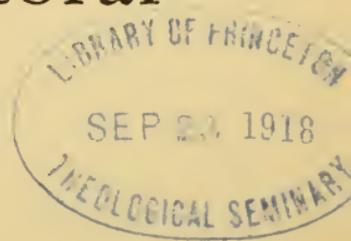


# Lectures in Pastoral Theology



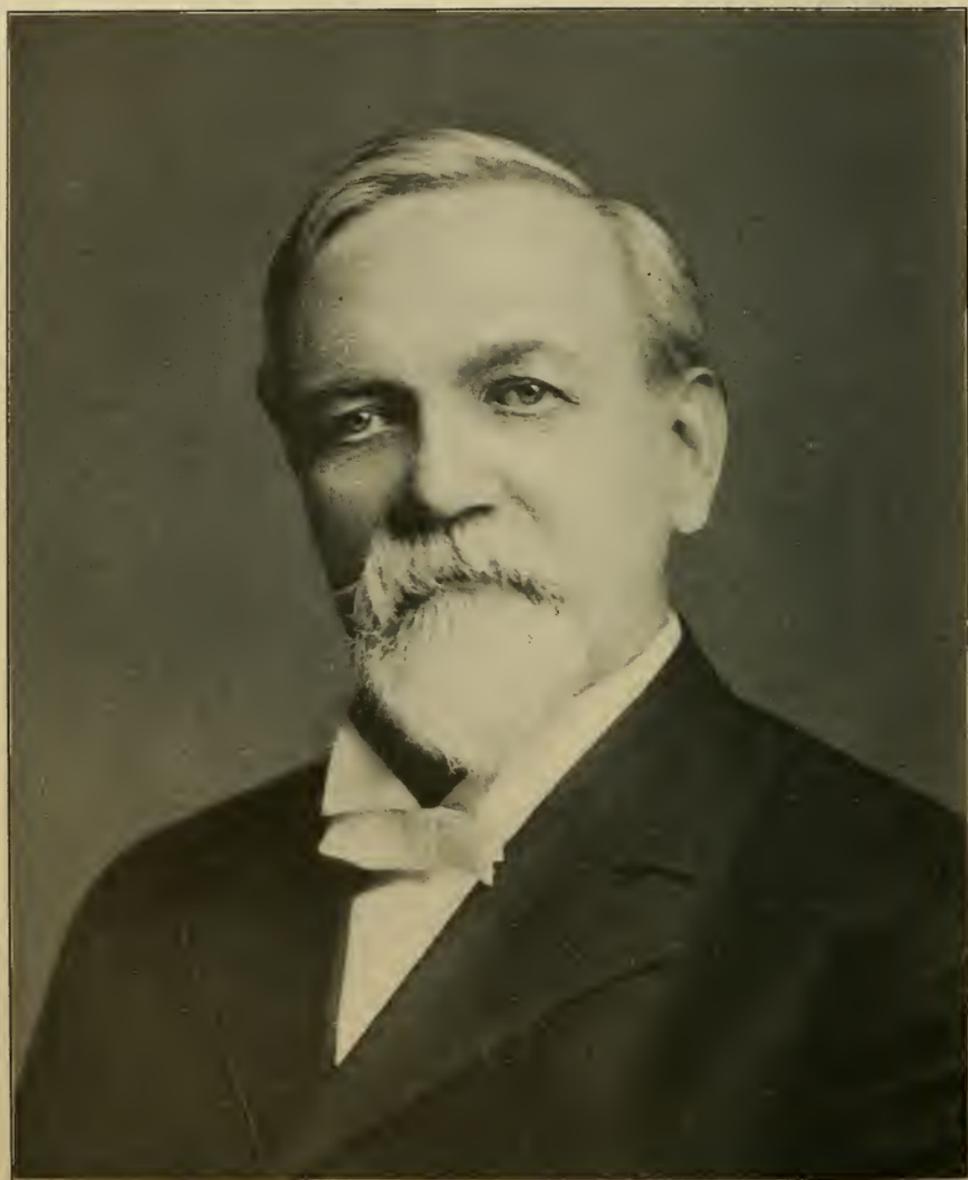
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THIS VOLUME—THOUGH NOT WRITTEN FOR  
PUBLICATION—MAY FITTINGLY BE  
DEDICATED, AS WERE THE  
INTERESTS OF THE  
AUTHOR,

**To His Classes**

## FOREWORD

*These lectures are not so much the Theory of the Pastorate as the record of a pastor. They are born less of the study and the library than of the fields of life and labor. Perhaps if any one man was the inspiration of the author's life, and any one spot on earth may be pointed to as the field in which his convictions took root and from which his life unfolded—that one man was William Slater; and the scene, the countryside about the old church at Miller's Run.*

*In offering this first series of lectures to the church it is with the thought of the many who have said: "It is as a pastor that we shall remember your father most of all." Even his students felt that he came to his classes in a pastoral attitude of mind. This feeling, which was common among his friends, has made it seem particularly happy that these lectures on Pastoral Theology should be the part of his work most easily preserved.*

*To some the memory of the man will be so real that his words will bring to them constantly the scenes of his ministry. There are those still living—in North Jackson and in Beaver Falls, perhaps in other places over the church—who will read into such lectures as that on the Communion Service far more than the words say. Even strangers will*

## FOREWORD

*understand that these counsels come from a heart that is living and loving, rather than from a mind that is merely analyzing.*

*However, this volume is not exactly a memorial of what he was. It is rather his own conception of what he hoped to be. It is the heavenly vision that continually called him; and to which, as God in His abundant grace helped him, he was obedient.*

MCLEOD GEORGE.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. *Definition.* "Pastoral Theology is that department of study whose object is to assist in applying the truths of the gospel to the hearts and lives of men.

"It is 'Theology' because it has chiefly to do with the things of God and His Word.

"It is 'Pastoral' because it treats of these divine things in that aspect of them which pertains to the pastor."—Murphy.

