

Special Needs of the Ministry at the Present Time.

A MINISTER of the Gospel of Jesus Christ needs to be a sort of walking Encyclopedia—a Specialist, if you will, and yet more than a mere Specialist. One Idealism in the pulpit are certain failures.

He needs to be a man well rounded, with all the rough, projecting points chiselled down, so that the keen eye of the art critic may not be able to detect any glaring imperfections.

He needs to be free from sore spots or tender points, for the harness will be sure to gall them.

He needs to be a true man in every sense. His physique, be it huge or scant, should be as nearly perfect as possible. I refer not so much to the contour, for a man cannot change his appearance always any more than he can his heredity, I was going to say *stature* instead of heredity, but it struck me that many, if they could not add a cubit, might add considerable to their stature by giving the spinal column the responsibility of supporting the head. While a shambling gait and hanging head always indicates slovenliness, they do not always bespeak weighty intellects by any means.

Success, not to speak of health, depends somewhat upon a stiff spinal column, as well as a "stiff upper lip."

I referred rather to the physical functions, closely connected as they are with proper habits of study and exercise, and the system of 'Water Cure' persevered in throughout life.

Then mental health and vigor depend on habits no less than physical.

Mental dyspeptics are as numerous as any other kind, and may be accounted for in a similar way.

I would say to them all, 'eat less and think more.' The next best thing is to go farming. To me there is no greater incongruity than a shrieking dyspeptic in the pulpit preaching *glad tidings*. He should be able to look upon men and things as they really are. He needs to have a true philosophy of life that he may weigh social questions properly and foresee their influence and effects.

To do so there must be the proper action of the gastric juices combined with healthy cerebration.

Only upon such a well developed physical and mental manhood as a basis can there be built up a strong and vigorous moral and spiritual manhood. Let us teach men out of the pulpit as well as in the pulpit, that it is a manly thing to be a Christian. What we need is God fearing, man-fearless men in our pulpits of the future, and with these I do not fear for the future of Christianity.

J. R.

Peace of Conscience.

W. T. HERRIDGE.

BEHIND the thought manifested in the universe, we must of necessity find a Thinker. Every idea presupposes a plan, and every plan a Designer, with whom will reside the standard of laws for the government of the world which He has made. If we adopt the belief that the

various bodies around us are only "fortuitous aggregations of matter," and that "the human form Divine" is one of these, then our moral responsibility is at an end, and under the relentless sway of impersonal law, we move forward to an uncertain destiny which it is impossible for us to change or avert. But if we listen to the voice of nature, we shall find that she loudly denies her asserted orphanage. As at the beginning when she came fresh from her Creator's hand, so now through the changeful ages she still proclaims that she is under the same Almighty power which was, and is, and is to come. Nature is neither Atheist nor Pantheist.

But the external evidence for the Divine existence is not stronger than that which we possess within ourselves. There is in man an intuitive perception of right and wrong. To this perception we give the name of Conscience. But as moral attributes belong only to personality, and as the uncreated Power is the source of moral law, we can readily understand the statement of Julius Muller that "Conscience and the Consciousness of God are one." The word itself ought to teach this sublime truth. Conscience is not merely that faculty by which we know in regard to moral distinctions, but that faculty by which this knowledge of ours is linked with the knowledge of Someone outside of ourselves, and held in common with Him. Let the Materialist say that nature is the partner of our knowledge. We cannot believe him. For thought implies a Thinker, and nature does not think. The great external Someone is God. On our nature is mirrored the thought of the Divine nature. We send back to God the echoes of those eternal principles of right and wrong established before the foundation of the world. Conscience is the universal possession of man, and a sufficient ground of his moral responsibility. It is a light, though not the greatest light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is not an outgrowth of education, nor a development of Christian times. It spoke to Adam when he ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. It gave to Cain the mark of obloquy and disgrace. It followed Ahab in the midst of his ill-gotten possessions. It thundered before Israel when they turned aside from the God of their fathers. It made its power manifest in the heathen world, for though they have not the law, yet "they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them." The pages of heathen writers bear witness to the power of conscience. One of the most vivid passages of the poet Æschylus describes the pangs of a guilty conscience. Cicero says:—"My conscience is worth more to me than the words of all men." Quintilian's remark has passed into a proverb:—"Conscience is a thousand witnesses." And its witness is not to be destroyed. Man may stifle conscience for a time, but he cannot smother it to death. Now and then, through the thick coverings with which he would fain shut out its speech, he will be sure to hear it.

"Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through gain's silence, and o'er glory's din;
Whatever creed be taught or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God."

Unlike the famous responses of the Pythian Apollo, there is no equivocation in what it utters. Conscience cannot be trained to confuse the eternal principles of right and wrong. It cannot be trained to alter its decrees of moral obligation to follow the one and to turn away from the other. The unchangeable "ought" and "ought not" of Jehovah comes thundering down through the eternities. Instead of falling into obedient hearts, it strikes full against the huge mountain of human sin; but none the less, returning from those tangled forests and dark ravines, it keeps the perfect echo, far as it may be, but unmistakable, and in each soul is heard the "ought" and "ought not" from the lips of God. If then in spite of this knowledge of God's will, there is a turning from right, and a following of wrong, there cannot but be a tumult of disquietude within the soul, and a dread foreboding of future punishment. For in proportion as the true authority of conscience is apprehended, will fear be increased when its teaching is despised. No man can persuade himself that God will lightly regard the violation of His law. However forgetful we may become in the whirl of life's activities, in the hours of that solitude which is filled with the presence of God,

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all."

Yet no one desires such inward misgiving. On the contrary it has been the mournful endeavor of mankind to sweep it away. The goal of life is happiness. But happiness is impossible while care sits enthroned like some gaunt spectre within the soul. All mirth is hollow in the constant shadow of this unrest. So men in every age have felt. The sacrifice of heathenism is a sacrifice of fear. It is the attempt to appease the wrath of an outraged Deity, whom they have consciously offended. It is the protest against sin even from those regions where the darkness of sin holds fullest sway. It is an attempted answer to the great question of the earliest ages:—"How shall a man be just with God?" We see the same endeavor in the heathenism of so-called Christian lands. Far off we behold the smoke of bloody sacrifice, and hear the cries of innocent victims immolated on the altar of religion. And in our midst we witness the tedious penance, the lonely vigil, the long idolatry of worship. For the unregenerate heart of man the wide world over gives essentially the same answer to this greatest question of life, though more or less distinctly conscious all the while that it is a false one.