

# THE FRATERNAL.

The Editor will be glad to have the offer of short papers on matters of interest to men in the ministry, and also brief communications in the form of correspondence. The latter must be really brief and to the point. Short reports from county and other fraternal will be especially welcome.

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## Editorial Notes.

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With Mr. McKay's reply in this number, the correspondence on "Life in Christ as an Evangel" ceases. It has awakened more apparent interest than any topic with which we have dealt thus far, not even excepting the Baptist Union Scheme. This looks as though the theological instinct were still strong in our midst.

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The arrival of this issue at the homes of the brethren will find many of them deciding, or already decided, upon their holiday. In a great many cases, the summer holiday has one effect—at least, we may hope it has—it transfers the ministers from the pulpit to the pew for a Sunday or two. This is very good for us, even if it only teaches us how very long a fifteen minutes prayer is to the hearers, or some other piece of useful information. It would be interesting to have in our columns next autumn some brief impressions from ministers in the pew. Members of our fraternity will perhaps keep that in mind, and send a few notes by and by.

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How many of us have preached a sermon from John iii. 16? Those who have, and have the outline by them, may like to submit it for competition. A volume of the value of five shillings nett is offered for the best original outline, not to exceed four hundred words. Each entry must bear a pseudonym, as well as an enclosed envelope with the writer's name and address. All outlines must reach the Editor by August 31st.

The great pageant of the Anglican Church has been carried through very successfully, and has probably impressed the young members of communion with the greatness of their heritage. It was incomplete in some respects—some vital respects, too—inasmuch as there was no introduction into any of the scenes, of a select body of nonconformists with slit ears, or other token of ecclesiastical love for their souls. There is no intention, we may hope, to hold a Free Church display, but the pageant of our religious liberty exists, and should find a place in our discourses, where it will undoubtedly do more good than staged and dressed for common gaze. In America, we are told, religious liberty has been so frequently portrayed in sermon and speech, that hearers have been tempted to wish that Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers. This only shows that a variety of facts is desirable.

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### The Sabbath Month.

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We have come again very near to what is, or ought to be, the Sabbath month for men in the ministry. Many of us will be glad of respite from the ordinary round of our duties, and some will enter with relief and delight upon a season of complete relaxation.

It is perhaps well for us not to lay too much emphasis, publicly or semi-publicly, upon the exacting nature of our duties. In the years gone by, when we found our vocation, we did not bargain for the easy road; at least consciously. Some element of hardship, with weariness of the flesh as an ingredient, was in the covenant which we made with the Lord who redeemed us. We must not let the world think that ours is a hard task master, or that we thought the ministry to be, what the modern slang of the moment calls "a soft job."

Just for the moment, it is profitable to think of the best uses of a holiday, and even if that luxury has to be cut to fit a very slender purse, it may at least serve its purpose and give us some measure of renewal of our powers. There is hardly a man in the ministry who has not discovered that some of

his costliest holidays gave him least return in fitness for service.

There is the brother who will not get away from home at all ; his holiday is a problem. But he may have one if he will so order his days as to gain some new routine. There is but one remedy for him " Break up your days and your routine, in as large a measure as is possible. Recast your daily programme : alter your reading, change your habits, sleep more, or less ; think less, or more ; seize on some forgotten hobby, recall some mood and delight of boyhood ; make above all things, a deliberate raid on the monotony of your ordinary months, and turn your little world upside down." Such would be our advice to the less fortunate brethren.

For those who are able to go further afield and to claim entire rest, the same recipe is to some extent applicable. To transport our ordinary ménage to some distant spot, where we proceed to eat, sleep, and smoke a little more than usual, and to call it holiday, is scarcely just to that happy sounding name. Least helpful of all is it, when we transport with us or find near at hand, a brother of our vocation, and embark with him upon an endless sea of disquisitions on deacons or other topics of delight. It would be absurd to expect a man to be dumb on such questions day after day, but the consideration of them should be rigidly limited.

For many of us, a certain measure of solitude is very good, especially solitude in the presence of the greater things of nature—mountain and river and sea. A long lingering sunset, watched with a restful, open heart, is able to make many of the lesser vexations of life look as little as they really are. Not seldom has some such scene proved to be Peniel to a heart which needed to be wrestled with, and the man has risen from it fuller in stature than ever before. There are brethren who, perhaps, wisely, spend their holiday in a quest for new topics for preaching, and many who, wisely enough, drink in as much of light and air as they can. Many of us would come home in better health, in literal physical health, if we had made a better quest for spiritual renewal and increase of soul stature. That can be

accomplished surely without detracting from the joy of the holiday ; it makes it indeed a holy-day.