2. *Scope.* Pastoral Theology includes:

- (1) The exhibition of what constitutes a true ministerial character and deportment.
- (2) The discussion of principles which should determine the minister's choice of a field of labor.

Shall he be a missionary? If so in what field, Home or Foreign? Shall he be a Pastor? If so, in what congregation; large or small, city or country? Shall he be a leader of public opinion? If so, shall he seek the Platform or the Press, or the Pulpit, or the Professor's Chair?

- (3) It includes a discussion of the duties of the pastor in all pastoral relations.

The pastor in his study, in the pulpit, in the administration of sacraments—the pastor in his relation to the activities of the church—the prayer-meeting, the Sabbath School, the young peoples' societies, the work of evangelization and in revivals.

The pastor in his relation to the social life of the people—pastoral visitation, visitation of the sick, mar-

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PART I  
CHARACTER OF THE PASTOR  
AND  
HIS CALLS TO SERVICE

## LECTURE I

THE first qualification for the pastoral office is piety. "Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Until this question can be answered in the affirmative there is no commission, "Feed my sheep," or "Feed my lambs." I have therefore chosen as the theme for the opening lecture of the course in Pastoral Theology—

### PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD

#### I

#### *The Pastor Should Be a Saved Man.*

1. Because preaching the gospel to others will not save him.

Matt, 7:22-23. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

These are very solemn words from the lips of our Lord. With such a warning before him it is not strange the apostle should say—"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27.)

To his son Timothy he writes—"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16.)

This admonition implies that without this self-

watch the minister may even lose his own soul as well as the souls of his hearers.

Richard Baxter in "The Reformed Pastor" says: "Can any reasonable man imagine that God should save men for offering salvation to others while they refused it themselves? And for telling others truths which they neglected and abused? Many a tailor goes in rags that maketh costly clothes for others; and many a cook scarcely satisfies his hunger when he hath dressed for others the most costly dishes.

"Believe it, brethren, God never saved any man for being a preacher, but because he was a justified, sanctified man, and consequently faithful in his master's work."

Again he says—"Believe it, brethren, God is no respecter of persons; he saveth not men for their coats or callings. A holy calling will not save an unholy man."

2. Because the exercise of the pastoral office tends to harden an unconverted man.

The reason of this is—

- (1) That he is living in constant disobedience to known duty.

F. W. Robertson, preaching from the words—"Pilate saith unto him, what is truth?" and discussing "The Causes of Pilate's Skepticism," says: "Now Pilate was false to his conscience. His conviction was that Jesus was innocent. It was not a matter of speculation or probability at all, nor a matter in which fresh evidence was even expected, but a case sifted and examined thoroughly. The Pharisees were persecuting a guiltless man. His claims to royalty are not the civil crime which they would make out. Every charge has fallen to the ground. The clear mind of the Roman Procurator saw that as in sunlight, and he did not try to invalidate that judicial conviction. He tried to get rid of the clear duty which resulted from

it. Now it is a habit such as this which creates the temper of skepticism."

Again he says: "There is boundless danger in all inquiry which is merely curious. When a man brings a clear and practiced intellect to try questions, by the answer to which he does not mean to rule his conduct, let him not marvel if he feels as life goes on, a sense of desolation, existence a burden, and all uncertain. It is the law of his human nature which binds him—for truth is for the heart rather than for the intellect. If it is not *done* it becomes unreal, as gloomily unreal and as dreamily impalpable as it was to Pilate."

This sad picture may well arrest the attention of the unconverted pastor. His constant inquiry after divine truth with no purpose in his heart to bring his life into harmony with the truth which he already knows, or which he may discover, in the very nature of the case causes that truth to become to him the "Savor of death unto death."

(2) That his life is one continued act of hypocrisy.

An unconverted man urging his fellow-men to repent of their sins, while he himself remains impenitent; enforcing the claims of Jesus to the love of his people, while in his heart is no love for him; calling Christians to lead a holy life, while he is devoid of any desire for holiness; such a man is a hypocrite and a sham. Living such a life of duplicity, he sinks lower and lower in the depths of infamy.

(3) That he is dealing with the most sacred mysteries of religion, yet remaining untouched by their power.

It would be difficult to conceive a more certain pathway to destruction than this presents. To preach as the ambassador of heaven while one is in league with hell; to administer holy sacraments with an unsanctified heart; to become familiar with the dying hour, and the

funeral service, as every one must who fills the pastoral office; to pose as God's minister in life's crises, if it does not soften the heart, must fearfully sear the conscience.

If, then, one should take upon himself this sacred calling, while he is yet uncalled of God, and should deal with the sacred mysteries of our holy religion with heart untouched by the saving grace of God, every passing year of his ministry lessens his capacity for salvation until that which was at first difficult becomes at last impossible.

3. Because an unsaved minister is disqualified for saving others.

Ps. 50:16. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" It is not affirmed that an unsaved man may not be used of God for saving others, but that he is not "a vessel to honor sanctified and meet for the Master's use."

The consecration necessary to a successful ministry is twofold: first, the consecration of character; second, consecration to service. The first is bringing the gift to the altar; the second is offering it up to God. And the consecration to holiness must precede the consecration to service.

Spurgeon in his "Lectures to My Students" says: "A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics; a dumb man elevated to the chair of music. He is a mole professing to educate eaglets; a limpet elected to preside over angels. He is a guide to travelers along a road which he has never trodden; to navigate a vessel along a coast of which he knows none of the land-marks."

4. Because an unregenerate pastor is most injurious to the souls of men.

It is not enough to say that he is disqualified for saving men. More than that: he is likely to become a

powerful agent for their destruction. It has been well said that, of all the causes which create infidelity, ungodly ministers must be ranked among the first.

Spurgeon says: "A Christless minister, an unconverted choir, and a proud, aristocratic congregation,—there is no greater instrument for damnation than this."

