

# The Fraternal.

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Literary and other contributions for "The Fraternal" should be addressed to the Secretary, Rev. A. J. Payne, 25, The Grove, Earlsfield, Wandsworth, London, S.W.18.

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Members of the B.M.F.U. will hear with deep regret of the resignation of the Secretary, Rev. E. D. de Rusett, M.A., on account of ill health. It is a real grief to him, for he delighted to serve his brethren; and, may we add, that they felt it a pleasure to be served by one so gracious and self-sacrificing. We pray that he may be perfectly recovered, and that right soon.

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At the Committee Meeting on November 21st the Rev. A. J. Payne was appointed to succeed Mr. de Rusett. We know him not only as a loyal worker, but also as the efficient Secretary of the London Baptist Board, and we are sure of being wisely directed.

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Will members please see whether they have paid their subscriptions up to and including 1922. This is essential, in view of the Annual Meeting in the Spring, when we shall be electing officers and Committee. It would be helpful if subscriptions for 1923 were also sent to the Secretary, as all are due on January 1st each year.

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The Rev. Goldsmith French has been asked to become Editor of this Magazine, and we hope that he will accept the office. Under his direction and aided, as he will be, by a small Subcommittee of chosen men, we shall look with confidence for the regular appearance of a Magazine worthy of the brotherhood.

J. H. FRENCH (Tres.).

## THE FRATERNAL.

### PERSONALITY AND MINISTRY.

By Rev. A. M. RITCHIE, M.A.

FROM start to finish in the Christian ministry we are working with personality. The personal factor is always operative, and colours all we say and do. There is, perhaps, no calling in which work and worker are so indissolubly joined. In some of the higher arts there may be a dividing line between the artist and his art: moral and spiritual qualities are not in the deepest sense determinants. A great deal of human activity bears no vital relation to personal character. In art you can have dissolute genius and it is still genius. There is, however, no such hiatus in the Christian ministry. We are working with character all the way along. The potent and persuasive factor of moral manhood is subtly and irresistibly active all the while. There are, of course, aptitudes and powers which the minister acquires; but the supreme and abiding aptitude is character. To this ethical and spiritual test a man's ministry must ultimately come.

It is impossible to miss this emphasis in the New Testament. Our Lord Himself set significant store on the quality of His personality. In a unique sense His ministry was Himself. We are conscious of a power which lay somewhere in the harmonising of personality and ministry. He DID, because He WAS.) You find this moral Nexus of character and ministry in many a saying of Paul. There were elements of moral anxiety in the apostle's whole attitude to his ministry. He agonizes to be, that he may do. A man's life is a "vessel," the purging of which is essential, if he would be "meet" for His Lords use. The body must be brought within the limits of an exacting servitude, lest the preacher, with all his preaching, become futile, negligible.

First, qualities of moral manhood are indispensable in our great task. It was said of that fine spirit, Alfred Lyttleton, that self-discipline was continued throughout his life. I should be the last to underestimate culture and intellect, and the need of prolonged mental discipline in a work like ours. The restless and badly-led democracy of our time needs all the sound, intellectual guidance we can offer. But neither democracy nor aristocracy is near intellectual bankruptcy. It is moral breakdown, moral

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rotteness that we are up against. If culture and civilisation meant Christian morals we might sit a bit easy to the great sanctions and values of Christianity. But it is far otherwise. Beside the intellectual achievements of our age moral Christianity is a mere cripple, halting alas far behind the amazing triumphs of genius and art.

The Christian ministry calls for consecrated manhood, for dedicated personality. Dr. Stalker, in his book, "The Preacher and his Models," has a reminiscence of his student days. He tells of a Professor who came to speak to the students of his year on their future work. This professor was reputed the most scientific man of the staff, and it was generally expected that he would deliver a scathing exposure of the weakness of ministers, or a severe exhortation to study. The address, however, turned out to be one "full of genuine emotion and of almost lyrical tenderness." "We listened," says Dr. Stalker, "to a conception of the ministry which had scarcely occurred to any of us before. The Professor declared that the great purpose for which a man is settled in a church is not to cultivate scholarship, or to visit the people during the week, or even to preach to them on Sundays, but to live among them as a good man, whose mere presence is a demonstration which cannot be gainsaid, that there is a life possible on earth which is fed from no earthly source, and that the things spoken of on Sunday are realities." Do we not feel that the Professor's estimate lights up with a kind of radiance the chief end of our ministry. A man's ministry may easily become a kind of dome of many coloured hues—flashy, brilliant, visible—but without this white radiance of goodness. Our influence and power depend on our keeping the main track of our calling. Among the moral inspirations of ministry is the savour and saintliness of goodness.

