mind of a child. They read the *Garden of Verses* and know it is the forgotten soul of their own childhood, or they

set to their seal to the truth of the younger Coleridge's confidences:

"All children have a world of their own as distinct from that of grown-up people who gravitate around them as the dreams of girlhood from our prosaic life, or the ideas of the kitten that plays with the falling leaves from those of her carnivorous mother that catches mice and is sedulous in her domestic duties. But generally, about this interior existence, children are dumb. You have warlike ideas, but you cannot say to a sinewy relative: 'My dear aunt, I wonder when the big bush in the garden will begin to walk about. I'm sure it's a Crusader, and I was cutting at it all the day with my steel sword. But what do you think, aunt? for I'm puzzled about its legs, for, you see, aunt, it has only one stalk; and besides, aunt, the leaves!' You cannot remark this in secular life, but you look at that infelicitous bush till you do not wholly reject the idea that your small garden is Palestine, and yourself the most adventurous of knights."

I do not envy the task of the disillusionist, because in the destructive work of a child's first faith many good elements have to go with the moralising of knowledge. Truth must be the ultimate standard. In its presentation, however, it needs delicate perception not to denude it so that the naked truth produce a recoil in the child's mind against its underlying spiritual parts. As a writer in the *Hibbert Journal* puts it: "When a child is taught to disbelieve in fairy stories and giant-slaying, he does not merely lose faith in giants: he loses faith in the hero who slew them. Children kill giants daily—the sagacious adult kills Jack." The rub is to retain heroism as common sense grows upon us.

The secret of men like Stevenson, like Barrie, or Coleridge, is in reality the secret of perpetual youth, with its never-dying imaginative art. Stevenson's explanation of it is: "I am one of those few people who do not forget their own lives." Wherefore Chesterton writes of him: "He died with a thousand stories in his heart." Life never grows stale to such a soul. It escapes the thrall of the years. The elect soul is that which refuses to surrender to life's disillusionments. It finds an antidote to the "trail of the slug-commonplace" in the colouring of the common day with the rainbow of the imagination. The greatest writers are not sensational-mongers, but specialists of the commonplace. This was the chief characteristic of Dickens. In an appreciation I read of him, "he walked the streets and found there, not men merely, but deathless characters. Everything was alive to him, even brick and stone. 'The house was squeezed between two others,' or 'it had run up a court and got lost'; or, 'the road fled down a hill half-way and up the other side, where it stopped, tired out!'" The great painter is the man or woman who, as Kipling puts it, can "see the blue in the white of the mist, the violet that is in gray palings, and all things else as they are—not of one hue, but a thousand." The people who quicken life about us are those who do common things in an uncommon way; who possess the driving-power of imagination.

It may be urged that this applies only to those with the temperamental equipment of genius, and, as such, is confined to the few. But there are many classes in the kingdom of the imagination. The world can easily table its supreme artists, but who shall number the minor poets, the seers, the "mute,

inglorious Miltons," who feel after the unlearned languages of the soul. If, as in the fairy days, when all things were possible to those who believed, I were bidden wish a wish for the future over the cradle of a child, I should ask for it the artistry of the imaginative mind in its two highest outworkings:

First, the gift of the religious faculty—that supreme power which can lift the duties of a domestic servant above their ground level into the eternal order—

. . . the famous stone
That turneth all to gold

as Herbert exults in "The Elixir," and which enables multitudes of souls to face the greyness and negations of life in the light of that fine paradox which speaks of *seeing* things which are *invisible*. To receive religion is not the deliberate acceptance of some dogma; it is the awakening of the seeing power of the soul. It may dawn slowly, as an infant's eye grows by degrees to define the world about it; or it may come with the sharpness of a surgical incision, as sight breaking in upon cataract; but in every history of conversion, in all the biographies of soul, from Paul, Lydia, Augustine, or the tinker, Bunyan, to the transformed characters in Begbie's *Broken Earthenware* or *Down in Water Street*, we find testimony to this newly-found seeing-power of the soul. In its outworkings it is infinite in variety as man himself, but however lowly the way of a recipient, he becomes enlarged in spirit if not in circumstance.