This is a fearful indictment, and properly enough the Christless minister stands at the head of the list.

5. Because an awful doom awaits the lost minister.

If there are degrees in glory, there are also degrees in perdition. And if "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, forever and ever," then they who have profaned the pastoral office to beguile souls to hell, surely to them shall be reserved the "blackness of darkness forever."

Pollok in his "Course of Time" describes the scenes of the judgment and the fearful terrors of the wicked. The man of fame, the man of pleasure, the bigot, the skeptic, the duelist, the suicide, the slanderer, the hypocrite, the judge who took a bribe, and last of all the unfaithful minister.

"Among the accused who sought a hiding place  
 In vain, from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,  
 And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb,  
 Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile,  
 Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt  
 The fellest gnawing of th' undying worm.  
 And so he might, for he had on his hands  
 The blood of souls that would not wipe away.  
 . . . Ah me! What cursing then  
 Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls  
 That charged him with their murder, as he stood  
 With eyes of all the unredeemed, most sad  
 Waiting the coming of the Son of Man."

Candidates for the pastoral office, I beseech you "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." Let your daily prayer be "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fel-

lowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death."

## II

*The Pastor Should Cultivate the Spirit of Devotion.*

This implies—

1. That he should have a *place* of meeting with God.

Matt. 6:6. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet." Every pastor should have a place for prayer—a secret closet, literally. It helps devotion. The very place becomes hallowed by its associations. I could not read without emotion the pathetic words of Dr. Cuyler, referring to the sacred associations of the pastor's study in Lafayette Avenue Church:

"Ah, there are many sharp pangs for me," he says. "None will be sharper than the hour that bids farewell to yonder blessed and beloved study. For twenty-eight years it has been my daily home, one of the dearest spots this side of heaven. . . . That hallowed study has been to me a Bacha of tears, and sometimes a Hermon when the vision was of no man save Jesus only."

Yes, my fellow-students, have, among the appointments of your pastoral life either in your home or in your church study, an inner chamber, a sanctum sanctorum, where you will hold daily converse with God.

2. That he should set apart a *time* for personal devotion.

You will be surprised to find how easy it is for the busy pastor to neglect his own soul. He often has to say with regret, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept."

3. That he should attend to the devotional study of the Divine Word.

Intellectual acquaintance with God comes through

the diligent study of the Bible. Experimental acquaintance with God comes through the study of the Bible in its application to ourselves. Now the tendency of ministers is to study God's word *professionally* in its application to others. This may instruct the head, but it will not sanctify the heart.

4. That he should set apart special seasons for communion with God.

There are times in the lives of most ministers when the soul seems to falter. The heart becomes discouraged. Prayer is restrained. The soul faints, and must needs be refreshed. When His disciples were thus over-worn and weary Jesus said to them, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." (Mark 6:31.)

Our senior missionary to China when about to go out, after tossing about for weeks from place to place, holding farewell meetings and making preparation for the journey, said to me: "Oh, how I do long to get where I can be quiet and have a little time with my Bible." I think such times will come to every faithful pastor when he will feel that his spiritual resources are exhausted. Then he must refresh himself at the fountain of life.

### III

#### *The Pastor Should Aim to be an Eminent Christian.*

Acquaintance with God implies that we have fellowship with Him in our daily walk. Enoch was acquainted with God because he "walked with God." Every minister might adopt the famous resolution of President Edwards, viz., "On the supposition that there is but one eminent saint living in the world at one time, resolved that I will so live that I shall be the one living in my time."

The pastor should be an eminent Christian—

1. Because only thus is he qualified to be a true messenger of God.

Bishop Brooks defines preaching as consisting of two elements, viz., Truth and Personality. If preaching consisted of truth alone God might have given the gospel to the world without a living ministry. The very purpose for which the gospel is committed to men is that the embodiment of the gospel in the life of the minister may increase its power as spoken by his lips.

John the Baptist was "a burning and a shining light." He was a shining light because he was a burning light. It is related that a blind man being asked why he always carried a lantern when he went out at night, answered—"I carry the light so that others who have eyes may see where I am and not stumble over me." If ministers were more careful to let their light shine, they would at least not be stumbling blocks to other people.

2. Because only thus can he be a worthy example to the flock.

"Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ." This was Paul's conception of what a minister should be to his people. So he wrote to youthful Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. 4:12.)

The pastor sets the standard for the religious life of his people. This is a grave responsibility. If he goes wrong it is not for himself alone. He is a shepherd, and the sheep follow him.

3. Only thus will he be secure from the tempter.

Gal. 5:16. "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The life of positive and eminent holiness, is the only life that is secure against the crafty devices of Satan.

Many reasons may be assigned why the pastor

should seek to shield his life from temptation. The following propositions laid down by Baxter in "The Reformed Pastor" are worthy of your consideration:—

- (1) You have a depraved nature, as well as others.
- (2) You are exposed to greater temptations than others.
- (3) You have many eyes upon you and there will be many to observe your falls.
- (4) Your sins will have more heinous aggravations than other men's.
- (5) The honor of Christ lieth more upon you than upon other men.

#### IV

*The Pastor in his Official Capacity Should have Familiar Converse with God.*

1. As to his call to undertake the office of the ministry.

The ministry is not a trade or profession, but an office. The call to this office is a religious experience and is the beginning of a new acquaintanceship with God. (Acts 26:16.)

2. In his call to a field of work.

Acts 13:12. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." It is the privilege of the minister of Christ to have his work assigned to him by the Holy Spirit. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers." (Acts 20:28.)

3. In his care of the flock over which he is appointed.

1 Cor. 3:9. "We are labourers together with God:

ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." I doubt whether there is any closer intimacy with God allowed on earth than that of a conscientious pastor with the Chief Shepherd, concerning the care of the flock. Here we have companionship with the angels. "For are not they all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" To sum up all, the pastor's acquaintance with God involves these four things:

*First.* Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ.

