

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.

OUR PRESIDENT 1926-7.

REV. J. E. MARTIN, of Erith, will always be known and loved as the first Pastor of that Church which was formed early in 1876 with a membership of 14, and which has steadily grown under his faithful and gracious ministry until now there is a membership of 379. Beginning in the Lower Room of Erith Public Hall the buildings now comprise a Church seating 650, with the former School Chapel as Sunday School and a Manse, with a Mission Room at Slade Green, whilst a former Mission has become a separate Church at Northumberland Heath. Behind these bare facts there is an amount of consecrated energy and devotion which can only be adequately realized by those who have passed through similar experiences. They indicate one of the finest pieces of pioneer work in the history of our Denomination in London. To quote from the L.B.A. record "Mr. Martin is a minister of one love. He espoused the Church at Erith before it was a Church, he was married to it when it became a Church, and has lived happily with his early choice ever since. All inducements to leave his first love have proved unavailing and they seem more closely united now than ever, endeared to each other by years of holy service and happy fellowship in weal and woe." Mr. Martin was born at Hammersmith and spent his earlier years in communion with the Church of England, but was converted at

Edmonton and baptised there during the ministry of Rev. D. Russell. He speedily began to use his gifts in the Sunday School and Mission work and eventually entered the Pastors' College where he acted for some time as Students' Secretary. Then came the appeal of Erith and the great work of his life, a work which in the later years has been enriched by the loving sympathy and co-operation of his wife.

Mr. Martin has been invaluable in his services on the Council of the L.B.A., which called him to its Presidency in 1912. He has acted for many years as Secretary of the Baptist Ministers' Prayer Union, and still serves us in that part of our B.M.F.U. work. He has shared fully in the various activities of the town and has toiled hard in the causes of Temperance and Foreign Missions. In closing this brief record we would bear testimony to his winsome and gracious personality. All who know him recognize in him a modest and devout man of God, an earnest and devoted Pastor and a faithful and evangelical Minister of Jesus Christ. We honor him for his ministry, we love him for his personal worth and we glorify God for the 50 years and more of unstained life and service. We have honored ourselves in honoring him by calling him to be the President of our Fraternal Union and and even these brief lines must constitute an appeal, a stimulus and a challenge to our younger ministers.

A. J. PAYNE.



SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS PREPARED FOR THE BAPTIST
MINISTERS' FRATERNAL UNION, LEEDS, MAY 6, 1926.

IT has been the custom of my predecessors in the chair to make in their Presidential address, a serious attempt to deal with a great topic. I also will at least try to do that, and at no great length.

I have long held, and see no reason to revise my judgment, that what I may call the life and death of doctrines, at one time or another passionately held and proclaimed, is a matter of ever vital interest to us as working teachers of religion. Believing then that the rising and setting of the sun of a serious phase of Christian teaching is not a mere matter of historical interest, but of ever fresh importance, I turn to one which I have often pondered; one which even in this age, so rightly interested in the social aspects of Christian thought, retains for me at least a vital charm. I come to it without further pre-amble, and with a question—What is the latter day value of the great Biblical doctrine concerning Wisdom? How came it that a concept which held so large a place in Old and New Testament religious life, suffered such complete relegation to neglect and obscurity. If the question were one of mere intellectual interest, it would be scarcely worth while to consume time in quest of an answer. My own conviction is, that for reasons which I think I can in part discern, a religious ideal, of very great value, has suffered neglect and eclipse. For that at least is my reading of the situation. It would be difficult, I believe in any recent age, or in any religious thought-movement, to find such place given to Wisdom, such emphasis placed upon its value as was given to it in the practical theology of the Hebrew and the early Christian community. For there in the literature of the old faith and the new alike, stands what we may roughly call a profound and constant sense of the supremacy of Wisdom, made concrete by a high estimate of the Wise man, and by a most definite calculation of the part played in life by the fool. Later thinking would appear to have no royal place in its midst for Wisdom, and no great appreciation for the wise, and as certainly or more so, no greatly troubled sense of the malady of folly, and the destructive pathological condition of the fool. For the

moment we may simply repeat our question. Why is this disappearance of emphasis, this alteration or suppression of values ?