And secondly, I would endow a child with the faculty of fellowship with nature. I would put it out to nurse with this great force. We know

how Kingsley's mother steeped herself in its atmosphere before his coming, and how, in the sensitive cells of the undeveloped brain, was written an undying love and affinity for the great world of God. The universe became vocal, alive at every pore. It is a heritage none can rob us of so long as we keep undimmed the outlook of the soul. We can be cabined and confined in the circumstances of life, but with it we are never straitened in ourselves. In its cultivation nature begins to be humanised to us: we endow it with consciousness like our own, and become rich in friends other than flesh and blood.

Take this little illustration by a "gentleman of the road," who has known at a time the hospitality of the casual ward:

I hear leaves drinking rain:
 I hear rich leaves on top
 Giving the poor beneath
 Drop after drop.

Can any soul to whom the world so speaks be poor or lonely? It is significant that this fine imaginativeness, that finds its wealth in its own inwardness of suggestion, often dwells with those who know, or have known, material limitation. Folklore and mysticism never flower in rich, bustling city life. They grow in Highland fastnesses, in Welsh valleys, in the lands of the Little People.

Wherefore, who would wish for man that his life assets should run into seven figures? The full world is for the millionaire of imagination.

Our New Secretary.

“Oh, that’s Whitman, is it? How is he getting on?”

These are the sentences that come to my mind as I sit down to write of my friend, the new secretary of the B.M.F.U.

The scenes are various. L.B.A. meetings at some London Church; the Holborn Town Hall crowded with delegates to the Spring Assembly; the Annual Re-union at Bristol College. His London colleagues, country ministers, Bristol men of an earlier generation, all are interested to see this young man called from the obscurity of college life to the front of the firing-line in one of the prominent places of the field. To be a friend is to shine with a reflected glory. “Yes, that’s Whitman.”

“How is he getting on?” You wait a moment before replying, to let first impressions soak in. And the first impressions are distinctly favourable. He does not suggest a decaying cause. There is about him an air of quiet confidence, a general suggestion of maturity and stability. The question is half answered before you speak. You have no time, perhaps, to reply at all. He has seen you in the crowd which he scatters as he makes a bee-line for you. He is introduced; other friends join the group; you separate, but you know that another man has gone home with the conviction that Woodberry Down made no mistake when it called T. J. Whitman straight from the class to the leadership of this important church.

In turning to the Handbook to verify my dates, I chanced to pick up the volume for 1911, and was puzzled for a moment as I searched in

vain through the ministerial list. Then I remembered another column—which Whitman was largely instrumental in having considerably shortened—that of the noble army of probationers. I recalled the letter with (I think) a German post-mark, addressed to “Probationer T. J. Whitman.” Before a jury with knowledge and a sense of humour, that accidental but brilliant *reductio ad absurdum* would have laughed the entire scheme out of court. Whitman never was a probationer. It is true he was styled one, with all of us, during his first few months in college. It is true he was styled one, with many of us, during his first few years in the ministry. But in his case there is really nothing probationary, amateurish, tentative. He seems to fit into a new situation as easily as a hand into an old glove. He comes to wider tasks as to his own kingdom. When he broke the college shell he came out a minister, fully hatched. That is not a denial of growth; there has been growth all along the line; but it has been from strength to strength. There is a quiet inevitability about him like that of rising water. As secretary of the B.M.F.U. he has undertaken new duties and responsibilities, but those of us who know him have no fear; the new duties will be lightly carried, the responsibilities adequately met.