*Second.* Fellowship with God in acts of holy worship.

*Third.* Daily walk with God in a life of practical godliness.

*Fourth.* Familiar converse with God in the fulfillment of an official trust.

I repeat: The first qualification for the pastoral office is piety. But I beg of you, do not confound piety with piousness.

## LECTURE II

### THE DIVINE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

IT is the duty of all Christians to make known the gospel. To one whom He had healed Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." (Mark 5:19.)

To the woman of Samaria He said, "Go, call thy husband and come hither." . . . And the woman said to the men of her city, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John 4:16, 28-29.)

Before closing the New Testament the Lord Jesus put into the hands of every believer a divine warrant to extend the gospel invitation, "Let him that heareth say, Come." (Rev. 22:17.)

But there is also a special and authoritative proclamation of the gospel which He has entrusted to the ministry. The aim of the present lecture will be to show that for the fulfillment of this trust one must have a divine call to the office. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb. 5:4.)

The subject is scarcely less solemn and personal than the one already discussed, and I desire so to speak of it as to exalt your conception of that sacred office for which you are candidates and strengthen your convictions that you are called of God to this work.

#### I

#### *A Divine Call to the Ministry is Necessary.*

- I. Because the ministry is not a trade nor yet a profession, but an *office*.

There was a vast difference between the employment of Jesus as a carpenter, into which he entered as the son of Joseph, and his mission as the Mediator, to which He was appointed by His Heavenly Father. The first was a trade; the other an office. He took up the carpenter's trade as a carpenter's son to earn a livelihood, but concerning the office it is said: "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." (Heb. 5:5.)

The servant is not greater than His Lord; and if it was necessary that Jesus should be "anointed to preach," "how shall they preach except they be sent?"

It was a severe reproof of Eli for permitting the profanation of a holy office, when it was said unto him: "And it shall come to pass that everyone that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say: Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

It is sad to reflect that some regard the ministry as merely a skilled trade for making a living.

Nor is the ministry a mere profession. Men speak of the three "learned professions"—*i.e.*, Medicine, Law, and the Ministry. But this is not correct. The ministry is not a profession, which anyone may take up after a prescribed course of study; it is an office to which he must be called of God.

2. The office of the ministry and the minister himself are gifts of God to the church.

Eph. 4:8, 11, 12, "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And He 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."

1 Cor. 12:28. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

The passages show clearly that the office of the ministry is not a human invention, but a divine appointment, and is one of Christ's ascension gifts to His church.

With equal explicitness do the scriptures teach that the minister who rightfully fills the office is a gift of God. Jer. 3:15. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Acts 20:28. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

This latter passage was probably addressed to Ruling Elders, but if these are divinely called to their office, much more are ministers.

3. The names by which the office is designated show the necessity for a divine call to it.

(1) *Messenger of God.* Mal. 3:1. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me."

This is spoken especially of John the Baptist who is the herald of the gospel ministry.

The epistles unto the seven churches of Asia were addressed unto the "angels" of these churches. The word "angel" means messenger. The messengers of the churches were their ministers.

In the vision recorded in Revelation first chapter, Christ is seen walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, holding in His right hand seven stars: and it is said that "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Thus the ministers of the gospel are Christ's messengers, held in His right hand. Shall

anyone assume to occupy such a position *uncalled?*

(2) *Pastor or Shepherd.*

The flock is Christ's, who is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. In regard to the right of anyone to enter the sheep-fold as an under-shepherd, He uses language impossible to be misunderstood.

John 10:1-3. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth." By the "porter" many understand the Holy Spirit. Others understand Christ Himself. In either case it teaches the necessity for a divine warrant for entering the fold as a shepherd.

(3) *Ambassador.* 2 Cor. 5:20. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

An ambassador is one who represents his government at a foreign court. He is qualified to treat and to speak in the name and with the authority of the government whose ambassador he is. Would anyone assume to himself such prerogatives?

The name ambassador has its full significance when applied to the minister of the gospel. "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead." The minister has official authority to represent the kingdom of God.

Matt. 10:40. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Here Christ constitutes ministers His ambassadors, and declares that what is done to them is done to Him and to His Father. Is it not a daring act of presumption for one to seize the prerogatives of heaven without a call from God?

(4) *Steward.* 1 Cor. 4:1-2. "Let a man so ac-

count of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

What is the office of a Steward? He is one to whom the master of the house entrusts his property to be managed and controlled and distributed. No one can assume such a relation to another unless called thereto. If anyone of us should elect himself steward of the White House at Washington and proceed to deal with its affairs he would soon learn of his need of a higher call to the office. "Stewards of the mysteries of God!" Shall one assume to dispense the sacred and priceless treasures of the covenant of grace without the calling of God?

Titus 1:7. "A bishop must be blameless as the steward of God."

Messenger of God, pastor, shepherd, ambassador, steward; all of these inspired titles of the ministerial office attest the necessity for a divine call to undertake it.

4. The Scriptures expressly teach that men are called of God to this office.

Isa. 6:8-9. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying unto me, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And He said—*Go.*"

Jer. 1:4-10: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." . . . "Say not I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak."

Acts 26:16. "For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles unto whom now I send thee."

Gal. 1:15-16. "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen." Here Paul notes three great epochs in his existence; viz., his birth, his effectual calling, and his call to the ministry.

5. Those who enter the ministry uncalled have no promise of success.

Jer. 23:21. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."

Verse 32: "Behold I am against them that prophesy false dreams saith the Lord, and do tell them and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all saith the Lord."

I have said they have no promise of success, but this language goes beyond that and declares that because they are not sent of God "therefore they shall not profit this people."

"When I think upon the all but infinite mischief which may result from a mistake as to our vocation for the Christian pastorate, I feel overwhelmed with fear lest any of us should be slack in examining our credentials; and I had rather that we stood too much in doubt, and examined too frequently, than that we should become cumberers of the ground. . . .