The Sabbath Month has one great gift for many men : it gives them for a small space a new congregation and large opportunity for useful contact with men of varying types. A new congregation it gives, but not in the sense of a coterie of constant listeners. The minister who " takes the floor " on every possible occasion, and is audibly preaching through all the meals and journeys of a summer holiday, ought to take his vacation with a select company of men who also love that practice ; and spend his strength in contending with them for a hearing. It is a far finer opportunity which the holiday month gives. The field is that of small but Christian courtesies, gentle and unselfish ways, manly and earnest joymaking. The testimony of such things is immeasurable. There lingers in the memory of the present writer the face and form of a minister of God, who always went out with unwonted energy to meet the empty char a banc, as it is called for a holiday making company. He always arrived on it, in the seat next to the driver which he coveted and got. It was good business, but poor testimony. It taught to a miscellaneous congregation, by symbol, how selfish a good man can be.

We go forth as brethren to snatch what delight and profit we may from the swiftly passing tale of earth born summers. It is not an ultra pious hope to cherish, that this sabbath month may be, for us, and through us, a preparation for ageless and deathless summers to come. It may be that many of us in some quiet moment of this August, may stand far apart from the louder voices of our common life, and find that in the still voice onward comes the Lord.

F.G.F.

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"Sermons are mere tools, and the business that you have in hand is not making sermons, or preaching sermons, it is *saving men*. Let this come up before you so frequently that it shall never be forgotten, that none of these things should gain ascendancy over this prime controlling element of your lives—that you are to save men."—BEECHER.

## From Under Vine and Fig Tree.—2.

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How shall a man begin to become a better workman while waiting for a change of pastorate, and discouraged by delays? I assume the minister's trust in God's love and care; he knows that sorrows and disappointments may serve to fit him for his divine work, as steel is tempered by the hot furnace and the icy bath. But sometimes men work unwisely; doing too much, or too little. A jaded brain, like a jaded horse, may be goaded and spurred to little purpose, and even to its lasting harm. Brain-fag does not predispose even a saint to cheerful trust. A minister can sometimes do more for himself and his work by doing less. Brilliant instances of strenuous and versatile labours continued down to old age are not examples for the average man to follow. Men as brilliant as the best have died of overstrained powers in their prime. Every reader of these lines could give names. And men of average gifts and strength may have periods when persistence in work may lead to total collapse and when the best work is impossible. The brain is like a jibbing horse or a sulky servant. I knew a man who in his earlier ministry was obliged to take two days a week off from his regular work to keep on at all. Work and worry combined had brought him to the verge of a complete breakdown. So for months, busy as he wished to be and had been, rain or shine, off he went alone or with congenial company, for long walks, or fishing, and took two long days a week in the open air, returning, tired out at night; but frequently bringing back illustrations that gave point or interest to his sermons. For on these idle days illustrations quite unsought would sometimes come flocking to his mind, as doves to their windows. How glad he was to welcome them, though much too weary to search for them. The sermons smelled less of the lamp, but more "of a field that the Lord had blessed." It was impossible

to get away for a long holiday, hard to spare the two days a week; but the choice between that and a collapse was inexorable. Yet hardly anything of importance was neglected, for soon the brain compressed its work into fewer hours; and the walks through Nature were also walks with God. Good company cheers. The idle days were the busiest days of communion with God the man had ever known; and when the need for the idle days passed, something of that closer divine fellowship stayed on.

My friend tells of a similar experience in his later life, when worries were less but duties more. Body and mind were again jaded with the work of the week of seven long days; and of course the day of rest for others was the hardest and longest of the seven for him. Pressure of all sorts of work had crowded out even a weekly half-holiday; till one day a mere truism laid hold of him and held him fast for the remainder of his days. It was this: "God is wiser than I am. He gave a day of rest. Take His way and rest one day in seven." So he took one day for relaxation, as a duty to God and himself and his work. The only day possible to keep free from all his pastoral duties was Saturday, a day which had always seemed indispensable for completing whatever might be incomplete in the sermons for Sunday. But as that was the only possible day, efforts to advance the preparation of sermons early in the week were redoubled; and whatever was wanting, after diligent endeavour, was scrupulously laid aside, so that my friend rose on Saturday morning as free from all duties, except that of taking real mental rest, as the lark and as thankful before God. Whatever was irksome was set aside, whatever was most restful, walk or talk, or book or bed, was chosen for conscience sake; and then in the evening from 7 till 9, the sermons were reconsidered with keen interest and clearer vision; and rarely without some material addition or welcome illustration which had come unbidden through the day. Here again my friend did more by doing less. His

own "more" would have broken him down; but God's "less" was more, and restful besides.