The brethren present will all of them, without any prompting by quotation, be ready to recall the large place given by Hebrew thinking to Queenly Wisdom and her courtiers, The Wise. The personification of Wisdom, which made her a figure mystical and commanding, so exalted as to be almost if not altogether Divine may be regarded as a mere mood of Hebrew poesy. It is surely far more than that. In any case it is seldom that the poet, even the mystical poet, takes into his song things that have not first troubled and stirred the hearts of common men. It would rather seem that the mental restlessness of serious men, sanely contemplating the endless drama which we call human life, has long been uneasily aware of the heavy part assigned to the Fool, and the hopelessness of all the plot of things until the appearance of the grave heroic figure of the Wise. Moreover they had discerned that even his coming does not overwhelmingly undo the destructive activities of the wrecker who ruins by crass stupidity. They would see in the unfolding of life's action the disfiguring and devastating part played by the unwise worker, in many cases of a ruin so complete, that all which Wisdom can do is to stand in the end, bearer only of the pathetic assurance of what might have been.

The enthronement of Wisdom had its origin, we must believe, in a valuation only too accurate of what life is when the fool gets hold of it and has his will. The fact that the Hebrew reverence for Wisdom became a cult, with all the attendant presumption and charlatanism, which accompanies cults, does but make us understand that some great and deeply-felt problem vexed the minds of earnest men, and led them to place Wisdom at the very right hand of God; bade them also to speak with unqualified reverence of the Wise; and led them to speak in plain terms of the Fool, and to call him by his one, curt, devastating name. He was for them, an active agent in life's bitterest wrongs; vain mishandler of the delicate mechanism of life; not the world harmless idiot providing it with a little laughter and tolerated as an unfortunate

unit, "lacking somewhere," but as a positive doer of mischief, destructive and anarchic; defacer of beauty, and maker of tears; a grey shadow on the fair face of home and human love, a spoiler of the melody of life's best music.

Such, in the manifold portrayal of the Fool by Hebrew literature—born of intense practicality—the fool is conceived to be. An unsparing delineation of him stands deeply etched on Biblical and extra Biblical pages, and the mordant of the artist has been allowed to bite long and effectively, so as to endure.

I am not forgetful that the Hebrew conception of Wisdom, cannot be briefly and slightly dealt with. There is much more than on an occasion such as this need be said. It is enough to say that there was a poignant sense of the calamity which a fool-ridden world presents to a contemplative mind, and it is not difficult to say why the need of Wisdom and its embodiment in the wise, should become an integral part of religious thinking and teaching, and eventually become, first a philosophy (as much of a Philosophy as the Hebrew ever possessed) and at length a cult, with all the excrescences which cults have always developed, from the earliest mystery religions down to the latest pseudo-mystical stunt.

Yet it is always dangerous to allow the grotesque in a cult to blind us to any essential beauty or truth which is striving for expression. The Strasburg mystics seemed to talk much nonsense, when, obsessed as sensitive men, by the destructive power of SELF, they seemed to plead for a negation of self, and personality. In reality they did nothing of the sort, but all that matters is that they were set for the defence of that self-surrender which the Church of their day was forgetting and the Church of this day is far from honouring.

It is not easy to see why in the early post-Apostolic Church there was an apparent immediate revulsion against the older doctrine of Wisdom. I confess entire inability to see why the fallible Councils of the Church, which set the Old and New Testament Canon for all succeeding years, should have rejected the Book of the "Wisdom of Solomon," in face of the traditional acceptance of the Book of Esther, and much of Proverbs. For edification, nothing much

more valuable could have received the hall mark of those assemblies. The plea that there are false notes of merely worldly wisdom in the Apocryphal book, will not pass muster. That is equally true concerning some of the canonical Proverbs. They are "shrewd," and shrewdness is a quality worthy of its sinister etymology. We should resent it if applied to our Lord Jesus, and its value in the world's markets is no standard by which it may be accepted as a Christian ideal. Wisdom as against shrewdness, is a kinder, warmer, holier thing.