Of Whitman as a preacher I can say little from personal experience. I have never heard him preach since student-days, and then only in college to bloodthirsty critics, whetting their knives to slay. But I know enough to realise that he can preach. The sermon-class was less of a shambles than usual when he was the victim. The “supply lists” soared to magnificent heights during his reign as senior. Churches where he

preached on supply solicited his MS. for the next month's magazine. Tempting invitations came to him towards the close of his college course. And he has kept it up. One occupies his pulpit with fear and trembling, knowing the high standard maintained there Sunday by Sunday. He comes of a preaching stock. He has a strain of Welsh blood. He loves preaching. His voice is clear, sweet-toned, persuasive. "Quiet intensity" probably sums up his manner. He is a diligent student, and gives his people of his very best. His outlook is frankly modern; he is keenly alive to all the changes in religious thought, and he has the courage of his convictions. But, behind it all, and through it all, there is the yearning note of the seeker of souls.

In that North London suburb, as in so many places of the field, "no slacker grows the fight." The district is changing; many valued workers have passed away, but all the work has been well maintained. Despite heavy losses there is an increase of membership on the present year. Additional premises, costing some thousands of pounds, have recently been erected.

"For the first six months in his diocese a bishop can do nothing wrong; after that he can do nothing right!" That brings the bishop very near to some of us! "How long has Mr. Whitman been with you?" I asked one of his people, on a recent visit. "Nearly six years, and we love him more now than the day he came." Happy church! Happy minister!

A man of sterling character and of fine gifts, a true and trusty friend, a good minister of Jesus Christ—such is my impression of the new secretary of the B.M.F.U.

W. H. C.

“Cummy.”

By Walter A. Mursell.

A Celebrity.

Through the delicate and thoughtful kindness of a friend, I was privileged to meet, a few weeks ago, a celebrity—none other than Alison Cunningham, the old and much loved nurse of Robert Louis Stevenson. “Cummy,” as Stevenson called her, and as she still loves to be called, delights in the hero-worship of which she is the centre, and never grows tired of talking about her “ain laddie.” She is ninety years of age, but she might be nineteen as far as vivacity is concerned. The only sign of age is her deafness; but for the rest she is alert in mind, graphic in speech, quick in memory, brisk in observation, emphatic and final in opinion, and sufficiently nimble in body to trip up and down stairs like a girl, to walk with firm, energetic step, and thoroughly to enjoy all she sees. I saw her in company with a literary friend, and when we were introduced, she demanded to know which of us was “the minister.” She expressed some very natural scepticism on being told that I was the culprit, and appeared a little shocked at the absence of a clerical collar; but when I told her it was at the wash, she was quite relieved, and friendly relations were immediately established.

Some Opinions.

I have said that some of her views were emphatic. This came out in her vehemently expressed dislike of the portrait of Stevenson now in the National Portrait Gallery, and of the

memorial medallion on the wall of St. Giles' Cathedral. She resented, I think, in this last, the perpetuation of the invalid; for the medallion depicts Stevenson sitting up in bed, propped on pillows, pen in hand, with his writing materials spread before him. It is an unfortunate phase of such a man to perpetuate in bronze, and is certainly not the kind of memorial Stevenson himself would have desired; and the loyal Cummy rejected the representation with scorn. She was voluble and emphatic again when she spoke of Henley, whose attack on the character of his dead friend was so bitterly resented at the time. She admitted that Henley was a brilliant writer and a most fascinating man, but she said: "He did Louis a great deal of harm." She did not say exactly what she meant by this, but I understood her to mean that Henley's growingly unfriendly attitude had deeply wounded Stevenson's generous heart. She referred, with a break in her voice and a suspicion of moisture in her eyes, to Stevenson's journey to America in an emigrant ship, and across the continent to California in an emigrant train, and declared that it was that journey which really killed him. He lived for several years afterwards, but the effects of that terrible journey were never lost. "His lungs, at that period, were like a sponge," said Cummy. "Lewis describes it all in 'Across the Plains,'" she said; "it is a book I can't bear to read." I noticed that she was always careful to pronounce his name "Lewis," although it was spelt in the French fashion, "L-o-u-i-s." Stevenson himself changed the spelling of his name from "Lewis" to "Louis," for the characteristic reason that a fellow-citizen whom he cordially detested spelt *his* name "Lewis," and Stevenson desired a complete severance from this unpleasant person-