But what if the minister be doing too little? What if, on the average, he be doing less than an honest and strenuous day's work? He is on the road to ruin as surely as the rake or the infidel. It may not be the same kind or degree of ruin as theirs; but his ministry and character will deteriorate as surely as July days shorten. None may mark it at first, none can miss it at last. Only a diligent student and a humble learner can continue to teach well. No renovated scheme for exchange of pastorates will long help the indolent. The idle healthy pastor is a wicked man; a blight settling on the garden of the Lord. Wise work is indispensable to the soul's health. It is "twice blessed," like mercy and "the gentle rain." It pleases the Master!

Some work is specially helpful to discouraged men. What?

S. VINCENT.

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### Method.

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What has become of Todd's Students' Manual? My copy vanished years ago, and it is long since I caught a fugitive glimpse at one in a second-hand shop. Even the bookstalls in the Farringdon Road know him no more.

One morn I miss'd him on the 'customed hill  
 Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

And yet what a tyrant he was in the days when like H. G. Wells' "Mr. Lewisham" our heads were full of schemes of study, and hope told a flattering tale that a timetable of studies, ruled neatly in red ink and accounting for every hour of the day from 5.30 a.m. (or was it 4.30?) until dusk, was the high road to scholastic and ministerial success. But there came a day when Todd fell like Dagon from his pedestal. A rumour was spread that this master of method

for others was himself the most unmethodical of men, that the "Index Rerum" he recommended to his younger brethren found no place on his own shelves, and that his study was an utter chaos compared with the study of our friend Dr. X. on the admired disorder of which, fresh from Todd, we had once looked with such disapproving eyes. So Todd fell, and with him fell for some of us that respect for excessive method he strove so vicariously to instil. "Vaulting ambition" as usual had "o'erleaped itself and fell on the other."

Yet is there room for method, as a servant if not as a tyrant, and he who does not bring to his work arrangement and foresight, is likely to return from the field with a poor harvest. There is no necessary antagonism between genius and taking pains, even if the one be not identified with the other. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," but the miller sets the sails, frees the clutch and pours the grain into the hopper. One has heard of brethren hesitating to preach a series of expository sermons, or to pledge themselves to definite subjects on particular days on the ground that it seems to be a limiting of the Spirit, "and the Word of God is not bound." Truth to tell some expository courses and some special sermons seem to justify the objection, but it is doubtful whether the poor result was not due rather to lack of diligence and skill than to any offence taken by Him Whose instrument we would be.

At least there is much in ministerial life into which we must introduce method if we are to do it efficiently, and without undue wear and tear. Visitation must be methodical, unless we are to deserve the most fatal of all reputations that of favouritism in the homes we visit. Nor does the Divine guidance and help forsake us because we call on certain days in certain streets.

So it is with study. The Bible itself needs continual illumination by the Divine Spirit, but if we only open it when the spirit moves, we may remain but occasional readers of its pages. And so with other studies. Inclination may often suggest another book than the one we had planned to read. That chapter of Harnack looks particularly dull, and here is a new volume of highly commended sermons. It will not do. There is a kind of irreverence which mistakes

its moods and inclinations for the movement of the Divine Spirit, and persuades itself that it is inspired to do—only what it likes. All this is fatal. The hard task, the uncongenial bit of service, the visit one would rather not make, the book one would rather not read, the article one has no wish to write—here is the bit of discipline which comes through method and through which comes power.

Nor is our sermon work exempt from this rule. The old question of our youth recurs. Are we to sit down doggedly to prepare a sermon at the appointed hour or are we to wait until the inspiration seizes us? Certainly there is no place for a sermon that is not inspired and that fails to inspire. The purpose of an æroplane is to fly. But æroplanes need ample level space in which to catch the breeze and rise; they cannot take the air from the narrow limits of a London back garden. And sermons need space and ample scope in which they may soar, and that space is only obtained by drudgery, by diligent study, by unwearied self-discipline, by solitude, by prayer, by method which secures them all.

In the formation of that which lies behind all our work—character, method has its essential place. “Every good that is worth possessing” says Prof. James “must be paid for in strokes of daily effort.” “Do every day or two something for no other reason than its difficulty.” And there is this more sure word of prophesy which reads thus. “He entered *as His custom was* into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up to read. And He opened the Book and found the place where it was written ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.’ And he began to say unto them ‘To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.’”

C.W.V.

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“If, when a man comes back from his garden, his lectures, his journeys, and his æsthetic studies, or from his scientific coteries and séances, he finds himself less interested in his proper work; if the Sabbath is getting to be rather a burdensome day to him, and it is irksome to be preaching, he must quit one or other of those things.”—BEECHER.

