

Messenger and Visitor

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GIVE THE MINISTER YOUR SYMPATHY.

The desire for sympathy and appreciation is not an evidence of weakness. Every good man desires the sympathy of his fellowmen and that the assurance that the work which he is doing is not without value in their sight. Even the saviour-keeper, with his seared conscience and blunted sensibilities, is not indifferent to the fact that the better part of the community regards his business as a curse to society. And on the other hand, every man who is following an honest calling, however humble, is encouraged and helped by the assurance that his work is recognized as having a value to the community and that his neighbors appreciate his honest purpose to do his work faithfully and well.

To those who occupy positions of trust and whose work is directly related to public interests the good-will and appreciation of those served should be of special interest. Under our party system of government it must be discouraging for public men to know that however faithfully they may strive to do their duty, there is always a large proportion of the public who will seek to minimize their services and to place the most unfavorable construction possible upon their acts. And the fact that there is always a large class which will uphold and applaud them, whether they do well or ill, does not afford an incentive to honest service. If our public men could know that their efforts to serve the public would be regarded on all sides with intelligent appreciation and that their acts would be condemned when, and only when, the facts justified condemnation, it could not but have its effect upon the ideals of public men and the character of the service which the country secures from its public servants. The narrow partisanship of our political life, that refuses to see anything but good in a political friend or anything but evil in a political opponent, keeps many of our best men out of public life, and upon those who enter it the effect is far from wholesome.

There is no man who needs and who deserves sympathy and honest appreciation in his work more than the Christian minister. Without giving the ministers credit for more than facts will justify, it may fairly be claimed that men do not enter the ministry out of sordid selfish motives. They are in the ministry for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the welfare of humanity. The interests which centre in the gospel of Christ and its message to mankind so far transcends in their minds all worldly interests that they have felt impelled to give themselves to the work of the Christian ministry. They are not perfect or sufficient to themselves. Like other men, they have their weaknesses and limitations. Sometimes they are strong and full of confidence in their God. But even Elijah who in the name of the Lord could contend single-handed against all the prophets of Baal had his times of deep despondency, when he was ready to believe that all his battling in the cause of Jehovah had been in vain. The men and women who occupy the pews and who hear the minister at times speaking in so confident and triumphant tones come to feel perhaps that his spiritual life is so vigorous, his faith so strong, that he needs no help which they can give. But the modern prophet has his hours of despondency when it seems as if Baal and not Jehovah were victor. This man of flesh and blood needs sympathy. He needs a word of appreciation. He needs to be assured that he is not alone in the fight, that there are other knees than his own which have not bowed to Baal, that there are other hearts hoping and praying for the day of the Lord. It is quite true of course that the minister's great source of help is divine, not human, and that he who looks to men only for help and inspiration will never be a strong and persuasive preacher of God's truth. But men can greatly help each other. Even Jesus was far from indifferent to human sympathy. The humblest member in the church can by words and act of appreciation and sympathy bring needed help to the pastor. There is no minister who has not been helped more or less by Christian sympathy. On the other hand there is perhaps no minister whose work

has been so effective as it might have been had there been on the part of the members of the church the full measure of that sympathetic co-operation which they might have given. And then, how many ministers have been starved out of the churches which they were seeking to serve—starved out sometimes literally, and sometimes by the withholding of that kindly appreciation and sympathy for lack of which the minister's heart dies within him. Is your pastor growing discouraged? Have you been starving him? Try how it will work to give him a cheer. Show your appreciation for what he has done; tell him the good things you can truthfully say about him; put your shoulders under some of his burdens; make him feel the warmth of your Christian sympathy, and above all pray for him, and expect your prayers to be answered. Far better do that than starve the minister out.

JESUS AND THE SABBATH.

The Bible lesson which we study this week in connection with the International series brings out strongly the different attitudes of Jesus and his Pharisee critics toward the Sabbath. The Jewish rabbis had interpreted the law of the Sabbath with such microscopic literalism that an institution, ordained in wisdom and benevolence for the well-being of men, had been so hedged around with vexatious prohibitions as to make it almost a tyranny. The Pharisees, accordingly, in harmony with the rabbinical interpretations, construed the act of the disciples in plucking the ears of grain to appease their hunger as they passed through the grain fields on the Sabbath day, as a breach of the Sabbath law, and made it a ground of querulous complaints against Jesus himself. In his reply to them Jesus first shows that a more intelligent study of the Old Testament would have taught these censorious critics that the Sabbath law was not intended to be applied in this casuistron fashion. Divine institutions were not ordained as a display of tyrannical power, but as an expression of wise and benevolent purpose. If human necessity demanded it, the regulations of the temple service might be dispensed without sin. Had not these learned Pharisees read of the act of David and those who were with him, when, in the extremity of hunger, they ate the shew bread which according to the letter of the law might be eaten only by the priests? Here a law of the temple was set aside in the presence of a human necessity. And again, the requirements of worship made it necessary that the priests in the temple should perform acts which, according to the rabbinical interpretation, constituted a profanation of the Sabbath. The reply of Jesus to the Pharisees evidently condemns a minute and unreasoning interpretation of the Sabbath law or of any ritualistic ordinance of the Old Testament. The interpreter should endeavor to apprehend the divine purpose in its largeness and not so to interpret a benevolent ordinance of God as to make it an instrument of tyranny and cruelty. Fundamental to all was the divine principle of mercy. It is mercy, not sacrifice, which God desires. Not ritualistic observances, but good deeds done in the spirit of love and mercy are the things which are acceptable in His sight. If the Pharisees had understood this they would not have been so quick to condemn these hungry men because they had plucked a few ears of wheat to appease their hunger on the Sabbath day. If they had really understood the spirit of the Scriptures which they assumed to interpret for others, they would have found very much in their own lives far more worthy of condemnation.