age. Cummy told us how Lewis, as a little boy, would dictate stories to her by the hour. He would lock the door of the nursery, so that they might be perfectly alone and undisturbed, and then paper and pencils would be produced, and the most wonderful tales would be evolved. Cummy wishes she had kept those old manuscripts now. But who could have told what was to be? Once, she said, she had put Lewis in the corner for some misdemeanour, and when, after a time, she called him to come out, he refused to stir. Again she called, but still he remained immovable, with his face to the wall. Thinking something was the matter, she went to bring him out of the corner, when, hearing her approaching, he turned round, and lifting up an admonitory finger, said: "Sh! I'm telling myself a story!" How characteristic that was! The child was indeed father of the man.

A Pathetic Link.

It was very charming to sit with this dear old lady, listening to her pouring out these simple and tender reminiscences about her "ain laddie"; very touching to see how he held her heart still, how proud she was of his fame, and of her own association with him, how every simple memory was cherished as a sacred thing. Well she might be proud, for she was in the Stevenson family for forty-five years, and she nursed Lewis from the time that he was eighteen months old, and brought him safely through all his childish ailments and frequent severe illnesses, watching all the time the growth of his mind, and directing the development of his character. Well she might be proud, for there was a link between those two as strong and sweet and familiar as that between

mother and child, and right nobly and beautifully did Stevenson acknowledge his debt when he became a man. Could there be a tenderer or more delicate dedication than that which forms the preface to *A Child's Garden of Verses*? Alison Cunningham needs no better certificate of character than that, and no better epitaph—long may it be deferred! I count it one of the privileges of my life to have been permitted to clasp that "most comfortable hand," and through it to have greeted the exile in Samoa. The last time I was in Edinburgh I went to look at 17 Heriot Row, where the Stevensons used to live. The house was empty, and I would have given much to enter. I compromised matters by mounting the front steps and peeping through the letter-box, and then risked my reputation by publicly and most tenderly embracing the lamp-post that stood in front, believing it to be the very lamp-post immortalised in *A Child's Garden*:

"For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door."

It may have been another lamp-post altogether: perhaps it was the one at number 8 Howard Street, where the child was born; but no matter; it pleased me to think it was the same, and I paid it suitable homage. I thought how often Lewis and Cummy must have sat together at the nursery window in the gathering dusk, watching for Leerie, "with lantern and with ladder, come posting up the street." I thought of the long nights the sick child lay awake, and the faithful nurse carrying him to the window, wrapped in a shawl or blanket, that he might see the lights winking through the mist across the gardens opposite, and catch a glimpse of the bright stars

looking down from above. And then I thought of the exile in the South Seas, and of his exquisitely poignant and haunting lines, as his thoughts flew homeward:

“Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the
rain are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the
whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how!”

Counsels to Clement.

Dear Clement,

I think that there are many men in the ministry who are somewhat perplexed, as you are, concerning the best use of Sunday evening, after the service is over; although to many others it may seem a matter of small importance and readily left to take care of itself. Many men, many methods: and yet some of the methods, like some of the men, might be better than they are. I write now entirely of men of average physique and age; not of the veteran nor of the broken in health.

We may dismiss first and finally, the man who, theoretically or actually, is so built that he must hasten home to an exhausted repose. If he is so nervously frail that he must have immediate and total quiet, let him take it by all means. It is a healing remedy, and better taken without the assistance of a bosom friend who drops in to discuss all things in heaven and earth with a provocative temper and style. He who has not strength left to talk to an inquirer certainly

has not enough left to talk to a dogmatist at the supper table.

There are those, too, whose Sunday evenings represent opportunities for sacred gatherings with their own family in its entirety: opportunities which a few short years will snatch from them for ever. These men will know well enough how to use the remaining hours of their Sabbath so that at least they may be a remembered joy to their children in all the after years.