I stress this more intensive side of our work for the fundamental reason that the outward and lasting effect of our ministry reflects the reality and sincerity of our own personal religious life. The real perils of ministry cluster about the personality of the minister. They are perils of personality—the loss of spiritual fervour and feeling, the lowering of moral tone, the perishing of power. We may be busy here and there, and these may have

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gone! We may touch many things, but there may be no "virtue." The living soul of ministry is communication. Dr. Lyman Abbott has recently said that the secret of the preacher's power "is the possession of the life of God in his own soul, and the power to communicate that life to others." Sylvester Horne wrote in one of his letters: "The fruit of our work on others depends on the fruit of God's work on us." An imperishable ministry comes to work itself out in multiplied personality, in spiritual growth and moral personal conquest. The "increase" if it has its rise in the heart and soul of the preacher himself.

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Then there is our ministry: and we are still in the vivid, actual realm of personality. In a man's ministry there is himself and others. There is, of course, our Message, our Gospel, but that must reach others through personality. Of our message or of our preaching I do not speak. Our ministry is to living souls. It is first and last a "cure of souls." This, I know, sounds very obvious. But probe to the weakness of the Christian church to-day you get there. One of the hardest things some of us have to face is the temptation to make our ministry something else. And even without much temptation, "the passion of . . . humanity," to use Seeley's phrase, may die a kind of slow death in a minister's life. The individual soul withers and other calls and tasks bulk more and more. A varied programme takes the place of a consuming passion. We lose the flesh and blood of ministry and find ourselves taking an interest in arranging and rearranging what, after all, are only the dry bones. We may have to fight against a certain desultoriness, against vagrant and dillitante pursuits which blunt the edge of our husbandry. We may come to regard Committees and Conferences and an overcrowded diary as the proof of a ministry of which we need not be ashamed. Robert Hall used to say that when the devil saw that a minister was likely to be useful in the church, his way of disposing of him was to get on his back and ride him to death with engagements. It is passion that makes a ministry great. It is compassion that redeems a ministry from the drifting tides of the commonplace. "He had compassion on the multitudes and He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus."

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It was Dr. Cairns, I think, who, during the war, emphasised the need of rethinking God. Is there not as urgent a need of rethinking our Christian ministry in terms of personality, in immutable values? Of course, nothing that concerns man in his social relationship is foreign to our work. But we may be so engrossed with his conditions that we are in danger of missing him. He is the starting point of all our psychologies as he is the end of all our sociologies. There was a shrewd American article recently in which the writer declared that the Church must recover her interest in Jane Smith, in the average, ordinary individual so often overlooked. It was a plea for a ministry with a passion and a glow for individuals. This was the brand new thing in our Lord's ministry—the more wonderful when you think of it against the depth and range of His Personality and Power.

Jesus discovered the individual—the individual, who had been lost in the crowd; who had not counted as a unit but only in the mass. Dr. Glover, in tracing the history of the significance of Personality, says, that "a doctrine of God that ignores His unity, His personality, or my personality . . . leads to disaster. Any doctrine that suggests contempt, or even inattention towards any real feature in God or man fails to endure." A ministry that misses the souls of men, that transfers its interest to other concerns counts some kind of loss. Dr. Staker tells of reviewing a ministry of 12 years when he was moving from one sphere to another. The chief impression he had was that he had missed the individual. "I looked back," he says, "and saw that it was here I had failed; and I said to myself that henceforth I would write Individuals on my heart."

No man, I suppose, is a judge of the value of his own work—what success I may have had is due to a never-ebbing interest in individuals. I find nothing half so interesting as humanity—so tragic, so exciting, so engrossing as personality.