The second incident of the lesson may or may not have been connected chronologically with what precedes. The logical connection is certainly very obvious. Here our Lord is seen putting into practice the principle that acts of mercy are far more than ritualistic observances and distinctly formulating the principle that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. There was indeed nothing in connection with this mode of healing of which the enemies of Jesus could lay hold. It certainly could not by any kind of casuistry be contended that for a man to stretch forth his hand on the Sabbath was unlawful, and yet probably the Pharisees, if they were present, would regard this miracle of mercy a breach of the Sabbath, just as they regarded the act of the disciples in satisfying their natural craving for food. Our Lord's words indicate that some were present who would probably be disposed to regard this act of healing as unlawful on the Sabbath day, and he shows the absurdity of such an attitude of mind in view of the fact that probably any man among them if he had a sheep fallen into a pit would be led by his interest in his property and by his sympathy for the dumb creature to lift it out on the Sabbath day. If the labor necessary to the performance of an act of mercy toward a sheep was justifiable on the Sabbath, there surely could be no law against this act of healing. Accordingly the principle is declared that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day.

In respect to the Sabbath, as in other matters, the teaching of Jesus is with authority. He interprets the Scriptures from his own standpoint without reference to rabbinical decisions. And he declares that the Son of man is lord also of the Sabbath. In reference to the significance of the title of the Son of man in this connection Dr. Alexander MacLaren says: "The attempt to take dignity and

authority out of the title "Son of man" is shipwrecked on the words; for whatever more that title may imply, it is used here as implying freedom to mold and remold a divine institution. No doubt it does imply true humanity, but that alone would not give lordship over anything that God had appointed. It implies a unique humanity in which somehow all human nature is gathered up, and corresponds perfectly to the divine ideal of manhood. And such uniqueness and perfection of representative humanity standing in some relation to every single man of the race, can only be realized in one who is divine as well as human. Therefore he has power over the Sabbath as over all things, and is lord of the Sabbath, and of us, and of all men."

Editorial Notes.

We are generally too much inclined to do only the things which are easy to do, to follow the well-beaten paths, to hug the shores. We dread the things that will make large demands on our courage and endurance. But it is not merely by doing easy things and walking in the deep-worn ruts of custom that the best that is in men is developed and they made strong for distinguished service. Perhaps if we look back over the years we shall perceive that the things which most severely tried our souls have done most for us. Let us seek to have patience and accept bravely the appointments of Providence.

The MESSENGER AND VISITOR had a pleasant call last week from President Trotter who is now engaged in promoting the Second Forward Movement Fund. For the present only those are being approached in the interest of the Fund from whom it is hoped that subscriptions of five hundred dollars and upwards may be obtained. We are sure that Dr. Trotter will not intentionally pass by anyone who would like to have their names entered in this honorable list, and if peradventure there should have been inadvertent omissions we are sure that any advances on the part of those thus slighted will not be frowned upon by the President. Dr. Trotter is at all times a most approachable person, and never more so than when one comes with a contribution for the College. The results of the canvass thus far, we are glad to learn, are on the whole encouraging. Something more than two-thirds of the \$60,000 expected to be secured in large subscriptions has now been subscribed. Besides this a number of persons have intimated their intention of becoming subscribers to the Fund, but are not just at present prepared to name the amounts of their subscriptions. Accordingly it is not possible at present to report results definitely. But Dr. Trotter is assured that the \$60,000 expected in large subscriptions will be fully subscribed.

Alluding to war in the Far East and to the reverses which Russia has suffered in the first stages of the conflict, the *Montreal Witness* very justly says: "Our sympathies are naturally with her [Japan] as our ally and as the weaker and more liberal and progressive country. All the more reason is there for taking a generous view of Russia's side of the question. Especially would we reprobate jibing at Russia in the day of her reverses, as some merry-andrews of the press are doing. Ribaldry is out of place at any time in the presence of a national calamity, and so far as we are concerned, it is so recently that we were suffering defeats, and being mocked at and maligned by a whole continent, that we should have learned not to jibe at another power in her dark hour. According to some critics Russia is already dead and done for because she has lost a boat or two. Great Britain suffered reverses at half a dozen places in the first part of the South African war, and according to the Germans especially, we were already wiped off the map. However, we continue to be in fair health, and we give 'the bear that walks like a man' credit for a little endurance and ability to take a good deal of punishment before lying down."

Hon. David Wark who on the 19th of the present month will have completed a hundred years of life, has been a member of the Senate of Canada ever since the establishment of confederation. But the period of his public services dates far back of that. Mr. Wark is probably the oldest man now living in the British Empire—perhaps in the world—who is able to take an active part in public affairs. His mind is said still to be vigorous and his physical health good, and he expects to attend the approaching session of the Senate as he has been doing regularly since 1867. Senator Wark has so lived and so employed his talents as to win the general and high respect of his fellow citizens, in regard both to his private life and his public services. It is proposed to make the one hundredth anniversary of his birth the occasion for presenting addresses and for other demonstrations which shall fittingly testify to the great respect in which Senator Wark is held by his fellow citizens of Fredericton and by others to whom his personal worth and the value of his public services are known.

Speaking of old age and long continued service. It may be noted that it is reported of Rev. William Howe, D. D., that, "at the age of ninety-seven, he goes into Boston with great freedom, getting on and off the electric cars, going up and down elevators, climbing stairs, attending