## Topics of Interest.

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For the assistance of brethren (of whom we occasionally hear) who are willing to write, but do not know what to write about, we append a few topics which may tempt them or rouse the *furor scribendi* within them. So long as personal criticism is not indulged in, there is no deep necessity that contributions should bear the writer's real name, though, in such a brotherhood as ours, that is desirable in most cases. Brethren must, of course, send their name as well as a pseudonym.

“The National Free Church Council—should it be reorganised?”

“Is Anglicanism gaining at our expense?”

“A plea for lengthy pastorates.”

“The limits of Church Advertisements.”

“Bazaars, wholesome and otherwise.”

“Bazaars and the Retail Trader.”

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## Review.

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The Rev. W. T. Kershaw, of Ramsbottom, has written and published a small pamphlet of 28 pages, illustrated, detailing the history and traditions surrounding the name of Roger Worthington, a nonconformist patriarch of that district. It is a valuable piece of work, such as might be done for many another worthy of other parts of our land, especially where, as in this case, floating traditions need to be collected and recorded.

\* Roger Worthington, one of the Heroes of Faith, by W. T. Kershaw, Ramsbottom. Holden & Scholes, threepence.

## Mr. McKay Replies.

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I am sorry that anyone should think it is not right for me to use a quotation from Dr. MacLaren in support of "Conditional Immortality"; but in my own judgment I am quite justified in doing so. The doctor in a past-master in the art of phrasing, and his line exactly expressed the point I wished to make. Why should I not adopt it, and say from whence it comes? When it was first used in the book of mine, to which your correspondent refers, I sent a copy to the Doctor, with the quotation pointed out, and no objection to its use was made by him.

But I hope my friends will not be taken off the trail. The question—if the subject of my paper is to be discussed at all—is not, What does Dr. MacLaren believe? but, What saith the Word of God? If any scripture statement in proof of natural immortality can be found, I shall be glad to see it privately, should your limited space prohibit publication.

Regarding Mr. Ambrose's remark that "Eternal Life" has, as its primary significance, quality, not quantity; that, of course, is a begging of the question. I agree with him that "it is an immortality of blessedness, not merely extension of being." But it *is* extension of being; and the Scriptures so frequently dwell upon this feature of it (*e.g.*, "Life everlasting," "He shall live for ever," "Not die," &c.) that the primary significance seems rather to be there. At any rate, it is for those who believe in everlasting "extension of being," apart from the blessedness, to furnish proof of it from Holy Writ. Settle from Scripture the question of man's nature, mortal or immortal, and you will more clearly see the meaning of its statements about "the gift of God" and "the wages of sin." In my paper I simply showed that I have found "Conditional Immortality" the basis of an Evangel that has satisfied my heart, and has won the hearts of many to our Sovereign Lord.

Bournemouth, W.

G. P. MCKAY.

## The Christian Ministry in Thoughts from Coleridge.

I have gathered the following thoughts from Coleridge, as illustrative of a minister's life. Put together, they seem to me to give a very rich and full idea of it.

1.—I place first his "Pentad of Operative Christianity." There, by a kind of genealogical tree, he traces the preacher to his origins. In order to do a great work as preachers, we need to have a great conception of what our relationship to God really is; and that, I think, is most impressively set forth here:—

"The Pentad of Operative Christianity.

*Prothesis.*

Christ, the Word.

*Thesis.*

*Mesothesis*, or the  
Indifference.

*Antithesis.*

The Scriptures.

The Holy Spirit.

The Church.

*Synthesis.*

The Preacher.

The Scriptures, the Spirit, and the Church are co-ordinate; the indispensable conditions and the working causes of the perpetuity, and continued renaissance and spiritual life of Christ still militant. The Eternal Word, Christ from everlasting, is the *Prothesis* or identity;—the Scriptures and the Church are the two poles, or *Thesis* and *Antithesis*; and the Preacher in direct line under the Spirit, but likewise the point of junction of the Written Word and the Church, is the *Synthesis*. This is God's hand in the world." (*Aids to Reflection*, Bohn's Edition, p. 288.)

If we think of ourselves in that way, we shall do a work worthy of God.

2.—"The true life of Christians [and the Minister's life is simply the Christian life in one particular aspect] is to eye Christ in every step of His life—not only as their rule but as their strength; looking to Him as their pattern, both in doing and suffering, and drawing power from Him for

going through both ; being *without Him* able for nothing." (*Ibid*, 203.)

Probably the failure to grasp that thought with its warning is the secret of much weakness and failure in our lives. We take Christ as our *rule*, but fail to realize that He is also our *strength*, and so lose much of the strength that He would be to us.

"By faith in the love of Christ, the power of God becomes ours" Commenting on the words: "Stedfast in faith," or as he translates them, "Stedfast by faith," he says: "This is absolutely necessary for resistance to the Evil Principle. There is no standing out without some firm ground to stand on ; and this faith alone supplies." (*Ibid*, 208.) Then follow the words above quoted. No doubt the power of God does come to us in proportion as we have faith in the love of Christ, His love to ourselves, and His love to those we are preaching to.