A ministry inspired by genuine sympathy with men cannot know failure. "Fellowship with God and sympathy with men," it has been truly said, "is a power which never waned, and never will wane so long as God is the universal Father, and man is his child." If we happen to be pulpit geniuses we can perhaps maintain a ministry without sympathetic contact with the lives about

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us. But preaching genius of this kind with "traces of Olympian aloofness" has a way of preaching itself out. Spurgeon never lost his passion for the people. It is true he didn't spare them; but he never ceased to love them. He loved them like his Master to the end.

We can maintain our ministry. But we are not in the ministry to maintain it. We are in it for conquest, to make full proof of its powers. The ministry is the hardest task of all to ply with achievement. We must reckon with difficulties, but not with failure. We know we have no mandate for the status quo: no right to things as they are. Yet there is a sort of blight that may settle on a church and a ministry, a kind of tacit acceptance of things as they are. There is a stunted view even of the Kingdom of God. A minister needs from time to time, a fresh vision of success, a new will to victory, a fresh disclosure of the powers of God, and the surprising possibilities of the soul of man.

So I come to this: let a minister fall in love with life as Christ loved it: let him see people, and feel towards them in some such way as Christ did, and his ministry will take on a touch of real greatness. The petty, the ordinary, the superficial, the innuendo and the criticism need not trouble him: he may let it pass as the "idle wind which he respects not." If a minister thinks and acts in a small way his people think and move in a small way too, "Like priest, like people." There are the moral and spiritual heights of our calling where it is always broad day. When our people think of us they should be able to think of something big and spacious in the way of life and character, something morally invigorating, wholesome and convincingly real.

In such vitalised personality, life in loving and sympathetic fellowship with life, and in passionate quest of it, I believe, lies the power and influence of the Christian ministry to-day. We need a greater church a less broken body to express the mighty soul of the Gospel. I do not see the advent of such a church by the wider use of liturgical forms of worship, or the acceptance of new methods of church polity. Our schemes of Christian unity seem to tarry for lack of a larger, deeper view of Christianity

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and a more moving and commanding vision of the world. Doubtless we need a finer churchmanship, a more exalted conception of both church and ministry. But these things cannot come in any merely outward way. They are an inward grace, before they become an expulsive power.

There are denominational emphases which the world will always question. People have a fine and surer sense of the essentials (and non-essentials) than we often credit them with. They have an instinct (from Christ Himself) for the depth below our depths. But they cannot question the mighty emphasis of Love. They can hardly escape a ministry which is close to life, which translates itself into compassionate seeking and service, in the constraint of Jesus Christ. There would seem to be something without which our words and ways, our very selves, are but sounding brass and clanging cymbal. There would seem to be "a master light" of all our seeing: a master passion which becomes the inspiration of all our ministry.



### CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

**T**HOSE of us who are really interested in the future of our ministry should be greatly indebted to those laymen and ministers who have so carefully replied to the questionnaire sent out early in the year.

There is an extraordinary agreement in the reasons given why our ministry does not, at present, seem to attract the young men of our more wealthy families who have exceptional educational advantages. The answers received show that there is little, if any, ground for believing that men are deterred from offering themselves for this service by a fear of loss of social position, or from inadequate remuneration, or even from lack of lofty ideals.

A careful examination of the replies shows that the objections are, in the main, fourfold, and it will be well to deal with these in order, though, perhaps, the reverse order of their force and value. They are (i) the conviction that a greater service for Christ can be rendered outside the regular ministry rather than

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within it; (ii) the inability to speak with authority on theological matters; (iii) the lack of an adequate status; and (iv) the influence of deacons upon the life and work of the average minister.

(i) The larger sphere outside the regular ministry. The majority of young men who belong to the class we are especially considering have, in the main, two courses before them, that of commerce or of one of the leading professions, and when they compare the opportunities these present for definite service for Christ and His church, many come to the conclusion that such opportunities are greater than those offered within the regular ministry.

The modern church, they argue, lays great emphasis upon and devotes a vast amount of effort to raising money, and a successful business man can respond to this most beneficially; and the honour in which such are held, and the appreciation continually expressed, to say nothing of the weight of their opinions in all our assemblies, seems to endorse their decision to content themselves with this service.

