

The Pastor's Qualifications.

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Written for the Review

In 1 Timothy iii, there is a catalogue of most of the pastor's requirements. Some of these are general and apply to all christians, but others are special. He must be "blameless." That is the basis of all that follows. His conjugal relations must be free from all charge of irregularity: "the husband of one wife"; neither celibate nor polygamist, an example of chastity. "Vigilant"; wide awake to everything that concerns his office, keeping his eyes upon the flock and upon the wolf that seeks to kill and destroy. "Sober"; prudent, judicious, of a wise heart, under self-control, one who makes haste slowly. "Of good behavior"; neither clownish nor finical, neither gloomy nor sullen, neither arrogant nor sycophantic, but grave, courteous a pattern of good manners, a gentleman without affectation. "Given to hospitality"; disposed to acts of kindness, a friend of the poor and an entertainer of strangers in distress. "Apt to teach"; possessing the gift of tact in imparting instruction, ready to seize every opportunity for preaching Christ to individuals as well as to the great congregation. "Not given to wine"; not fond of his glass, nor a patron of convivial parties, willing to abstain from what is innocent and lawful for example's sake. "No striker"; not resentful nor quick to retaliate. "Not soon angry"; not going off like a rocket, nor exploding like a mine at the first spark, rather enduring. "Not greedy of filthy lucre"; not making merchandise of the gospel nor reaching after sordid gain though he live by the gospel. "But patient"; not overbearing, but gentle, modest, unassuming. "Not a brawler"; no wrangler, not given to fiery controversy, but with quiet earnestness opposing the truth to error. "Not covetous"; virtually repeated, as if the Apostle felt that a mercenary spirit would be utterly fatal to the pastor's work. "One that ruleth well his own house"; remembering that a well ordered family is a type of church order and that family religion is essential to church prosperity. "Not a novice"; not a man in years with the head and experience of a child, not an intellectual social and ecclesiastical blunderer, but a man showing manliness worthy of his high vocation. "Must have a good report"; must have a reputation for integrity, honesty, philanthropy, wisdom, piety and public spirit.

A Blessing in Disguise.

Such blessings are apt to come to us wearing grave and almost frowning faces, and we meet them with averted eyes and chilly hand clasps. It is because we do not know how precious they are and with what tender and fragrant sweetness they are fraught that we turn away from them, finding later how divine was their ministry and how beautiful their meaning. Once and again during our pilgrimage these messengers cross our path, and we seldom recognize them until they have done their errands and gone away—those errands sometimes half frustrated by our perverse and blind reception, or conception, of what God intended by this or that special providential dealing.

You are, for instance, full of plans for a certain period of time and exceedingly busy, so busy that you are sure you can not spare a moment for a single interruption. Nor, by the utmost effort, can you sandwich in another engagement. Every waking moment is occupied, and the thronging duties and anxieties of the day invade the night so that your sleep is broken and disturbed. Now, at precisely the most inconvenient hour of your life, as it seems to your thought, there comes the intrusion of a fit of illness. You resent the pain, the nervous weariness, the time you must spend and waste in bed, and you beg the physician to give you a tonic which will do its work quickly and efficaciously, and set you again on your feet. Very likely you say, in that incipient stage of illness which is simply solicitous and irritating: "I have no time to be ill, doctor. I must have my hands free for my work." The doctor smiles and drops a soothing word. His tones are encouraging, and you do not notice that he makes you no pledges, and that he is chary of

promises. You resign yourself to wait until time and rest and remedies shall have had their beneficial influence upon you, and then, you hardly know how it happens, all thought of the neglected tasks drifts away from you, and you lie still and are tranquil, and others take up your duties and carry out your plans, and the world goes on.

The world would go on if you were taken out of it, for, though the workers drop out of the ranks, the work itself never stops. No one of us is *essential* in any place, in any relation, and it is well for us occasionally to enter into a realization of this fact, which, commonplace as it is in the utterance, is still far from being fully accepted by our understanding.

Gradually health returns and with it a new poise, a new freshness, a new youthfulness of feeling. The first walk, the first drive after a short illness, how eventful they appear and how delightful! We did not remember that the view around the familiar turn in the road was so entrancing; we are surprised at the opulence of the roses in our neighbor's garden; the young girls in the village never looked so charming before, and we wonder if it is that the quaint picturesque costumes just now in vogue are more becoming than any dress ever worn by youthful girlhood before. What is the secret?

Presently we discover that we are ourselves *rested*. Those days in bed were doing for us what nothing else could have done; they were giving to every organ of the body and to every faculty of the soul a chance to stop the exertion which was wearing the machinery out. We have been, so to speak, in the dry dock for repairs, and the illness we girded at was a blessing in disguise.

Could we but see it, there are other and familiar experiences which bear the same character. The stupid and clumsy maid, who taxes your patience and ingenuity to make up for her blunders and to remedy her accidents, is developing you in sweetness, gentleness, and tact. The obdurate Sunday-school scholar, who is wilful and headstrong and apparently incapable of attending to lessons with any heedful interest, is bringing out in you those qualities of energy, of magnetism, of versatility, which will enable you hereafter to control classes of such boys and influence them for their unending advantage. A little thought will show to many of us how full of good and rich in abiding helpfulness are our blessings in disguise.—MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Time for Bible Reading.

While travelling in Illinois recently the writer noticed the brakeman on the train after each station was passed enter the car, take a back seat, and read his pocket Bible. The occurrence impressed him with the fact that we can all find time to read the bible daily if we only want to. The *National Presbyterian* says:—

A class of persons who profess to love the Bible excuse their neglect of it by saying they have no time for Bible reading. But is there any person in this land who cannot command the time to read a chapter from the scriptures every day? It may be doubted whether there is such a person. There are many who cannot do this and at the same time do all they desire to do in other directions. But that is not a reason for neglecting the Bible. Our Bible reading should be one of the first duties of every day. A good rule is to read nothing else until we have read a portion of the Scripture. If we adopt this rule, and rigidly adhere to it, we shall never lack the time to read at least a few verses from the Bible. This can be done at home, and it can be done on a journey. The man of the world can read his newspaper on the cars; if we are as much interested in the Bible as he is in the daily news we shall be able to read a chapter on a railroad train. And if it is always in mind, we shall find no day too short to read a lesson from the Scriptures.

Thou art gradually molding us in thine own image; and ere long the molding season will pass away, and we shall come forth from the shop and from the furnace burnished and brightened, and shall appear in Zion and before God,