3.—After a quotation from Bishop Hackett on the need of a wide and generous outlook on life, and the lack of it in his day, wherein the Bishop says: "We want public souls ; we want them" ; Coleridge, admitting selfishness in all ages, nevertheless goes on to speak of his own age in this way: "The number of 'public souls,' and the general readiness to contribute to the public good, in science and in religion, in patriotism and in philanthropy, stand prominent among the characteristics of this and the preceding generation [as they do now] ; the habit of referring actions and opinions to fixed laws ; convictions rooted in principles ; thought, insight, system ;—these, had the good Bishop lived in our times, would have been his *desiderata*, and the theme of his complaint—'We want *thinking* souls ; we *want them.*'" (*Ibid*, 99.) Surely that is a message to the ministry now.

4.—This seems to me one of the great sayings of the world, and of incalculable value for the life of the ministry :— "An hour of solitude, passed in sincere and earnest prayer, or the conflict with, and conquest over, a single passion or 'subtle bosom sin,' will teach us more of thought, will more effectually awaken the *faculty*, and form the *habit*, of reflection, than a year's study in the schools without them." (*Ibid*, 5.)

In another place he says very truly: "A man may pray night and day, and yet deceive himself; but no man can be assured of his sincerity who does not pray." (*Ibid.* 350.)

The word "pray" must be taken in its whole scope and meaning. The following beautiful words may be added to the foregoing:—

"Fix thy thought on what *Christ* did, what *Christ* suffered, what *Christ* is—as if thou wouldst fill the hollowness of thy soul with Christ." (*Ibid.*, 209.) Doing this would save us from no end of self-consciousness, vanity, and pride, and all their attendant evils.

5.—"The best preparation for taking [the] sacrament [and the best preparation for many other things too—for Church meetings and all important engagements, for visiting, for the Sunday services], better than any or all of the books or tracts composed for this end, is, to read over and over again, and often on your knees—at all events, with a kneeling and praying heart—the Gospel according to St. John, till your mind is familiarized to the contemplation of Christ, the Redeemer and Mediator of mankind." (*Ibid.*, 350.)

I know nothing that can give a surer vision of God in Christ than such reading, and it is in that vision that we gain strength and peace for our duties.

6.—I close with a quotation from Pascal: "People should not be able to say of a man, he is a mathematician, or a preacher, or eloquent, but he is a gentleman; that universal quality alone pleases me.—When you think of a man's book as soon as you see himself, it is a bad sign. I would rather that none of his qualities should be recognized till you meet them, or have occasion to avail yourself of them. *Ne quid nimis*, for fear some one quality gain the mastery and stamp the man. Let not people think of him as an orator, unless oratory be in question—then let them think of it." (*Thoughts*, Bohn, p. 80.)

Bromley Common.

LEWIS BARTLETT.

"A man who is going to be a successful preacher, should make his whole life run toward the pulpit."—BEECHER.

## Present-Day Problems.

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### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE SUFFOLK UNION.

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One of the first essentials to right action is a true understanding of the times. This understanding can only be reached by accurate observation, patient study of the facts, and the application of a keen and discriminative faculty of judgment to the affairs of men. What is going on within, and around us? Where are we, whither tending? What special problems emerge from the life and thought of to-day, and what is the key to their solution? These are questions of living interest and great moment. The present is the child of the past, and the father of the future. The problem practically determines the nature of our task, and the direction of our literary, social and religious activities. What we are to-day is determining what we shall be to-morrow. It is with a view to larger qualification for service that I invite you to consider with me some of our present-day problems.

#### I.—THE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM.

The age is highly critical. The very bases of life and thought—the authority of the Church and the infallibility of Holy Scripture—the nature of inspiration and divine revelation—the Being of God, and the personality of Christ—the freedom and responsibility of man—the materialistic or spiritual basis and interpretation of the universe, are being subjected to the severest scrutiny, and the most rigorous examination. Many are sorely exercised by the difficulty of reconciling the existence of evil with the goodness of God. Others are troubled by the awful and inscrutable silence of God in presence of human suffering. And yet others are much disturbed by the apparent conflict between the findings of science, and the place of miracle in revealed religion. On speculative grounds,