"It is imperative on him not to enter the ministry until he has made solemn quest and trial of himself, as to this point. His own personal salvation being secure, he must investigate as to the further matter of his call to office; the first is vital to himself as a Christian; the second equally vital to him as a pastor. As well be a professor without conversion as a pastor

without calling. In both cases there is a name and nothing more." (Spurgeon, "Lectures to My Students," page 42.)

## II

*How may one know that he is called to the Office of the Ministry.*

1. The earnest desire of pious parents or of Christian friends cannot determine it.

It is proper and right for parents to covet earnestly this best gift for their sons, and they may even dedicate their children to God for this holy office, as Hannah dedicated Samuel. But this cannot determine either God's will or the duty of the child. It is for God to say whether He will accept of this dedication; and every man must decide duty for himself.

When parents have made known their desire to their children and have set before them the claims of this high office, and afforded them all possible encouragement in preparation for it, and have sought for them the guidance and grace of God, that is about as far as they ought to go. There are many who might have been honored and useful in other departments of Christian activity whose lives have ended in failure and disappointment through the unwise zeal of godly parents thrusting them into the ministry.

2. One is not to expect any miraculous or supernatural intimation of the will of God.

It may be thought that when we reason from the call of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Paul to prove the *necessity* for a call to the ministry, that it would also prove that there should be a supernatural call, as in their cases. But this does not follow. Paul's conversion may be taken to prove that we need conversion, but not that all will be converted in the same

way. A conversion may be as real as his, although not as striking as to the manner of it. The same is true of a call to the ministry. It is a fact that some good men have thought that they received the call by a voice speaking unto them, or by a vision of Christ, but there are no intimations in scripture that such immediate revelations are to be expected.

How then is the Divine call to be known?

3. If one possesses the qualifications essential to the office it may be regarded as an evidence of a call to it.

Among these are—

- (1) The physical powers necessary.

Speaking on this subject Spurgeon says:—"When God means a creature to run He gives it nimble legs, and if He means another creature to preach He will give it suitable lungs. A brother who has to pause in the middle of a sentence and gasp for breath should ask himself whether there is not some other occupation for which he is better adapted; a brother who can scarcely get through a sentence without pain, can hardly be called to 'cry aloud' and 'spare not.' Brethren with defective mouths and imperfect articulation are not usually called to preach the gospel." So Spurgeon advises.

I recall an occasion in our Presbytery, when an aged minister asked to be relieved of his charge on account of his growing infirmities. A young minister rose, and in a very low and indistinct voice, opposed the granting of the request. When he sat down, another aged father tartly remarked: "If Father Galbraith could speak no better than that man, I am sure his request ought to be granted."

In distributing talents the Master gives to each one "according to his several ability." If one is vacillating between the seminary and the hospital it throws a doubt upon his call to preach. And yet we must not

say too much. Great work has been done in the ministry by men of feeble physical frame.

Dr. Wilcox gives the following instances: "Robert Hall preached with his breast crowded against the desk to relieve the pain he suffered. F. W. Robertson, for a like reason used to bend himself across the back of a chair in his room. Edward Payson hardly knew what health was, except as told by others. McCheyne struggled in great weakness." Evidently this alone cannot decide the question but it is to be considered in reaching a decision.

(2) The mental endowments required.

The ministry does not demand extraordinary gifts but it cannot be satisfied with less than ordinary. Ministers need not be brilliant geniuses, but they ought to be men of forceful masculine strength. One who is so deficient in mental faculties as to be unable to master the preparatory studies in college and seminary will hardly be able to grapple with the great themes of the Bible in a way becoming to the pulpit, and with sufficient ability to command respect in our times. The age is in many ways a superficial age, but it demands a pulpit of intellectual force. A man of feeble mental endowments cannot expect to succeed as a minister in our times. Especially is this true in a church where pastorates are permanent, and two public services are expected every Sabbath.

(3) The social qualities needed.

This is so important an element in pastoral work that it cannot be overlooked in considering the call to the ministry. There are not wanting instances of ministerial failure, not through lack of physical or intellectual faculties, nor even from a want of personal piety; but through the almost utter lack of social gifts and graces. The importance of this will be seen when we come to consider the pastor in his social relations.

(4) Common sense:

This quality is a resultant of a combination of other qualities and will hardly yield to analysis. But it has a definite signification and its use in this connection is easily understood. The want of this is fatal to ministerial success. The man from whom God has withholden it, or who has lost the talent through disuse, may be perfectly sure that he is not divinely called to the ministry.

4. If one has intense, yet unselfish desire for the ministry it is evidence of a divine call to it.

(1) This desire must not arise from a love of ease.

I would emphasize the word "unselfish." There are motives which sometimes prompt men to seek the ministry which are far from being evidences of a divine call. One of these is the love of ease. It is a fearful mistake to suppose that a faithful minister can live a life of self-indulgence. The nature of his employment is such that good people sometimes mistake it for pastime. The candidate who seeks the office for the sake of an easy life, will either speedily change his views or he will fail in his calling.

(2) The desire must not arise from a purpose to attain social distinction.

It is true that the ministry is a passport to good society. Let us be profoundly grateful that it is so. And let us be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy, that we never act unworthily of the social standing which it affords. But the man who enters the ministry from no higher motive than to lift himself in the social scale, will be almost sure to profane that sacred office to unholy uses in social life. The office of the ministry is too sacred to be used as a mere stepping-stone to any other position.

(3) This desire must not arise from an ambition for literary culture.

The ministry does afford some facilities for gratify-

ing literary ambition; but to enter upon it as a mere literary pursuit is sacrilege. Stronger evidence of this cannot be given than in the testimony of Arthur T. Pierson in "National Perils and Opportunities" (pp. 403-4).

Let us now consider the positive side:—what that desire should be.

(4) It must arise from an intense longing for the salvation of souls.