Apart from these, there are many with few such restrictions upon the use of their time. They can go where they will without restraint, except that of wisdom and duty and love. By such as these, there are things which can be wholesomely remembered; alternatives of important choice which can be considered.

There is, for instance, the Rev. Demosthenes Dash, whom you know and envy, who comes from his pulpit on Sunday evening with the manner of a batsman who has made a full century without defeat, cannot forget it, and hopes no one else will. There is a dash of Dash in all of us. The normal thing for this man to do is to make a short cut to the nearest abode where an atmosphere of adulation will confirm him in his feeling that he is rather a fine fellow. There are a few lonely folk who would be glad of the inspiration of his presence, and disheartened ones who would willingly catch, if they could, some of his abundant assurance; but it is not the way of Demosthenes to seek out such as these. A healthy and admiring audience is too precious to him, and he seeks what he values most, and acts accordingly.

Now no man can be expected to make Sunday evening a time for systematic visitation: but if he has time and strength with which to bestow the

influence of his presence anywhere, he may as well make it valuable.

It would be folly to forget that in a home circle of young people at such a time there is much true work to be done by the ambassador for Christ; but it will only be well done if, without being a prig, and repelling far from him the ever-sensitive hearts of the young, he is very mindful that he is an ambassador, and that only a few minutes since, he was speaking with the authority of one. It is good for the young to learn at the Sunday evening table that the divine messenger is a man, but they must find out that he is a real man, and that he has the marks of the Lord Jesus, even when he is speaking of other themes. It is fatal if the impression is gained that the genial supper-table humorist is the real man, and that the one who was in the pulpit an hour since was but saying what he was expected to say, and doing what was in the part. It is in the social home circle that the minister of Christ, whether he be Demosthenes, or anyone else, earns the regard which becomes such a large part of his power with men; and it is there that he so fatally loses it, if he goes only to bask in the sunshine of generous praise, or to win for himself an easy reputation as a jolly fellow. Those who begin by laughing with him may end by laughing at him. That is poor fruit for the closing hours of Sunday.

There can be no question, Clement, that the man who has done his best for his Master through the hours of a Sabbath day is fully entitled to rest at once when the strain is over: it may be conceded, too, that rest is often found in the freedom of congenial company. But there is one governing consideration which may guide all perplexed men in this matter: it is this, that, when we have done

all, gone where we will, or refrained from going, comforted the solitary for a few minutes, or rejoiced with the glad-hearted for an hour or two—when all is done, one sole question remains with any importance: “What do they think of our Master whose ambassadors we are? What have we made them think of Him?” That question is, of course, equally relevant to all other evenings spent anywhere; but it applies with especial directness to the evening of the Lord’s Day, when we have so lately handled the word of life, and spoken of the deep things of the kingdom. It were better to go home to the seclusion of our own home, even at the cost of seeming aloofness, rather than to give the impression that the ambassador is, after all, only a trifier.

It is my belief, Clement, that a man can round off the Sabbath day of service fruitfully and wisely in the homes of his people; he can even lift from his own heart some of the strain, if he needs that relief, and he can form friendships of deep and hallowed beauty at the hearths of his flock. But, to do this, he must be wise, and he must be impartial, and he must remember that those who have first claim upon him are his own young sons and daughters. I have met, in the casual acquaintance of hotel life, a young actor, who confessed to me that he missed his own home and parents most of all on Sunday night, and I saw, through that feeling, the warm light of a good home, not forgotten and not without influence. Such a home it may be our duty to make for our own kin; and if that be not so, we can at least endeavour to extend our ministry to the firesides of others, so that, in after years, the young hearts that have gone forth from thence may look back to Sabbath evenings at home with regretful joy.

They will, perhaps, in doing that, remember us, and better still; they will remember Christ.

These may seem small considerations, Clement, but out of them may come some of the lasting joys of the ministry; finer, and having more in common with Eternity, than the fleeting fame of what we call our reputation. I hope this may help you.

Yours fraternally,

BENEDICT.

From the Secretary's Desk.