some are taking up what has been called an "attitude of reasoned ignorance," concerning things that lie beyond the sphere of sense perception. In their view God is the Unknowable. Others, through regarding themselves as held in the iron grip of the most rigid determinism, are casting all thought of human responsibility to the winds. Mr. Cotter Morrison, in his book on "The Service of Man," says, "Nothing is more certain than that no man makes his own character. That is done for him by his parents and ancestors. A man inherits his brain as much as he inherits his estate." When asked what about moral responsibility, the answer he gives is this, "The sooner the idea of moral responsibility is got rid of the better it will be for society, and for moral education." Increasing difficulty is being found to-day in giving assent, without mental reservation, to confessional standards, articles of belief, set creeds, which were formulated centuries ago, and while accurately representing, it may be, fourth century thought are no longer a fit vehicle for the mind of to-day. Thought is living and progressive. And so is language. Hence the living thought of to-day should not appear in antique, but in 20th century attire. This same principle applies to the problem of the books of the Bible, more especially with regard to the Old Testament. We are asked to remember that the revelation of Old Testament times was progressive, and therefore that every line in the Bible does not possess the same face value. The books of the New Testament are of infinitely greater worth and moment as records of divine revelation than any within the covers of the Old Testament. These are some of the intellectual problems that we are called upon to face to-day.

## II.—THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

Conditions exist around us which are a perpetual menace to our stability, and progress as a nation. Gambling, intemperance, social impurity, sweated labour, lack of employment, abject poverty, bad housing of the

poor, unequal distribution of wealth, the accentuation of class interests, the selfishness of the heedless rich, and shall we add the increasing burden of armaments, are some of the evils which afflict the body-politic, and which give cause for grave alarm. These modern conditions must be altered. Their existence is a direct challenge to our faith. We are bound in the interests of purity, and justice, and common brotherhood to unite in the effort to clear our national life of these foul blots, and so to improve the people's surroundings that it will be easy for men to do right, and difficult for them to do wrong. "The whole interest of history," says Emerson, "lies in the fortunes of the poor." We must be the champions of the poor. To secure for them social, intellectual, and spiritual enfranchisement must be our daily motto and aim. With a feeling of real gratitude, we offer our meed of praise to the present Government for the Old Age Pension Act and Children's Charter which have been securely placed on the Statute Book of the realm, which may be regarded as two of the most beneficent measures ever passed by the British House of Commons. In this connection we would not forget the noble and heroic effort of the Government to serve the cause of temperance by the introduction and passage through the Commons of the celebrated Licensing Bill—a Bill backed by all the best sentiment of the country, but bitterly opposed by those more interested in big dividends, and the retention of privilege and monopoly than in good legislation, and the true uplift of the people. It is a matter for shame and regret that the measure should have been vetoed by an irresponsible canard meeting at the house of Lord Lansdowne. There is no doubt that the drink evil is the fruitful mother of most of our social ills. Until we rid ourselves of this gigantic curse we shall see abject poverty, misery, degradation and vice stalking through the land. Let us redouble our efforts to secure a sober as well as a free people, and thus bring nearer that new social order—the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

## III.—THE CHURCH PROBLEM.

We are confronted with the fact that vast masses of the people never darken the doors of our places of worship. In all the large centres of population there is increasing hostility to organised forms of religion. There is a cause for this. What is it? This inquiry must not be burked. And if the blame lies with us, then we must change our plant, and reorganise our worship on the lines of sympathy, and homeliness, and true charity.

Can it be said that as churches we have stood conspicuously for the cause of the poor? Have we offered them home and sanctuary in our Christian thought, feeling, and fellowship? Has brotherhood been writ large in our public assemblies? Have we not too often been sticklers for order and propriety, when we ought to have been filled with a burning enthusiasm for men, which would have taken us out to them in loving sympathy and sacrificial service. No church can thrive on the worship of respectability. It is not finery of attire, or architecture, or ritual, or music, that is going to make our places of worship attractive to the people, but the spirit of brotherhood, the joy of true fellowship, the blending of heart with heart in a common sympathy, service, and aim: the going forth in Christ's name to bring in the lost and wandering. When the church is filled with the divine and humane sympathies of the gospel, then men will flock to her, even as doves to their appointed windows.

Then our churches have their economic problem. The appeal for money is ever in our ears. The raising of the necessary means for the support of the ministry, the maintenance of public worship, and the carrying forward of the various branches of work, is a perpetual burden and strain on the minds of, at least, ministers and church officers.

It should be looked upon not only as a solemn duty, but as a high privilege. To spend gold and

silver on our recreations and pleasures, and then give copper to the Lord is not good enough. We are to give as God has prospered us. We are to give systematically, and on principle. We are to give on the lines of our Lord's supreme example, who though rich became poor that we through. His poverty might be made rich. We are to give to the point of sacrifice. I do not see how men can leave huge fortunes behind, and appear before the Prince of Givers with other than shame of face and bitterness of soul.