It was said of Alleine that he was "infinitely and insatiably greedy of the salvation of souls." Such a passion is a call from God. The cry of the perishing must have so entered into our ears, and so filled us that it is like a fire in our bones, that burneth all the day. On this point the language of Spurgeon is very emphatic:

"If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way. He is not the man in whom dwells the Spirit of God in His fullness. For a man so filled with God would utterly weary of any pursuit but that for which his soul pants. If on the other hand you say that for all the wealth of both the Indies you could not and dare not espouse any other calling so as to be put aside from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, then depend upon it, if other things be equally satisfactory, you have the signs of this Apostleship. We must feel that Woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel!"

(5) It must spring from a profound conviction as to the preciousness of the truth.

Spurgeon speaking of applications for admission into the college for pastors says:—"Occasionally we have applicants who answer all the questions well except those upon doctrinal views, to which repeatedly we have had this answer: 'Mr. So and So is prepared

to receive the doctrines of the college whatever they may be.' In all such cases we never deliberate a moment, the instantaneous negative is given. I mention it," he says, "because it illustrates our conviction that men are not called to the ministry who have no knowledge and no definite belief. When young fellows say that they have not made up their minds on theology they ought to go back to the Sabbath school until they have."

The minister is to be a defender of the faith. To be loyal to the truth he must be proof alike against the world's allurements and its scorn. He must say with Paul in the face of all dangers: "None of these things move me—neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Until a man has reached that estimate of the value of truth, he is not called of God to be His messenger to men.

(6) This desire should be prompted by love to witness-bearing.

Paul's divine call included four things, viz: He was to be a minister, a missionary, a witness, and a martyr. Every line of it was an inspiration to him. "Immediately," he says, "I conferred not with flesh and blood." This, young gentlemen, is the crowning nobility of the gospel minister. He is a witness for Jesus before men, before nations, before kings.

A noble line it is, that stretches down through the ages, of faithful witnesses for Christ, and well calculated to arouse us to the most exalted consecration in our desire to join the long line of conquerors and more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

The man who in the present crisis of the world has in his heart no burning desire to take the stand as a witness on the Lord's side, and to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and that

as he shall answer to God at the great day, has little ground to believe that he has a divine call to the ministry, and least of all to the ministry in the Covenanter church.

May our blessed Lord write each one of you, my young friends, among the number of them that are with Him,—“And are called, and chosen and faithful.”

## LECTURE III

### THE CLAIMS OF THE FOREIGN MISSION WORK

#### I

*As there is a Divine Call to the Ministerial Office so there is a Divine Call to a Particular Field of Work.*

1. God guides all his people in their life work.

Prov. 3:6. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

Prov. 16:9. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps."

Ps. 32:8. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Such promises as these mean more than general supervision; they include guidance for each step of the way.

2. Christ will especially guide His commissioned officers.

To suppose that God calls men to office and then leaves them uninstructed as to their work is to charge God with folly. If Christ says, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," He will indicate where the work is to be done.

3. That one may enjoy continued assurance that He is called of God to the ministerial office, he must become assured that he is called to some particular field.

It seems to me that however confident anyone might

at one time be that he had received a divine call to enter the ministry, it would be impossible to retain that confidence if he were left without further intimation as to where his office was to be exercised.

4. We have scriptural examples as to divine calls to particular fields of labor.

Acts 13:2. "And as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them."

Acts 16:6-10: "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

Nothing could be clearer than this as showing how these servants of Christ were divinely led as to where they should go, and where they should not go.

The demand upon you for a decision as to your life-work is liable to be made at any time. Within a very few years a large number of students were called upon to decide as to missionary work before they had completed their seminary course. I recall the names of James S. Stewart, R. J. Dodds, J. R. W. Stevenson, T. J. Speer, R. J. McIsaac and Walter McCarroll. All of these had accepted work in mission fields before finishing in the seminary. Probably as large a number declined appointments. The responsibilities involved in such decisions are very great and it is important that your minds be open to all the

considerations that will aid you in ascertaining the will of God.

As the call to missions frequently meets us earlier than the call to the pastorate, it is proper that this should be first considered.

## II

### *The Claims of Foreign Missions on the Candidates for the Ministry.*

1. The claim is founded in the terms of the great Commission.

Mark 16:15. "Go ye, therefore, into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

One of the missionaries about to go out to China, in a farewell meeting called attention to the unconditional character of the command, in this way:—

"If it said, 'If you think you can leave your friends, go into all the world,' it might not be our duty to go; or if it said, 'If there are no obstacles in the way, go into all the world,' it might not be our present duty to go to China; or if it said, 'If you think the church will be able and willing to support you, go into all the world,' we might hesitate; or if it said, 'If the heathen are all converted at home, then go into all the world,' we might delay. But the command does not contain any of these conditions, nor any others. It simply says 'Go.' It is to be *obeyed*. As long as there are vast portions of the earth where the gospel has never been heard, this command implies that all who have not good reason for remaining at home should go as foreign missionaries."

There are many heathen at our doors, but they are in reach of the gospel; and if they long remain ignorant of the gospel it is because of shameful neglect, either theirs or ours. As Dr. Pierson says, "We are

responsible for contact; we are not responsible for conversions." Until we who have the gospel do all in our power to give it to those who have it not, the responsibility for their eternal loss lies with us. The great commission placed in the hands of the church by her ascending Lord, nineteen centuries ago, is yet sadly unfulfilled.

2. The need is greatest in the foreign field.

"The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few." Other things being equal the minister of the gospel should choose the field of the greatest destitution. If the question hinged upon this alone, we would all have to decide to be foreign missionaries. For whoever has heard of Christ has a chance to be saved; but "how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Most impressive and appalling statistics are given of the vast unoccupied fields, with their hundreds of millions of souls sitting in outer darkness. We have little evidence of a divine call to the ministry if we are indifferent to the fate of these multitudes.