Whereas those who anticipate entering one of the leading professions can easily see that the opportunities of Christian doctors and lawyers are almost boundless, and any services they may render are not open to the statement which was made in public recently, in one of our largest suburban churches: "He (the minister) does not need our thanks, he takes the collections!" How many lads hearing such a declaration would vow they would not risk the like being said of them?

It must also be remembered that there is not a single office, duty or privilege which belongs exclusively to a regular minister. A layman with gift, and sometimes without it, may do anything from preaching and administering the sacraments, to "pastoral" visitation; then, why enter "the ministry" and thereby lose caste in order to do it?

(ii) The sense of uncertainty which exists about theological matters.

This fact is referred to by most of the laymen in their very thoughtful replies, and in many cases it is held to be the most potent influence in preventing promising lads from seeking to enter the ministry.

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From the candid expressions of opinion which have been received, it seems that there are two ways in which this works. There is the influence of the extremist, who accepts most of the findings of the Higher Critics, and, therefore, gives the impression that even the Revised Version is most unreliable, and that, as a matter of fact, the true "Word of God," which is to have any authority, can only be discovered by experts, and even with them there is no finality and assurance. How can men be expected to devote themselves to the "ministry of the Word"—if "the Word" be so difficult, even if possible, to discover.

On the other hand, there are those who are reared under a ministry which goes to the other extreme and denounces as anti-Christian all Higher Criticism, and all results of scientific research as "pagan." Now the youth we have in mind probably only hears this during the holidays, for in the class room and school chapel there is quite another tone. He finds himself on the horns of a dilemma; he must be either false to "the faith of his fathers" or false to the teaching his parents have sent him to receive!

Is it to be wondered at that a number of such lads, though they retain enough faith in Christianity for their own spiritual life, and even become members of one of our churches, yet have insufficient assurance to think of teaching others?

(iii) The unsatisfactory "status" of our ministry. I have purposely put "status" in inverted commas, for it is difficult to discover its exact meaning. This "status" is referred to by most of the ministers in their replies, and in such a way as to convince one that the reason is by no means trivial.

Let me say at once there is no indication whatever of any hankering after any artificial status for the ministry; nor is there any desire manifested for such a thing as a distinct class—a priesthood—yet there is more than a suggestion that men have sought a very sacred spiritual office where they can render the best service possible to Christ and to their fellows, only to find that they are almost alone in considering it as such.

The thoughtless talk and senseless jokes about the "parson," not only rob him of his due influence, but make the office an uncoveted one. The lad whose thoughts are being directed to-

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wards the ministry is quick to detect in parent, and even in the minister himself, want of respect for that office which was held in such awe by the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

This "status" they see is easily maintained by outstanding preachers and certain erudite professors but denied to the rank and file, and—the risks are too great.

(iv) The influence of deacons.

The references, particularly in the ministers' replies, to this side of the question, are, to say the least of it, most disconcerting.

Sensitive men with high ideals and who conceive of themselves as being "bondservants of Jesus Christ" seem to have experienced a cruel bondage, but not to Christ, and to have suffered a disillusionment which is not hidden from the quiet man in our churches. This is a fact referred to time and again, so let us look at it in detail.

Two types of men are singled out in particular—the wealthy man, whose cash enhances the value of his vote, and the pushing, noisy man, who gets his way for the sake of peace; this latter is plainly called in one of the papers a "bully."

The man who "pays the piper" and expects to "call the tune" evidently wields a great influence in our churches, so that whatever the Church may be the minister is not "Free." This influence may be unconscious, but the fact remains that nearly all our ministers are entirely dependent on their salary for their living—and that of their wife and children—and not a few are really no more than private chaplains to the rich man of the church. That man's son sometimes vows that if he cannot preach the gospel gratuitously he will not preach it at all, for he could not submit to bring all he would fain say—yes, all he has been commissioned to say—to the test as to whether it would "offend Mr. Dives" or not."