Further, there is the problem of the adjustment of our church methods of machinery to the demands of the age, with a view to the securing of larger, and more permanent results. It is a question, not of principle, but of procedure—not of altering the foundation of our policy, but of redirecting our activities, with a view to consolidation, and widened influence. The whole trend of modern thought and activity is in the direction of a larger interpretation, and finer application, of the principle of mutual aid. We are thinking more of the community than of the individual. We are realising as never before that we are members one of another—that our interests are common, and that no one individual has the right to fatten himself on the life-blood of others. It is a case not of the suppression of the individual, but of the fitting of self to the public good, so that each shall serve the rest in the right use of the gifts which God has conferred upon him. In the light of this principle of mutual helpfulness—of related life and service—of a true commonalty of being, we are called on to consider our congregational usages and methods. Without putting any less emphasis on the value of the individual—without insisting any the less on the necessity, and validity of personal regeneration—and without sacrificing the undoubted right of each properly constituted church to manage its own affairs, may we not, by common consent, federate on the lines of common use and service, with a view to the strong helping the weak, and the creation of that community of effort

which will relieve many a church and many a pastor from what is now an almost intolerable strain.

There is no thought of departing from the principle of Congregationalism. We believe that it is based on New Testament teaching, and truly expresses the mind of Christ. We stand for the purity and simplicity and spirituality and freedom of every church based on New Testament teaching. We are free. We rejoice in our freedom. We are not prepared to sell this great inheritance for any state patronage, or emolument, or temporal ease. It is on the very ground of our freedom that we claim the right to revise our methods, and to readapt them to the needs of the time and to the securing of the best results. If there be the weakness of isolation, then we have the right to end it by a strong federation. If there be pastors finding it hard even to get the common necessities of life. Then we must step in and relieve them of the cruel strain. If there be no worthy system of securing a change of pastorate, and men are compelled to resort to methods that involve loss of dignity and self-respect, then we must end the confusion by the adoption of a plan, which, whilst not affecting the just freedom of the churches, will secure for our ministers an honorable way of passing from one sphere to another. Our Congregationalism must not mean independency run mad. We are surely free to combine for great common ends, so long as the Congregational principle of autonomy remains intact. Did not that great lover of freedom, and early Congregationalism, say to the churches of Galatia, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christ is the law of sympathy—of the strong helping the weak—of mutual burden-bearing. It is exactly on those lines that we need to solve the problem of interchange of pastorate, and the creation of a sustentation fund.

#### IV.—THE RELIGIOUS PROBLEM.

The growing disregard of the Sabbath as a day of rest and recollectedness—of meditation and prayer,

is patent to us all. Many are just turning it into a day of selfish pleasure. Motoring, golfing, tennis, cycle runs, week-end excursions, concerts, and other forms of amusement are alarmingly on the increase. We shall shortly have to add to the list the opening of rifle ranges, so that when a truce is called to labour, the crack of the gun will be in our ear. This increase of Sabbath desecration is symptomatic of the lowering of ideals, and the emptying of life of its true spiritual significance and meaning. The Sabbath has been one of our greatest boons. If we let it slip, or degenerate in purpose and aim, then we shall lose immeasurably in moral vision and grip. One of the greatest curses of our time is secularity. And so we deplore the tendency to secularise the Sabbath. May the Sabbath ever be to us "an opportunity for enlargement of the soul, for converse with things unseen and eternal." It has been well said that, "no Sabbath has been well spent if we do not feel at its close as though we had made an excursion to the city of God, and paid a visit to the Father's house."

Further, there is a deep and wide-spread feeling of religious apathy. This is found in all ranks of society. There is little, if any, response to the best things. Prayer is crowded out. The Bible is a largely neglected book. There is no fear of God before the people's eyes. The sense of reverence—the consciousness of sin—the feeling of responsibility—the thought of judgment—seem to be in a decaying or parlous state. In regard to religious thought and feeling the vast majority of our fellow men are found at the "centre of indifference." The spiritual side of their nature is being starved. This is one of the gravest of all the problems with which we are confronted to-day. For where there is no vision the people perish. Where faith dies down there the flood-gates are opened to all manner of ills. We can never move this widespread apathy to the claims and sanctions of religion—this stolid indifference to spiritual ideals until a new breath passes through our churches,

even the breath of that mighty life of the Spirit which quickens, cleanses and beautifies everything it touches—the breath that brings springtide in its train, with its delicious green and bursting buds, and tinted leaf, and “fairly blossom”—the breath that makes the wilderness to rejoice and the desert to blossom as the rose. A revived church will send a breath of life through the whole community. When we are awake, there will be a great waking in the nation.

What is the key to these intellectual, social, ecclesiastical and religious problems?

1. A more restful realisation of the Lord's presence.
2. The complete surrender of ourselves to God that He may have His way with us.