3. The doors to mission fields are wide open.

A number of considerations are to be taken account of here.

(1) The obstacles in the way of access to the heathen nations have been almost entirely taken away.

Our missionaries in Syria are more hampered and interfered with in their work than missionaries almost anywhere else.

There is scarcely a kingdom on earth where the missionary may not enter with an open Bible. Catholic countries present more difficulties than the veriest heathen.

(2) The facilities for multiplying copies of the Bible are greatly increased.

- (3) The facilities for rapid and extended intercourse with heathen nations are vastly extended.
- (4) The treasures in the hands of the church-members are sufficient to support ample missions in every land.

Doubts have been expressed whether our church will support the new mission in China and at the same time maintain her old missions uncrippled. If she fails, it will not be through lack of God's bounty.

- (5) The church has been largely baptized with the spirit of missions.

It sometimes seems as if the membership were in advance of the ministry in missionary faith and zeal. The Women's Missionary Societies and the Young People's Societies are doing much to increase the missionary spirit. Taking it all together we can confidently affirm that the doors of opportunity swing wide open.

4. The nobility of the foreign mission work constitutes a strong claim.

I cannot do better on this point than refer you to a sermon, "The Heroism of Foreign Missions," by Bishop Phillips Brooks.

He says: "The glory and the heroism of the Christian life are in the mission field. . . . Heroism is in the very thought of missions. . . . Sent to tell men of Christ is our commission, and men certainly need to be told of Christ over and over again. Those who have known him longest need to hear his name again and again, in their temptations, their troubles, their joys. We need to tell them of Him all through their lives until we whisper His familiar name into their ears just growing cold in death. I rejoice to tell you of Him always, those of you who have heard of Him most and longest, but you can imagine, I am sure,

how standing here in your presence, and letting my thought wander off to a foreign land where some missionary is standing face to face with people who never heard of Christ before, I feel that *that* is telling men of Christ in a more real, more direct way than I am."

In closing he says: "I plead with you for the heroism of the missionary life, not because of the pain it suffers, but because the essential character it bears is heroic. Missionaries have been the heroes because of their faith, because their souls supremely believed in, and there lives were supremely given up to Christ."

My young friends, if this is a true presentation of the inherent nobility and the essential glory of Christian missions, then you must recognize its supreme claim upon your attention as candidates for the holy ministry.

5. Ours is, in an eminent sense, a missionary church.

(1) It is so by its fitness for the work.

The church that is purest in doctrine and worship is best furnished and equipped for making known God's salvation among men. The church that is most loyal to the kingly claims of the Lord Jesus Christ is best fitted to establish his kingdom among all nations. In the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, the one most highly commended and against which no charges were brought, was the church of Philadelphia. And it was to this purest of the churches that Jesus said: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it."

The very fact of our position of Political Dissent from the unscriptural constitution and laws of our nation qualifies us for missionary work among the heathen. One of the most powerful barriers to missionary work is the unchristian conduct of nominally Christian nations in their dealings with the heathen

nations. The missionaries of no other church can disavow all responsibility for the wickedness of the government, as our missionaries can.

Think what a vantage ground our missionaries to China have, because of our entire separation from the government in its outrageous anti-Chinese legislation. The same thing can be said of our missions to the Jews. How can those who are in complicity with the nation in its rejection of the kingly claims of Jesus Christ, urge the Jews to accept Him as their promised Messiah who is to sit on the throne of David? Our fidelity to the royal claims of Christ qualifies us in an eminent sense to carry the gospel to the Jews.

(2) We are so by our solemn covenanted vows.

Listen to the language of the covenant we have sworn: "Rejoicing that the enthroned Mediator is not only king in Zion, but king over all the earth; and recognizing the obligation of His command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and resting in faith in the promises of His perpetual presence, as the pledge of success, we hereby dedicate ourselves to the great work of making known God's light and salvation among the nations: and to this end will labor and pray that the church may be provided with an earnest, self-denying and able ministry.

Profoundly conscious of past remissness and neglect, we will henceforth by our prayers, pecuniary contributions, and personal exertions, seek the revival of pure and undefiled religion, the conversion of Jews and Gentiles to Christ, that all men may be blessed in Him, and that all may call Him blessed."

(3) We are so, practically.

Any impression that our church is lacking in missionary enterprise in comparison with other churches

is without foundation. In fact, the Covenanter church leads the missionary hosts. With a membership of less than ten thousand, she has her missions in Latakia, in Tarsus, in Suadea, in Cyprus, among the Freedmen, the Indians, the Jews, the Chinese on the coast and in the midst of the Chinese empire. This is the most emphatic testimony to the purpose of the church to fulfill her covenant vow. To you, young gentlemen, candidates for the ministry in such a church, the claims of foreign mission work come with a powerful appeal. May our Lord direct your answer.

## LECTURE IV

### THE PERSONAL CALL TO BE A FOREIGN MISSIONARY

HAVING considered the claims of foreign missions in general, on the candidates for the ministry, it seems necessary to pursue the subject a step further and to present considerations that may assist you in determining your personal duty. Assuming that you have received a divine call to the office of the ministry, and that you now have before your minds the claims of the foreign field as they are set forth in the command of Christ to go into all the world, and in the superlative need, and in the open doors, and in the essential nobility of the foreign mission work; and in the eminently missionary character of the church in which you aspire to be ministers, the personal question still remains—Lord, what will thou have me to *do*?

Are you all called of God to be foreign missionaries? Are any of you so-called? If so, WHO?

#### I

*The Decision is to be Made on Your Own Personal Responsibility.*

It is necessary to emphasize this truth because we have a natural inclination to shirk this responsibility; and sometimes others can be found who are willing to assume it for us. This they cannot do. We must

act for ourselves, as we shall give account of ourselves unto God.