At first sight the case of the other type of deacon may seem to be similar to the first, but in reality it is not so. The noisy, pushful man, who gets on to the executive of the church "to keep him quiet," is usually the very curse of the minister, especially if he be at all sensitive, and is not sensitiveness almost an essential qualification for the ministry? The brutal criticism of the sermon and harsh judgment of the actions of the pastor,

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either crushes or hardens, and either are fatal to useful ministry. Where ignorance and bigotry are added to the other characteristic, as too often they are, especially in the country districts, the ministry becomes a martyrdom.

It is true the working of the Sustentation Fund has somewhat affected the influence of both these types of men, but the lad of the very class and temperament which we most covet for our ministry, when he sees and hears of these happenings, even if his own father be guilty of them, silently decides he will not run the risk of being the victim of a system which allows it. Whilst fathers, deacons perhaps, with promising sons, will use their influence to prevent their selecting, or rather responding to such a vocation, lest they should suffer in like manner.

There is one other custom which is only too prevalent, and that is for Selection Committees to tacitly agree or even declare by definite resolution, that "none over forty need apply."

This gives young men furiously to think. Christ only wants men until they are forty! Fathers cannot allow sons to enter a profession, even if it be called a vocation, which has such a feature, nay such a peril, within it. No wonder we have a dearth of candidates of any sort.

The remedy for all this is strangely enough, suggested only by one or two of the correspondents, but I venture to think that they are right.

A deep and far reaching spiritual revolution—sometimes termed a revival—would not only result in suitable young men responding to an irresistible "call," which they would accept at "any cost," but deacons such as I have referred to would be swept out of office—also "at any cost," that is, if they were not converted in the upheaval! With this spiritual blessing would surely come a new vision of God in Christ Jesus—within the sacred pages of the Word of God—and men would not hesitate to declare that only those who devote the whole of their lives and the whole of themselves to a truly "separated ministry" can after all render the best service to God and the world.

Perhaps then the Church will instinctively reserve the highest honour for those who have laid talent, position, yea, life itself, upon the altar and left their all there.

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## "MINISTERS OF GOD IN MUCH PATIENCE."

(2 COR 6, 4.)

By the Rev. S. W. HUGHES.

**P**ATIENCE is to be a characteristic of Apostolic Aggressiveness. The urgency of this work is to be tempered by the power of an inward calm. When preaching failed they were to win by endurance, and when the calm notes of the Gospel evoked derision their own brave patience might convince and convert.

The Christian ministry ultimately becomes a monotony unless we are "strengthened with all power according to the might of His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy." Our position demands constant attention to disposition. The Master appointed twelve to be with Him to share His Spirit, to copy His demeanour before they proclaim His mighty evangel, and even then He sent them forth with a suggestive prohibition: "Go not into any city of the Samaritans."

As yet they were without the needed patience for that difficult and delicate mission.

If we read Luke ix. 54, with Acts i, 8, we see at once the relation between patience and disposition.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria."

Jesus always insists upon patience as an apostolic credential. How well we know that impotence is an aspect of impatience—and impatience is our peril.

The Master never sanctions a sudden leap to fame in His Kingdom. This work takes time. We feel that in studying the date of the incarnation.

If we would become workmen that need not be ashamed we must guard against a multiplicity of engagements that side track us from our prime duty. We shall keep our balance, and increase in power and usefulness, if instead of living too much in the public eye, we live and work: "As ever in the great Task Master's eye."

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Our acceptance of the Saviour's call to the ministry must mean our assent to His discipline, and He is never responsible for overtaxing either heart, brain, or hand.

Sitting at His feet, as He sits to teach—how 'reposeful!—we shall learn that self effacement is the way of efficiency.

He will insist upon our tarrying until we be endued with power from on high.

As His messengers, we must take time to receive His message, then we shall not hurriedly depart from the mighty truths of His love, for the pleasing and sensational topics that lift the speaker into notoriety without bringing glory to the Saviour's name.

The messages of Grace take time, because they must be transmitted through the avenues of heart and brain. The deliverance of a message from God surely means due time to receive and feel it, and then its proclamation without fear of a single pew or person.

Great messages come through great messengers, and they are made in secret.