It is only thus that He can possess us with His spirit, and pour His life through us.

3. A fresh presentation of the old Gospel in the language of to-day.

4. Bolder, braver, more capable and more magnetic leadership. Our leaders should be men of keen intelligence, fine sympathies, and heroic build—great hearts, utterly devoted to their high calling, and fearing the face of no man. They should be men—men of God—separated unto the Gospel of God.

5. A more flaming passion for souls, in both pulpit and pew.

This passion must be lit at the Cross, where we see Jesus tasting death for every man. And it must be kept burning with inextinguishable blaze through living contact with Him, Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, and trampled on the shame. We must recover that spirit which travails in birth for souls.

There are great days in front of us. It was never more exhilarating to live than to day. It may be that sufferings await us in every city. But we leap to the task with some measure of the indomitable spirit of those who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Ipswich.

SIM HIRST.

## Secretary's Notes.

### BOOK FUND.

Deposits received in June :—No. 15, 2/6 ; 25, 22/6 ; 34, 20/- ; 35, 20/- ; 43, 5/- ; 51, 10/- ; 55, 7/6 ; 56, 40/- ; Total, £67/6.

Half gross profits in quarter ended June 30th, credited to members' accounts as follows :—No. 2, 8d. ; 3, 1/10 ; 13, 3d. ; 15, 1/- ; 19, 6d. ; 20, 7d. ; 24, 6d. ; 25, 1d. ; 30, 1/1 ; 32, 1/4 ; 34, 2/8 ; 35, 1/2 ; 39, 6d. ; 41, 1/1 ; 47, 2/1 ; 51, 4d. ; 56, 9d. ; 242, 3/-. Total, 19/5.

### NEW MEMBERS ENROLLED.

DAVID MACE, Hillside, West Malling, Kent.

SAMUEL VINCENT, Merriotsford, Crewekerne.

C. H. WEAVER, 208, Lancaster Road, London, W.

ALBERT WOODWARD, Hill Crest, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey.

And by an oversight, the Secretary omitted from the list of new members in the April number :

THOMAS WILLIAM DINEEN, New Road, Halesowen, Birmingham.

### TO REST.

Just as we last went to press, the sad news came of the fatal cycling accident to our Brother, Ernest Edward Tippet, of Totnes. All our members who heard of that loss to our ranks and the churches will have felt deep sympathy for the bereaved homes and the church at Totnes.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

On the 12th of August, the Hon. Secretary will move to "Bretby," Walkern Road, Stevenage. This is announced in case brethren should be wanting to call when motoring or cycling through Stevenage.

### COMMITTEE.

The Committee will meet for BOOK FUND and other business at the Church House, on Tuesday, July 20th, at 3 p.m. The work is a little in arrears, owing to pressure of various duties.

### YEAR BOOK.

The Secretary will have this ready soon.

A Correspondent suggests that the subscriptions for Membership and THE FRATERNAL should fall due at the same time. As a matter of fact, both fall due at the beginning of the year, and application is always made in these notes in the months of December and January.

#### EXHIBITION OF PICTURES.

It will interest all the brethren to know that our brother, Thomas Spurgeon, enforced by ill health to rest from preaching, has been devoting himself to the work of an artist, and there will be an exhibition of his pictures in Bond Street, London, beginning October 25th. Advertisements of this will appear in the various papers, but it would help the success of the effort if brethren would tell their friends about it. An artist friend of the Secretary's tells him that the pictures are really fine works of art. It is a cause for thankfulness that a friend, who is denied the joy of preaching with his voice should be able to preach with his brush, for there is a sermon in every good picture, especially when it comes from one in communion with The Creator.

B.V.B.

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### Memoranda.

(i.) Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS became due on January 1st. These, together with the subscription for "The Fraternal," 2/6 in all (minimum), should be sent to the Hon. Secretary:

B. VERNON BIRD, "STRUAN," STEVENAGE,

to whom also should be addressed applications for benefits of the Benevolent Section of the BOOK FUND, or Membership in the Mutual Benefit Fund; and all general correspondence.

(ii.) Enquiries *re* Books, Orders, and Deposits for the BOOK FUND should be addressed to: The Secretary B.M.F.U. Book Fund, 4, Southampton Row, W.C.

(iii.) MUTUAL BENEFIT FUND SUBSCRIPTIONS are payable in advance, and become due on the first day of each quarter; they should be made payable to "The Treasurer of the B.M. Mutual Benefit Fund," crossed \_\_\_\_\_ & Co., and sent to the Rev. J. H. French, 86, Hampton Road, Forest Gate, E.

The first subscription should not be sent till a member has received notice of the acceptance of his application, and of the amount of his subscription.