The fact that Wisdom had become a cult, with mystical implications and pretensions, may account for this early neglect of an ideal which both Greek and Hebrew had brought into, at least, the outer courts of their respective religions. We are not concerned now with the Greek and his somewhat elusive "Sophia." But we are greatly concerned with the strong sun-lit virtue which the Hebrew first revered as "life-giving quality, and finally enthroned very near to the Most High as His agent in all that was worthy and strong and sane in human life. We ask then all the more urgently, why so soon and the cherished Wisdom ideal of the Hebrew became at best only the casual accomplishment of the Christian. It was not merely a case in which a doctrine had weakened and vanished, as so many did and still do, but rather *the abandonment of a spiritual quest.*

One is prepared to have the strong teaching of St. Paul cited as against this reading of the situation. Wisdom and Wise are familiar words upon his lips. That may be readily admitted. He is not responsible for the subsequent undervaluing of the one priceless quality. That burden rests upon generations and schools of thought which were too busy with formulæ to care greatly for fruit of faith. For them, the white light of Holy Wisdom was focussed in one intense beam on Councils and Conclaves: it had no ray for the common Christian man. The most it did for him was to operate in a mysterious regeneration which with all its after failures might be held to suffice. The saints of those slothful centuries were alone the people who seemed to have profited.

Striving to make a general survey of the situation it

would appear that the old veneration for Wisdom, as one of the fruits of Godliness had vanished, and unwisdom had become accepted as part of the common heritage of man. No longer the object of a sustained and serious quest, and the chief part of true holiness, but a thing of temperament and casual accomplishment. Largely in vain St. Paul had pleaded for it. Its significance as a thing necessary, desirable and attainable, found less and less accentuation in Christian teaching. A kind of devout despair was content to leave the world and the church to the dominion of the fool; accepting him and his work as inevitable.

It is a recurrent phenomenon in Christian thinking and practice that truly spiritual ideals fade in this way from time to time. Therein lies the value of the history of average Christian thought as it can be read in succeeding generations. We see for instance the great Christian doctrine of "assurance of faith" weakening and vanishing in such manner. Generations of our fathers lived and died in joyless uncertainty because St. Paul's teaching concerning "full assurance" had been lost in the amplification of great theological tenets.

In the case of wisdom, we see, not the loss of a confirming and comforting conviction, but the relinquishing of a positive ideal, Wisdom ceasing to be a great quest as definite and possible as, for instance, purity. No voice attempts to say "Wisdom is the principal thing," With the underestimate of wisdom comes the palliation of folly, and that situation remains to a large extent; in spite of the fact that many of life's keenest observers would testify that they have seen more irreparable mischief wrought by folly, than by sin. Few of us have not seen the fairest lives and the soundest schemes deeply hurt and often destroyed by the folly of those who were morally irreproachable.

No estimate of the meaning of all this can be rightly reached, unless we discern how mischievous has been the tendency to take refuge in the grace which covers, as we think, all sins and the lesser delinquencies of foolishness. It is sound religion that the soul in its final estimates of itself should need to fall back upon imputed righteousness, and humbly accept and appropriate the offered holiness of

the Son of Man. But in stark irrefutable fact, neither church nor individual can live by imputed wisdom. Yet in a subtle way they have tried to do so; and therein perhaps lies the answer to our question. Positively stated it means that for the time that now is—the time which St. Paul bids us redeem, Wisdom is a necessity and a reality, and as much as ever, “the principal thing.” It is a practical and spiritual ideal, attached to what we may call the craftsmanship of the Christian life. Its value is well known wherever it is found. Which of us does not owe to the few Wise whom he has known, as much, or even more than to the loving. And when the two qualities have been wondrously allied how much do we not owe to wise love: unflattering, immoveable and inexhaustible. To such as these, if we care to reckon up life’s indebtedness we owe our souls and often our careers. They shine even now, as Hebrew poetry pictured them “as the brightness of the firmament.” It cannot be that the value of Wisdom has declined in our day; nor that having rich resource in the atoning work of our Lord, we have need of nothing else. Life as we see it, with its confusions and its disasters, waits above all for the Wise. It is not worth while to attempt to re-create a cult for the purpose, nor need we over-accentuate what has been unduly suppressed, but we may rightly plead that a larger place should be given to Wisdom in the catalogue of Christian virtues.

I close abruptly with St. Paul’s great personal confession “Brethren, I count not myself to have attained.”

F. GOLDSMITH FRENCH.



THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE CROSS.