It requires little grace and preparation to make a few remarks, or to offer one or two observations with the air of an encyclopedic philosopher. Let me implore my brethren to refuse invitations to speak with six, eight or ten other brethren, even in recognition services, which are capable of great improvement. We are not ordained to keep up a regular supply of a few words at so many meetings; we are appointed to teach, and to preach the Evangel of Christ. You cannot build character and churches on scraps. I agree with ten minute speeches in conferences, where verbose idlers become as sounding brass or clanging cymbals, but we are appointed to speak the words of Eternal Life, and that solemn duty involves patient detachment from the glamour of engagements that take time without yielding commensurate results.

With apologies to some Exegetes, I would suggest that, for many of us, our "strength is to sit still."

It would be very difficult to trace nervous exhaustion to the appealing voice of God for overwork. How carefully the Master economised the strength and time of His disciples. He not only sent them forth but He called them apart for rest and illumina-

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tion. Let us resist the tendency to fall from Prophetic dignity and power into the trifling occupation of Ecclesiastical "M.C.s." Let us rather become habituated to those formative silences where the Master finds His coveted opportunity to speak to our hearts, until we feel the kindlings of His love.

If great truths are portions of the soul then the soul must banquet regularly where the hidden manna is provided. If our whole demeanour is to accord with the Majesty of our Mission we must take time, all the time, to share the inspiration of the Master's peaceful certitude.

(1) The Minister's Disposition.—How strange the paradox: a well prepared sermon delivered by an unprepared soul. Who can exaggerate the patience required for the preparation of speaker as well as speech! "In your patience possess ye your souls," Luke 21, 19. Royal preachers understand that sovereignty. An irritable minister may be clever, but irritability will neutralise his influence. It is possible to reach great lengths in professional heroics—to lecture on the patience of an imprisoned saint like Bunyan and yet to have no patience for problems that call for sympathetic regard. We believe it is possible for some men to give "intellectual treats" to their congregations and then to treat their own families with impatience, and philosophic detachment from all trivial rounds and common tasks.

Never plead brain fag as an excuse for impatience. Never pretend to be so absorbed in the sublimities as to have no patience with the "Trivial round and common task."

If we lose our patience other things go with it and, alas, our influence. Estrangements in official life are all too frequent, and as ministers of God we need to be expert here. The true minister of God will be able to suspend insistence upon his rights until patience has had its perfect work in some disturbed and disturbing spirit. I am no admirer of the "Worthless worm" phraseology, but silent endurance is sometimes mightier than argument. The resistless strength of Jesus is disclosed in all He said and did, but His strength and dignity touch us profoundly as He remains silent amidst verbal fury, and in wondrous patience opens not His mouth when He is reviled (1 Peter 2, 23).

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The scenes in the Judgment Hall must surely appeal for the fullest patience on the part of His followers. It is sometimes possible to win by endurance the people who are repelled by argument. "Giving people a bit of of your mind" is often ill advised philanthropy and seldom awakens gratitude.

I speak of these things because we ministers have power to keep our churches calm and dignified, and all of us must know that the power of the church is largely determined by the Christ-like relationships of the members. Divine power never fails because the Holiness from whence it springs is always peaceful.

As ministers we must pay attention to demeanour, disposition and cadence. A patient disposition helps to make a minister wise and winsome to win souls.

The minister's inward life demands much care, yet how frequently we neglect ourselves. Our very altruism may lead us to neglect "Self knowledge, self reverence, self control."

We may take too much for granted about ourselves. Absorption in work sometimes means neglect of work. It may sound well to have "all irons in the fire," but what of the fire? Our outward life will weary us if our inward life be neglected. When we feel the spell of the prophets and seers upon us, even after these centuries, and profess the fascination of their word as they speak the oracles of God to succeeding generations, we must remember that they practised continuous detachment from the world before they went forth to speak in God's name to the world—hence the measure of the Eternal is in their speech, the thrill of God's passion vibrates through their heartening appeals.

One wonders what they would say to the demands for "a few remarks" to fit in an overloaded programme. They speak with the accents of passion peculiar to Seers and Hearers, they come forth to declare what they have seen and heard, having given time to make exalted detachments the conditions for receiving Divine Revelations—Moses, Daniel, John the Baptist, Peter and John, Paul, John Knox, John Bunyan, John Wesley. These men of massive build, of mighty interest and achievement spent much time in direct contact with God. They faced derision with assurance of victory, for they knew the truth they proclaimed and they were calm in the very confidence of God.