In the last issue of the FRATERNAL, our Editor referred, in kindly terms, to my acceptance of the Committee's invitation to become the secretary to the B.M.F.U. I will refrain, in all modesty, from quoting his exact words, but he made some reference to my digital exercises upon the official typewriter. Upon receipt of the said machine, much to my chagrin, it refused to work at the most inopportune moments, but I am sure the whole brotherhood will rejoice to learn that the Secretary, by great exertions and much diligence, has persuaded the official typewriter to run smoothly, and that there is some hope of letters being duly answered. May the behaviour of the machine be an omen of the future of our Union!

In spite of such minor discouragements, I should like to assure the brethren that the new Secretary has found a great deal of pleasure in his work. For one thing, it is extremely pleasurable for a poor parson to receive so many half-crown postal orders by post, though the feeling of substantial wealth is only transient. The cashier at

my bank took quite an interest in my sudden and unprecedented wealth, and on receipt of a bundle of half-crown postal orders, hazarded the guess that I had patented some pills. I hope every member of the Fraternal will do his part to support the little fiction, and make my "patent" appear a great success by rolling in the half-crowns!

I thank all those who have done their part to make the Secretary's work lighter by paying their subscriptions early, and they have been a goodly number. Is it an impossibility to hope that there will be no need to send out another reminder this year to the members? It would be the best indication of your support and appreciation of those who serve you in the executive office. One more word "concerning the collection"—that most threadbare of all ministerial topics. I am sure that there are a large number of men in our ministry who would welcome the privileges of our Union, but who cannot afford the half-crown. None of us would be happy, feeling such might be shut out of our brotherhood. Perhaps they could pay the shilling membership fee, but not the other one and six for this journal—which, however, I think is essential to sustain a feeling of unity, and the funds will not permit a free distribution of any copies. Are there any men who will give a donation towards such a project? I am sure there are many who would feel glad to pay for any extra copy, that it might be sent to a brother minister. I shall be glad to hear from you.

I am sure the Secretary enjoys the greatest benefits of the Fraternal. He gets the essence of fraternity showered down upon him; he lives at the hub of the world of fraternities. I have greatly enjoyed the large number of letters I have received from the brethren, breathing so much good-will

and appreciation; and have again and again felt like writing letters in return; but you will understand how impossible this is, and accept my heartfelt acknowledgment here and now. Some of the greatest testimonies to the blessings of the B.M.F.U. are from our men abroad. There they appreciate the fraternal spirit. It makes one think how good it would be for us all to be transported for a while. I venture to give a few extracts from our "Foreign Correspondents":

"Ministers must hold together now-a-days more than ever. With them there should be no lack of *esprit de corps*. None of us should fight for our own hand, in spite of the innate and normal selfishness of human nature. But we are slow to learn wisdom. We eloquently defend our principles, and leave the other fellow to give effect to them! Isn't that what they call altruism?"

"We are glad to keep somewhat in touch with our brethren in the Home churches, and the Fraternal helps us."

'Another regrets the little opportunity there is for a missionary to realise the fraternal spirit. He adds: "Except on Sunday mornings—then it is real."

That last phrase suggests to me that a reminder of our Prayer Union would do us all good.

"Let me remember that I am one of a company of Baptist ministers and missionaries who have promised . . . to pray once a week (preferably on the early morning of each Lord's Day) for . . . both ourselves and our churches."

The pledge runs in that fashion. I have given the substance of it. I shall be glad to send a card of the Prayer Union to any that desire it. I am sure our brotherhood will be real if it means a unity in prayer.

'As I think of all the letters I have received, I am impressed by the spirit of real brotherhood that exists among our members. Unfortunately, only your Secretary can fully enjoy its manifestation. If we could devise some means of communication, by which we could reach one another more readily, men would flock to enter our fellowship. Your Executive is carefully considering how best to foster the spirit of fraternity and bring men together who live in the same locality. I am sure that would be a strength to us, and I should like to receive opinions and suggestions for the same.