EVERY age has attempted to interpret the Cross of Christ in the categories of its own time; and the marvel of the Cross appears in this—that it can not only be interpreted by them all, but it can also interpret them and express them in their highest terms. In an age when slavery was a recognised institution, the thought of men turned naturally to the idea of the death of Christ as a ransom. When the great Christian scholars were also the great jurists of the time, it was natural that theories of Atonement should be largely juridical in tone and the language should be the language of the law courts. It is the duty of every age to find its own interpretation of the Cross of Christ.

Now one of the greatest categories of modern thought is undoubtedly that of Education, and this fact suggests that the time is ripe for an interpretation of the Cross of Christ in terms of Education. Can we find there, in addition to the other things we find, an educational principle? What is the educational value of the Cross?

Dr. Jacks has a chapter in his little book, "A Living Universe" in which he discusses the relation that should exist between Education and Religion. In the course of that chapter he says this very striking thing.

"The function of primary education is to lead on to secondary, and of secondary to lead on to higher. And the function of all three together is to lead on to that highest education which comes from a faithful performance of the work of life, and to that very highest which teaches men obedience through the things they suffer, the lesson of the Cross."

That is a statement of the educational value of the Cross. The highest education is to learn the lesson of the Cross. Here is not only our way of escape from sin, but also the source of all real spiritual culture and education. It teaches us the supreme lesson of life. The profoundest educational principle is that which we see acted out at Calvary. "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things He suffered."

There are two ways of learning. We may learn from the things we are told or we may learn from the things we suffer. In the first case, we learn something from others; in the second we learn something for ourselves. There can be no doubt as to which of these two ways is the truest and deepest. The real lesson of life does not consist in gathering information so much as in accumulating experience and finding out what is the real meaning of life. It is surely important to know what life is meant to teach us. If we do not know that, what is the use of simply gathering together a lot of facts? A man may be crammed full of information and not know what to do with it when he has it. He may have graduated in a University and yet be a hopeless dunce in the school of life. Another man may not have had what we call educational advantages, and yet may have found out for himself, often through bitter experience, the meaning of life and the purpose for which God has put him here. To say that man is not educated is to use the word in a very snobbish sense. The highest education is to learn obedience, for that is the lesson of life. Of course, the Schools and the University help enormously, but the man whose education finishes when he leaves either, has wasted a precious opportunity which another, who has not had his advantages, may take, and pass him in the end when they both go up for their final examination before the judgment-seat of Christ.

But what has all this to do with the Cross of Christ? Really, it has a great deal to do with it. This is perhaps not our usual way of approach to the Cross, but there is more than one way to the Cross. The real value of the Cross is that all the ways lead to it; any truth that applies to our human life finds its highest expression there. What makes Jesus Christ so infinitely precious to us is that we find in Him the perfect embodiment of everything that is true about our lives. He is Saviour because He throws light on every experience of life. It is just here that Jesus helps us so much. "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience through the things He suffered." He was not exempt from the operation of this great human law. From the beginning to the end of His life we can see how He learned from the things He suffered. At the

Temptation in the wilderness He had to refuse the short, easy path to power and choose the way that led to the Cross, and He chose it because it was the way of obedience. He had to renounce the joys and companionship of family life in obedience to the higher claims of God's will. At Gethsemane a horror of great darkness fell upon Him and He prayed, "Oh my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but it was not possible; obedience demanded that He should drink it, and though the suffering was such that we cannot comprehend it, He went right on to Calvary and the Cross. What was it that took Him to the Cross? Was it not that He had learned that the end and aim of life was obedience through the things He suffered.

Nobody can be a teacher who is not also a learner. Jesus could never have taught us that greatest of all lessons unless He had learned it for Himself. He did not just tell us that all the things we suffer may teach us the meaning and purpose of life; He acted it out all through His life and most of all in His death. That is what makes Jesus our Saviour. It is the very heart of the doctrine of Atonement. We can interpret it, not in the language of the law-courts, but in the language of the school and the world where we learn life's real lessons. To learn the lesson of the Cross is to penetrate to the real meaning of life, and a religion that centres in the Cross must be above all else educational.

So then, we reach this great truth—that life has to be interpreted by the Cross of Christ, the supreme example of the great principle that we learn obedience by the things we suffer. If the highest education comes from a faithful performance of the work of life, we cannot afford to neglect that which throws so much meaning on life itself. We cannot lay much claim to education if we do not know why we are here in the world at all. What is the purpose of life? Jesus lays it down clearly, and acts it more clearly than he says it, that the purpose of life is to learn to be obedient to God's will. God who made us, made us for that. He who controls our lives, controls them to that end.