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The wielding of the axe of John the Baptist stands unalterably related to the wilderness with its diet of locusts and wild honey, and we modern ministers must remember that honey alone will not give strength for the use of the prophet's axe. Paul's Arabian sojourn partly explains his triumphant march as the Herald of the Cross. John Bunyan's imprisonment became the condition of his illumination, and the stern school of the Kingdom for the cultivation of that matchless eloquence by which the loftiest literature has been enriched. We believe that these epoch making preparations were prominent aspects of the soul's perpetual discipline.

Philip Brooks says: "God gives us tasks not according to our strength. He summons us to tasks infinitely beyond our power. He summons us to tasks according to strength imparted by the Holy Spirit."

We must aim at a wise proportion between the time spent in public with men, and the time spent in secret with God.

Our Lord's example is impressive: "And when evening was come He went forth out of the city" (Mark 11, 19). So His evenings partly explain His days. He is calm and unperturbed in the city because each evening found Him in powerful detachment from the city. He was powerful in public because He was mighty in private. Many perorations have been based on Martin Luther's brave challenge to the Diet of Worms: "Here I take my stand; I can do not other. May God help me." But how seldom we hear the passion of his agony in prayer with God the night before. Luther made that public conquest on his knees in private prayer. It is the Master's way. Is there anything more moving than the serene confidence with which He passes through human fury to the agonies of the cross? He must have broken the heart of hell when He set His face to go to Jerusalem. He speaks of imminent shame with a dignity that is prophetic of victory. His mighty ministry belongs to His silent years and His wonderful detachments from the world.

Leckey's amazement at the phenomenal achievements of these three short years of public life suggests the unsuspected preparation of the Master in these secret places. When the gathering

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fury of His enemies is about to be consummated on Calvary He is reposeful in the house of Simon the leper, knowing that hell has no power to suspend the attributes of His Diety.

If we would be His ministers we must become His imitators in these patient habits that make the soul calm and strong.

Our passion for pace may obscure the conditions of progress and our overcrowded programmes may find us with unprepared hearts.

Patience in our work by faith in its issues. No panics! No misgivings about the issue!

“Jesus we know and He is on the throne.” Our work well done assists His plans and He works His sovereign will. “God works in a mysterious way”—sometimes we think Him mysteriously slow.

We enter into the eager expectance of those who voice the longing of many patient souls in the pathetic inquiry “Art thou the Coming One?” “Why did Christ tarry so long?” The date of the Incarnation must seem very late unless we have an intelligent grasp of the philosophy of history—then we learn that we are called to a work that means the pursuance of God’s ideal, which is something far greater than the fairest of dreams; and only as we trust Him to bring us to the goal of His own desire shall we be patient in well doing. We preach Christ crucified for we know that He alone who endured the cross can hold the throne. We see on Calvary how evil batters itself to death against a peaceful Redeemer. Let us not be impatient. Our trembling fears are not of inward faith. Take time to think until God’s thoughts become the devout convictions of your life. Always reconsider the verdicts of gloom. Stand apart and get the prophetic focus. Combine geology with Christology, and learn that the measured movements of God disclose the deliberate intent of His love, that when He knew all that creation involved He was sure of the issue, and so we know that we cannot labour in vain in the Lord.

“O Master let me walk with Thee  
 In lowly paths of service free,  
 Tell me Thy secret; help me bear,  
 The strain of toil, the fret of care.”

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Teach me Thy patience ; still with Thee,  
 In closer, dearer company,  
 In work that keeps faith sweet and strong,  
 In trust that triumphs over wrong."

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### NOTES ON SOME RECENT BOOKS.

By the REV. H. J. WICKS, B.A., D.D.

"Regeneration and Reconstruction."

By the Rev. S. B. John. (3s. 6d. net.) "Ivydene," Fleckbrey, Lincoln.

