

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL MESSAGE.

Our Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Fund has now been fairly launched, but before the harvest is reaped there must be unflagging zeal and persistent effort. No difficulty should discourage and no opportunity should be lost.

This movement began with the inspiration given to a Methodist layman, Mr. Perks, was caught up by the Methodist people of England; and has found a glorious response on this side of the Atlantic and in our own fair Dominion. Canadian Methodism has already crossed the half million dollar line, and British Columbian Methodists are doing their full share.

All along the ministry, as it ought to be, has been in the van of this great movement. Halting thus for a moment to survey the way by which we have come, we see that the people are with us, because, best of all, God is with us. This is our joy and rejoicing, but there is no room for self-congratulation as if we had reached the goal. The hardest part of the work now lies before us, hence there should be rebuffed rather than relaxed effort.

Connexional funds during this year of special effort should be carefully guarded. Every circuit should, if at all possible, bring them up at least to the standard of last year, in order that it may truly be said that the Twentieth Century Thanksgiving Fund has been raised as a praise offering in addition to the other funds and is in no sense a transfer of money from one fund to another.

A great spiritual revival is the supreme desire and need of the Church. However much we may desire other and temporal blessings, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people transcends in importance all else beside. As pastors let us pray and labor and live for this. Souls revived and souls saved must be the paramount watchword of the hour, if He is to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and we are to enter into the joy of our Lord. At this point, then, let us honor God more, if more we can, and a great revival of the Spirit of God in the hearts of men will be followed, nay, accompanied by a great revival of God's work in the lives of men. The tithes will be brought into the storehouse, God will be proved and He will pour out such a blessing upon us that there will not be room to contain it.

To this end, then, let us organize all the forces at our command; let us assume that our business men in the Quarterly Official and other boards and committees are not simply men of business but men of God and of prayer, so that their meetings be not only a means of business but also a means of grace. Their prototype was the proto-martyr Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Let every Sunday school superintendent and Epworth League president as well as the pastor, realize the responsibility for souls, so that there may follow a glorious ingathering of our young people and of our children into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

Let us all so empty ourselves of self as to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, as we face the work of the future, who

shall say us nay? If God be for us who can be against us? Yea, we can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us.

The Pastor's Sick Call.

It is said that we are living in a materialistic age, half the world is measured in ounces avertupoise, and the other half in dollars and cents. The baker, tailor and doctor are appreciated for their tangible services rendered, their dispensation of loaves, coats and pills to the hungry, shabby and the sick, but the preacher, after his Sunday's duties have been discharged, what of his household ministrations, his pastoral visitations, and his "sick calls?" Are these but the conforming to time-honored custom, or in these services is there a distinct contribution to the welfare of humanity, any positive advantage derived by the parishioner?

The relation of the true clergyman to his charge should be that of instructor, adviser and friend. His teachings should be thoughtfully considered and his advice, though possibly unsolicited, should be accepted in the spirit that gave it utterance, while his sympathy in seasons of affliction has become proverbial. It is in the latter capacity that I would endeavor to emphasize the pastor's work. We have thought of the clergyman in the pulpit, we have discussed him in such capacity, often omitting the consideration of a part of his activities none the less important. We have sat in the pew and enjoyed the public service, we have not all experienced the heat of fever and the pains of inflammation, nor have been confined to our beds for many weeks or months; but some of us know well the meaning of this by sad experience, and some of us also know that the brightest hours of that long and weary period were those illumined by the bright and cheerful face, and comforted by the appropriate words of the pastor. We felt we knew, and as we considered we wondered that a strange calm so often followed the retreating form of him whose cloude perhaps under other conditions failed to move us. Not that we soothed the storm-tossed frame by the refinements of superstition, but simply the heartfelt sympathy of a nature that we believed to be true and noble in self-sacrificing endeavor for the benefit of others, with a faith firm in the eternal.

The attending physician comes and goes we appreciate his faithfulness, we have confidence in his skill, the pains are lessened; the fever is controlled, and we rest assured that all that science can do is being done; but there are forces inherent in humanity conditioned by purity and nobility and available through sympathy that fail to be estimated by our crude system of weights and measures.

In our feeble efforts to explain phenomena we not infrequently exhaust the resources of recognized law and are compelled either to repudiate processes and results that are patent to even the superficial observer or to admit the existence of natural forces and laws yet beyond the reach of scientific tabulation. Above the physical laws that we know and the physical forces that we can measure there exists a different classification of

activity, the laws of which we do not know and the forces of which science has not measured. Life is the mystery of mysteries, definitions fail to define it and explanations fail to explain it.

These responses to immaterial stimuli these subjective conditions of satisfaction, peace and rest, are brought about through the agency of the sympathetic nervous system, a system of nerve fibres and centres not under the control of the will, yet the system which directs all the important organic functions. The processes of respiration, circulation and digestion are presided over by this monitor. The flushing of the eye in anger, the blanching of the face under fright, the blush of shame, the quickened pulse of hope and expectancy, and the cessation of digestion through fear, and many other alterations of function of every day experience are the result of the complex workings of this system which as yet well-nigh baffles investigation. This system, which never sleeps, is always on the alert and exercises a most important influence upon the whole organism. If a word can cause the face to glow with joy, flush with anger, pale with fear or blush with shame, so can a word alter the action of parts not so exposed and cause congestions of internal parts with disturbance of natural action.

Herein is the secret power of hope, sympathy, comforting sentiments, pleasant thoughts, "abiding peace," etc., all capable of producing a decided change in the condition of the body as actual, yet less easily demonstrated, as that frequently produced by the administration of medicines, and herein lies the possibility of the application of yet uncomputed forces.

It is not the province of the pastor to relieve a congested liver, but to point out the remedy for the consciousness of the accumulated burden of laws transgressed, which depresses the vital forces and retards, if not conflicts with, the physician's efforts towards physical recovery. It is his to administer the appropriate remedy to the upbuilding of the moral wrecks, and to co-operate with the physician in his effort to restore the physical; and these moral forces, psychic influences and sympathetic chords have not only their comforting, hope-giving function, but through that function are powerful therapeutic agencies, giving life and vigor to the invalid. There is a hope cure for the despondent, a good cheer cure for the melancholic, a joy cure for the sorrowful, and a faith cure for the discouraged, all representing and conveying to the invalid a life imparting influence of whose action upon the physical system we yet know but little. In view of this physical aspect of the pastors' "spiritual" ministrations there is room for development beyond our present experiences and expectations; it gives to the pastor an enlarged view of his oft-times depreciated week-day services.

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Of all the qualities we assign to the Author and Director of Nature, by far the most enviable is to be able to wipe away all tears from all eyes."—Robert Burns.