Then by all the disciplines and chastenings of life, its thwartings and sufferings, He is working out His purpose. God is trying to teach us something; life is educational.

There is a lesson going on if only we can attend to it and grasp it. When we want to know what the things we suffer, big and little, have got to do with our lives, God says, "You may learn obedience by the things you suffer; that is the law and the idea of life." If we are inattentive or rebellious, we miss the point of the lesson and perhaps arraign the Teacher on a charge of incompetence, but we cannot get anywhere unless we believe that God knows what He is about.

And if we say, "But we want to be exempted from the operation of this law," He says, "There is no exemption; there was not even for My only-begotten Son. Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things He suffered." That is why Christ, by dying on the Cross, not only saves us from sin, but makes us enter into life. We begin to see what life means, and in all things we learn to "look unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the throne of God." That is the educational value of the Cross of Christ, and it is supreme here as it is supreme everywhere else.

A. J. NIXON.

"THIS MINISTRY"—THINGS FOR THINKING OUT. No. 3.

THE GREAT YEARS.

IN the life of Herbert Evans, the fascinating Welsh poet-preacher of a generation ago, there is a Chapter headed "the great year." For him that meant the year in which he served his Church as the chairman for the year of the Union. Now, we do not all come to *that*, but each of us gets some period in our life which answers to it—days when strength is at the full, opportunities are many, and the sun shines in its strength. What of these years?

For the writer the great years, in the sense indicated, are gone, with him therefore the matter is one of retrospect, and he would recall what was stated in the first of this series of articles. "What"—said the then Editor, who incited to the writing of them—"would you do differently if you had your time over again?" The answer then given still holds "nothing," and so also does the reason for that answer—viz: "There is a providence which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." One would not dare to alter that by which God has been working out His purposes through one's life. When Dr. Newman Hall received the honorary degree of D.D., he said something like the following—"I can make no pretence of being a scholar, i.e., in the sense of full and exact scholarship. There was a time when I cherished that ambition, but the hour came when I had to choose between that, and taking a line of life which left no possibility for such attainment, and the latter course seemed plainly *the Will of God for me*, so I took it, and have pursued it." There is in every life given up to "this ministry" a time when great and determinative decisions have to be made, and happy is he who is alive to the fact, sees the marked-out path, takes it and turns not back. So, looking back, one would not like to say this or that he would alter. Yet without saying *that* it seems to him plain there are things to be avoided, and with this proviso—the Master's overruling must ever be yielded to—*should* be avoided.

The pitfalls of "this ministry" through the great years seem principally to be in the line of WANT OF BALANCE. One of the great things in the life of our Lord is just this—*the perfect balance of it all*—everything in absolute proportion, grace and truth, austerity and sympathy, quality and quantity, the claims of the cloister and those of the market-place, the time to be spent with the Father, and the time to be spent with those human brothers of His. Alas! for us when our poor ill-regulated lives are brought within the sweep of that search-light! He sets the standard—"as He, so we" is the concise putting of it—we fail, and constantly, and terribly fail to respond to it. In the volume quoted above (Dr. Herbert Evan's life) there is another, and in this connection, significant Chapter-heading—"Overdriven." When that is so it is not only

the overdriven one who suffers, but all he touches suffers, Home, Church, the public life on which he makes impact, all share in the loss entailed by the impoverishment of the life and lessened effectiveness of the service. If my younger brethren will not weary one would like to expand this.

1. *There is the balance between quality and quantity in service.* In those great years when everything is "at the flood," how the calls come—everybody wants you, and wants you for everything, to preach, to speak, to preside, to grace by your presence, and help by your voice, every cause both small and great. And how difficult it is to say "No." The more completely your heart is right with God the more you desire to serve men, and oh, how easily you can be busy and yet do no business, a thousand things attempted, but nothing done. "I have not found thy works *perfect* before God" is the word to Sardis, and if we read from the R.V. perhaps the words will come home more fully. "I have found *no works* of thine *fulfilled*," and yet again (not to be tedious) read the R.V. margin "I have *not found thy works*." Men said "What a worker." God said "I have *not found thy works*." There where the count is made, there was nothing that counted. For the writer the opportunity for betterment has gone—will younger men heed? What boots it my brothers, to have a hundred irons in the fire if none of them gets to the malleable point?

