

MEN FOR THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

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Nothing is more certain to a thoughtful mind than that, in the Divine purpose of raising men up from the unfortunate condition into which sin has cast them, the agency of man himself occupies a very prominent place. Even the fountain of Life has been opened by means of human nature. It is only, then, in accordance with the whole order of Mercy, that human voices should direct the thirsty to its rest giving streams. Hence, we are told by those most competent to teach on such a subject, that the Lord "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The instructions given to Timothy by the Apostle Paul, not long before his decease, indicate, as clearly as possible, that a regular order of teachers in the church is to be maintained as long as the church endures; and the exhortations to the various members of the churches to "hold forth the Word of Life," and to "lift up the hands that hang down," running parallel with these securities for a succession of pastors, must be designed to convey the impression that the work of the ministry and the work of private Christians, are the complements one of the other.

It is a vague sort of exegesis that would confine the application of our Saviour's command to pray for "more labourers" to the calling forth of private Christians from the ease and seclusion of well-furnished homes to self-denying effort in the great world of sin and ignorance lying around them. His habit of looking on to the distant requirements of all ages, and of forecasting the spiritual forgetfulness and routine of His followers, will account for this injunction to seek out by Divine aid, true men for the ministry of the Word. Judging from the incidental references of the New Testament, and the historic records of actual success achieved during the first century, it would appear that the Saviour's injunction was well heeded by the early church. At all events, there was no lack of men fired with the noblest enthusiasm, and intent on doing great things at any cost.

In our times, there is an immense demand for all sorts of things supposed to satisfy human craving; and there is a corresponding activity in endeavouring to provide for the enlarged wants of a wider civilization. To observant minds, that pay regard to the foundations of social welfare, there are few claims more important—more deserving the prayerful thoughts of young and old—than the incessant demand for men to enter the ranks of the Christian ministry. The two great elements at work rendering the demand natural are, the havoc of death and the advance of population. Pastors die and the people multiply. The restless temper of our modern civilization, also contributes its quota to the demand. In the race of the future, those denominations will succeed which provide the best men as preachers and pastors. The quality of the men sent forth will determine the quality of the success.

To some of us, who study the future of our churches in the provision made for a well-trained ministry in the present, it is encouraging to observe the general interest that is just now being taken in our college affairs. From all that comes to our ears, we infer the speedy realization of the proposed College Endowment Fund. This is as it should be; though I see no reason why, if our people are really in earnest, and alive to the claims of the times, the amount should not be doubled. There must be something truly ennobling in the reflection for any man, that he has taken pains to find out how he can spare some of his means to render stable and efficient, an institution for sending forth over the land well-trained men to preach the Gospel of Christ, and nourish the faith and hope of the children of God. The blessedness of giving, in this case, is very great, because it is connected with such wide-spread and permanent results in the highest department of Christian labour.

This time of deepening interest in our college is surely, also, a time in which we may expect to meet with many, eagerly desiring to offer themselves for the service