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THE MINISTRY FOR THE TIMES.

BY A LAYMAN.

There is a general complaint that the members of the Churches and the members of the Congregations are not as effective in holding up the hands of the ministry as they should be. The welfare of the Church ought to be as dear to the heart of the layman as to the minister. The layman should desire success—should pray for success—should work for success.

But the writer does not propose to lecture the laymen at present ; his word is to the ministry, and it is a word in kindness, in love. He knows how sorely they are tried—how difficult their position at the present day.

The ministers, with very rare exceptions, desire true success—that is, the conversion of men—the building up of the church on a substantial basis—the union of the church with the minister in true Christian effort and work. The writer believes that this is the desire of every minister in connection with the Congregational churches of this Dominion.

Nearly all our ministers are educated men—active men—earnest men. And yet an article in the *Canadian Independent* for August states that the churches when vacant are looking for men of *vim* and energy. As a layman, I would say this is a fact. I do not think they are looking for great men, for perfect men, for men physically strong; but for *live* men, who can discern the signs of the times, and watch every opportunity that the Master throws in their pathways.

If the people came in a prayerful spirit, determined to get lessons of instruction, they would receive the blessing. But there are so many requiring to be aroused, that the manner of presenting the truth should be considered by the wise pastor as much as the truth to be presented.

The world is asking how it is, and why it is, that persons comparatively uncultured can hold the attention of men. They are filled with the Holy Ghost and with power, some say, but that is the privilege of every servant of God whom He has called to the work of the ministry, if that servant of God puts himself in the position to receive the baptism that will be bestowed upon him from on high. God has raised them up for a special purpose at this time, says another. True ; but God has ordained that the ordinary preaching of the Gospel shall be one of the great agencies in the salvation of men, and He will baptise His own servants with the Holy Spirit if they wrestle mightily with Him until they prevail.

If the evangelists, says a third, had the same congregations to address fifty-two Sundays in the year, the interest would slacken. True, no doubt, every word. Still, there must be something in the manner of presenting the truth that acts upon men. They gave themselves up to fasting and prayer for a time, says another, and when the Spirit descended upon them in power, they went forth to the work.