2. *Balance as between things Central and things Circumferential.* How multiplied and mighty are the centrifugal forces at work in our lives. We fly the centre and were it not for that "power not ourselves" our life would be wholly lived at the out-most bounds. This is not to advocate a narrow life within high walls, and without a window from which to view our fellows in their toils and tears—"nothing of men (or of life) is foreign to me." "I do not live to myself." I cannot. But I may not live to man. If I do, life will be poor and ineffective. Life between God at the centre and man at the circumference, keeping the touch intimate and full with both, will be to follow hard after Him, who is "the pattern shewn to us in the mount." Now if that be so what of our *reading*? Also what of our *preaching*? "Read everything," said a

great preacher, and that is right, and what he himself did, but in reading everything he did not leave out the great things. He glanced at his paper, but he studied his Bible. "First things first," and the first things are the central things. Not first the bough and then the root, but first the root, and then the bough. And what of our *preaching*? Circumference again? "Twenty-nine knives?" "A piece of an ear." "The bed too short," etc., etc. Are these the texts we choose? I know even these may be made to serve great ends, may have their place in an all-round Ministry, but where is the emphasis? and what has been the proportion? God, Righteousness, Sin, Grace, Jesus Christ in all, and through all. John iii., 16, Rom i., 16-17, Rom iii., 23-26, Rom. v., 8, Rom. viii., 28-39, 2 Cor. iv., 5-6, 2 Cor. v., 14-21, Eph. iii., 14-21, Phil. ii., 1-11. The great passages of the great book! What says your pulpit Bible? Once the fringe, and four times the heart of things, or the reverse? Central things, brothers, central things first and foremost, and that all the time. And then as to the *sphere* of our activities. How about the balance here? Not long since one of our most honoured brethren, honoured for his work as well as his character, the pastor of a great and living Church was called from his own Church-sphere to serve the Churches. In taking office he gave his brethren evidence that he knew the cost, and was prepared to go only to a certain point, "a man's pastoral work must suffer if he takes up and carries on denominational work," was his remark. You will say, "but denominational work must be done." It must, and the denomination should pay for it, making provision for the helping of the man who does it. A minister's first call and last, and all the way through, is the call of his own Church. That is central, and the circumference must be determined by that call, his ability to answer it, and the surplusage of strength and time remaining when the Call has been answered.

3. *The balance as between the intake of the Study and the output of the pulpit and platform*, and in the intake of study is included the devotional as well as the purely intellectual. Ours is an extraordinary day, multiplied organizations, and innumerable activities, and so even in a

man's own church there are ceaseless calls for output, an address here, a "paper" there, and hurried work everywhere. When the present writer began his ministry one of riper years, and fuller experience, said to him, "have a care, lest you get out of breath in the first five minutes, *and never recover.*" The danger is real. The calls are so many, and when they come the first thing to suffer is the balance between intake and output. That fine writer, the late Mrs. Herman, in "The Secret Garden of the Soul" says, "with religious and social activities multiplying around us, and the call of the World's needs in our ear, we are at times tempted to neglect the quiet place. To walk with God in the garden in the cool of the day seems to us a misuse of time when so much remains to be done. There is indeed no cool of day for us: it is always sweltering noon, and toil as we may, the evensong bell still tarries. We race and pant: we work feverishly and beyond our strength; yet our efforts seem doomed to ineffectiveness because we have forgotten the Garden. Among the greatest saints have been men and women whose external activities have been of necessity few—men and women who lived in times when the contemplative rather than the active ideal of the Christian life prevailed, or who, living in modern times, spent their days on beds of suffering, or under cramped and fettering conditions. They did few things, but they did them superlatively well, for they did them in the spirit and atmosphere of the garden." In other words they kept touch with central things, and maintained the balance between intake and output. Now all this is not for one moment intended as an encouragement to a cloistered life, but it *is* intended as encouragement to cloistered seasons in life. The hour of silence, the days of retreat, on the devotional side; and the steady, strenuous toil on the intellectual. A father once said to his son, as together they stood at a fieldgate and gazed at the growing crops, comparing what they were then viewing with other things they had seen. "If you put nothing into the soil laddie, you can get nothing out." True, this, for fields other than those. Intake must at least be equal to output, and shall we say should exceed it?