This book, by one of our own ministers, gives clear evidence of its author's wide reading, careful thinking and intense earnestness. Dr. Clifford says that he has read it "with growing appreciation as he passed from page to page. Its power," he says, "is in its statement of fundamental truth and in its seasonableness." Mr. John holds that the troubles of our time arise from one cause, "the denial of love as the basis of life and the exaltation of egoism as life's controlling motive," and that "the hell of the present hour is but the fruit of the God denying selfishness which has dominated the world so long." But he is not a pessimist. He thinks with Thompson and Geddes that "love and co-operation and sacrifice are not mere utopias contributed by experience, but are the highest expressions of the central evolutionary process of the natural world."

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"Concerning the Soul."

By the Rev. J. A. Robertson, M.A.

Mr. Robertson's latest book is one of great literary beauty and spiritual suggestiveness. Some extracts from the book may serve to whet the appetite of the reader. The author describes a young child squatting down on hands and knees looking into the face of a collie dog. "Speak," the little one is saying

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to his dumb friend, while the dog, with eyes and ears alert, shows pathetic eagerness to understand. But, though the child's world is small as yet, it is large compared with that of the dog. The dog hears the words the child utters but can grasp only a fragment of the child's meaning. "What the child is to the dog that is God to the soul of man." Of course, this simile is very imperfect. God can and does impart more to a man than a child can to a dog. Man can think God's thoughts after Him. There is more kinship between God and man than there is between man and the beasts or the incarnation had been impossible. Still the comparison is not inapt. It does strikingly illustrate the limits of a Divine Revelation to man. A good note on the possibility of miracle is given thus: "Visit a battleship. Spread out between the masts are wires connected with a little operating room between decks. Two ships put out to sea. They are many miles apart. They seem to be out of all contact with each other. Yet one operator touches the keys of his instruments; he sends out little thrills of electric force, pulsing up on those wires and then out in space; they are got by the receiving wires of the other vessel and the operator there, with the receiving instrument strapped to his ears, listens to the throbs and reads the message off. Thirty years ago men would have said, "It is a miracle, an impossible dream." Mr. Robertson's book is enriched by many happy and suggestive quotations from literature. Here is one: "Are the instincts which move with such accuracy in the animal kingdom all at sea when man is their subject? Are they right when they urge the migrating swallow on its accuracy-way, when they make the squirrel prepare for winter scarcity and all wrong when they urge man to ideal conduct based on the sense of the life beyond." I should add that my quotations from this book are based on such rough notes and may not be verbatim et literatim.



The following note has been kindly contributed at my request by the Rev. Benjamin Oriel, B.A., B.Sc., F.G.S., of Eltham Park. Redemption from this World.

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In the months of November and December of last year Dr. Hogg, of the Madras Christian College, delivered a series of lectures at New College, Edinburgh. These are now published in book form by T. and T. Clark (price 7s. 6d.) under the significant title "Redemption from this World" or "The Supernatural in Christianity."

These lectures are original in thought, fascinating in their courage, a living message for our times. The spirit of incredulity with which the record of our Lord's miracles is being received in this generation perplexes the author. He thinks of miracle as being the free and adequate expression of God's goodness. Man has raised unnatural barriers within the natural order. These shut God out from His own world and from the life of men. Distrust has created the barrier and faith can dissolve it,

It has frequently happened in past geological times that a lagoon has been shut off from the great ocean by a strip of low-lying land. If this condition continues long the fauna of these enclosed water becomes puny and degenerate. But if the sea pierces the barrier and brings its own freshness and fulness into the confined waters then new forms of life appear and healthy organisms take the place of those which were weak and ill-developed. Which is the normal, the fulness of the sea or the stagnation of the lagoon?

Dr. Hogg's plea is that we should regard the power usually associated with the miraculous as the normal condition of vigorous and trustful Christianity. Signs have always accompanied the adventures of faith and they always will.

This book breathes the assurance of one who has entered deeply into the mind of the Master and has kept the child spirit.

"There is a kingdom into which none enter but children, in which the children play with infinite forces, where the child's little finger become stronger than the giant world; a wide kingdom where the world exists only by sufferance; to which the world's laws and developments are for ever subjected; in which the world lies like a foolish, wilful dream in the solid truth of day."