The date of our annual conference and business meeting is Thursday, May 1st, and will be held in the afternoon at the Kingsgate Chapel. The business-meeting will be at 2.30 p.m., when Dr. Meyer, our present chairman, will induct his successor, Principal Gould, who has always been so loyal to the Fraternal. The election of committee will take place then; will the brethren please send in any further nominations immediately.

At the conference which follows, Canon Masterman will give an address on "The Anglican Ideal of Worship."

Remember Thursday, May 1st. In London we are not allowed to forget that day; it is Labour Day, and all the Labour Unions mass together for the celebration. May there be a great rally to our Union on May 1st!

T. J. WHITMAN.

The Book-buyer.

The pastor of Fairtop Road Baptist Church, Leytonstone, has published a volume of twenty addresses to children, and he has given his book the exceedingly happy title, *Pins and Needles*. As a rule, such publications resemble a basket of strawberries, where the "big ones" are carefully arranged at the top. In almost any collection of similar addresses the first half-dozen are usually admirable, but they invariably thin out, and, after about fifty pages, become obvious padding. F. Humphrey's talks to the children are consistently good, and the last, on the letter H, we consider the best. *Pins and Needles* has reached a second edition. It is a liberal education in the art of addressing a junior congregation, and ministers would find several copies for distribution among their Sunday School teachers a good investment. The price is 1s. 6d. net.

From the same publishers (Hunter & Longhurst, Paternoster Row) comes another little book, also in its second edition: *The Women who Walked with Jesus*, by Ernest Dowsett. The writer has studied his subjects "in the gleam from George Matheson's lamp," but there is no slavish following of the master. Each study is penetrating and wonderfully suggestive. "The Woman who Mothered Jesus" is a beautiful tribute. "She does not talk as other people talk about her boy. She does not quote His latest saying when next she meets her friends. His mother kept all these sayings in her heart. She concealed the brilliance, she quenched the fire, so that it should not spoil her boy's childhood. If Mary can manage it, the child shall be a child as long as ever He can."

On "The Woman who Read the Thoughts of Jesus," the author has also many suggestive things to say, and he closes his book with a fittingly beautiful chapter on "The Woman who Taught me most about God," in which the Bible is described as "a letter to you from home, a letter of exquisite comfort from a Mother-God to the lonely and sorrowing children upon earth."

College Notes.

Regent's Park.

At the commencement of this term we bade farewell to W. H. Kinsey, who has left us to take charge of a church in Johannesburg. Herr Prochazka, who came to us from Bohemia, was recalled in the middle of last term to rejoin his regiment in Austria. We earnestly hope that it will not be long before he is able to return to us again.

The Bible and Social Study Circles which were held last term were very successful. This term we are giving our attention to the "Renaissance in India." The missionary spirit in the College is strong.

We have not been very successful in the sports' world. With the exception of the first two matches we have been defeated continuously by one or two goals, but we look for better treatment in the future.

F. S. DRAKE.

Glasgow.

We are not the most sociable people in the world just now. The 'Varsity Session creeps on apace, exams. loom ahead, and the last lap is in sight. Scotch "dourness" and determination are

much in evidence, and that means, of course, a big list of passes. Every minute is in demand, but in the wilderness of work there is a sacred oasis, and Friday afternoon is reserved for devotion and social study. To all hard-working students we send greetings. We understand and sympathise.

J. C. RENDALL.

Bristol.

The whole of the probationers were accepted at the beginning of the term, and duly initiated. Our Missionary Soiree will be held on March 5, when the musical part of the programme will, as usual, be sustained entirely by the men in the house. The speakers are to be J. P. Bruce, M.A., of China, and F. W. Hale, of India.

We are losing our esteemed matron at Easter, but she is leaving her famed recipe for black-currant tea—which has saved so many young and promising lives—behind her. All old “Bristol men” join with us in wishing Mrs. Burns and her husband-about-to-be many and happy years together at Bridgewater!

E. P. B.