So for "this ministry," even when the great years are ours, the sun shining, the opportunities many, and the

strength full, we still need, and perhaps more than than any when else, to keep the balance true. First things first. Centre as well as circumference. Intake to equal output.

CHAS. INGREM.



WHERE THE HONEY BEES GATHER.

ON the heights among the hills, far from the homes of men, here lying down in God's great open-air, we hear the hum and watch the flight of the nectar-gathering, honey-bearing workers. Whence have they come? Why are they here? What has lured them? Who has guided them? Entomologists tell us of the distances these little workers cover, and certainly these must come from far, but from whence must remain unanswered, not from anywhere near, for no human abodes are within sight, but possibly they come from many quarters. Was it not written long ago, "they came to *Him* from many quarters." He called by the abounding provision in Himself for their needs, and here also He has called others of His Creation by a similar abounding provision for their desires. Hungry seekers these, to be fed on Angels food.

But why are they here? What is the provision here that lures them? Questions easy to answer. Right, left, before, behind, the hills are covered with golden gorse, red heather and ling. God's many-coloured mantle wherewith He clothes the far-stretching hillside, a mantle of bewildering beauty and captivating charm, satisfying every æsthetic demand with its blends of tints and tones, and satiating us even to intoxication with its all-pervading and fragrant odours. Here is beauty, here is fragrance, and here is the chalice from which these little voyagers of the unwearied wing drain there long draughts of nectar, and similarly are human souls allured.

Why do men love the Bible? Why in spite of all the

multitudinous competing literature? Why, when all the atmosphere "in which we live and move, and have our being" is impregnated with materialism? Why, when so many are madly pursuing after wealth or pleasure? Why is it that the Bible still is selling as no "best seller" ever sells, or has sold? And why is it still sought unto by countless myriads of souls? Seekers are these for that which satisfies, that for which they were designed and that which was designed for them.

Why do men gather round the Holy Table? What is there to attract? Strangely simple are the viands there provided, meagre to the extreme from the material standpoint—a morsel of bread, and one drop of the blood of the grape. Then from a farther and higher viewpoint just a hymn sung, and praise and prayer offered—a fellowship of kindred minds, and that is all, yet here a little company, and there another, and others still both far and near till a multitude which no man can number is found at the "Table of the Lord." "All the bees gather honey there" said good Bishop Hale, and he spoke truly. Believing men and women through all the Christian centuries have found a lure in that simple festival gathering. A vision of enchanting beauty has risen before them, fragrance as from a garden of spices has been around them, flowers whose cups of gold have been filled with a divine nectar have been discovered by them, until they have said or sung:

"This is the hour of banquet and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me."

Why is it Jesus still draws human hearts to Himself? He offers them steep hills to climb, and stony roads to travel by, toils and tears are often seen to be the portion of those who follow Him. Service and Sacrifice are demanded of them. Yet they come and coming abide with Him. Other names and great names have been named, others have spoken great words of penetrating power and alluring beauty, and some for a little while have drawn more to themselves, but only for a little while. None has drawn as JESUS has, none has held as He, none has stirred so continuously to life, and service, and sacrifice, as He has done. The years have grown into decades, centuries and

millenniums, and still His power grows. The "gold of India" is brought to Him, Ethiopia stretches out her hand to Him, "these come from the land of Sinim, the old, old word is being fulfilled,"—"to Him shall the gathering of the nations be." Why is it so? Let the honey-bees answer. They come to heather-clad, gorse-covered hills, because there is honey there, because there is food which gratifies and satisfies. Souls come to Jesus because there is in Him that which is sweeter than honey or the honey-comb.

CHAS. INGREM.



SECRETARY'S NOTES.

WE regret that owing to the General Strike our Annual Meeting was not held at Leeds as we hoped, but we shall carry on with the former members of our Council under our New President Rev. J. Martin of Erith.

We are glad to print in this issue the substance of the address of Rev. F. Goldsmith French which he was unable to deliver personally.

Will our Members forward their Subscriptions (2/6) as soon as possible. Many usually pay them at the Assembly Meeting, but this year of course we were not able to receive them and our finances will suffer unless our members forward them on to the Secretary.