1. We cannot excuse ourselves from the duty on the ground of the sacrifice it will cost.

I have no sympathy with the sentiment that missionaries in our day are not called upon to make sacrifices. They are. To leave a Christian land with its beneficent institutions, and live in a heathen country, surrounded by its baneful influences; to go forth from the bosom of the mother church and dwell in the midst of heathen rites and ceremonies, separated from the fellowship of brethren, to break away from the hallowed influences of home and kindred and cast your lot among strangers, to bring up a family without the privileges of schools, and in the midst of children from the shadowed homes of heathenism; or to be separated from your own children that they may be sent home to the blessings of a Christian land, these are sacrifices which demand more than philanthropy for their motive.

But granted that the work is to be done and that some one must undertake it, then no one can claim exemption on the ground of its hardships.

Gal. 1:15-16. "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen: *immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*" How the words thrill us!

2 Tim. 2:3. "Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." He has little of the true spirit of a soldier who declines the post of duty because of its sacrifices; and how much less has he the spirit of a soldier of Jesus Christ—the great sacrifice? Having settled the question of the need, we should refuse to consider the sacrifices, so far as these are common to any one who would fill the place.

Rom. 15:3. "For even Christ *pleased not Himself.*"

2. We are not to be dissuaded from the work by the entreaty of friends.

I do not say that the claims of others are not to be considered. The circumstances of a family may have much to do in deciding the duty of its members. But when the call of God comes, that is supreme. It is a responsibility which any conscientious Christian will hesitate to assume, to interpose to prevent one from entering the mission field, who feels that he is called of God to go. And yet there are instances where it has been done.

3. The choice of the Board of Missions, or even election by the highest court of the church, is not necessarily final.

Of course great weight should be attached to such a call and there are some who go so far as to say that this should be regarded as the voice of God. I do not so consider it. If I did I should be compelled to regard my whole ministry as a succession of acts of disobedience to God. Three times I have declined the call of Synod. The first time was a call to the foreign mission field. God may have a purpose in permitting a court to elect a minister to a position, which nevertheless he does not intend to lead the minister to accept.

If one has considered the claims of missions and has surrendered himself to Christ for his service in any field to which he may be called and has decided to regard the call of the church, through the Mission Board or through the Synod, as the voice of God, then, if the call comes to him in that way, it should be regarded as final. But if, on the other hand, his own judgment and conviction are that he has been called to another kind of service, the mere fact of his election cannot of itself set aside his own decision as to his duty. It does, however, reopen the case.

The ground must be gone over again from this new point of view. Such a call cannot rightfully be declined without serious, thoughtful, prayerful consideration. But only one authority can command your unquestioning obedience. "One is your Master, even Christ."

## II

*What are Some of the Considerations that Should Enter into the Decision?*

1. Have you sufficient health to warrant you in undertaking it?

To have assurance of continued usefulness as a foreign missionary, one needs endurance and vital force.

- (1) To bear the change of climate and of diet.
- (2) To endure the exhaustion of close study in acquiring a strange language.

Foreign mission boards have learned by experience that these are considerations of which they must take account in their appointment of laborers for the foreign field. All boards require a medical examination and certificate.

2. Do you readily acquire a foreign language?

Gifts in this direction differ widely. If you are too indifferent to apply the mind to close study, that settles it. Stay at home. It is a waste of the Lord's money to spend years in the foreign field dilly-dallying over an unknown tongue. And if you have no capacity in that direction, your devotion to the cause will hardly give you eminence as a missionary.

Speaking of this Dr. Wilcox says:—"Some have so little facility in acquiring a foreign tongue, and so much in the use of their own that they give far more promise of good service at home than abroad. Some men have so poor a word memory that they can hardly quote correctly a text of scripture. Yet they have

immense pulpit power. It would be a waste of power to send such men abroad."

Again he says:—"I have in mind a missionary who has been extraordinarily useful in translating the Bible and in evangelistic work among the nations, who in a pulpit at home could hardly succeed at all. It would have been a waste of power for him to have remained in America."

3. Have you the temper, the disposition and the graces which are essential to missionary success?

God prepares his instruments and adapts them to the work. You may safely judge of what He is calling you to do by what He has fitted you to do. I can only suggest a few qualities which are so important as to be almost essential in a missionary.

- (1) Cheerfulness under privations.
- (2) Patience under trials.
- (3) Humility to condescend to the lowest classes, and to perform the most menial services.
- (4) Courage in the face of discouragements.
- (5) Faith to go steadily forward, when you cannot walk by sight.

If you have these things as natural gifts, or better still as gracious attainments, you have reason to hope that God intends them to be used in foreign mission work. But one who is notably deficient in such necessary qualifications and who cannot attain thereto will be likely to fail as a missionary. If he is devoid of them it will be hard for him to succeed in the work of the ministry anywhere.

4. Have you the heart of a missionary?

After all, that is the great test. Some people, both men and women, are born missionaries: if not by their first birth, they have been born again, and in their regeneration have received the heart of a missionary.

Their whole natures are aglow with love to the Savior and with love for the souls of men. They have both the spirit and the mind of Christ. They could not be happy at home while other men are pressing to the front. Let them go to the foreign field. They are called of God.

Dr. Wilcox relates such an instance. "The young man had been a soldier, a color-bearer in the army. At the battle of Shiloh he stood for half an hour as a mark for a blazing line of musketry. He expected every moment to fall. He did fall. But recovering from his wound and afterwards graduating from Chicago Theological Seminary, he asked—'What is the next position that no one else will take?' In Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, at that time a haunt of gamblers and desperadoes, he found it. There he gathered a church. Having nursed it up to strength he raised again the question of his life:—'What field next to which no one else will go?' For reply he chose Japan where at that date a foreigner entered at his peril. Men of that character would soon win the world for Christ." I do not believe that this is an isolated case at all. There are many such missionaries. And they win success.

#### 5. Have you the call of the Holy Spirit?

Rom. 8:14. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I am fully persuaded that it is the privilege of every one who is fully surrendered to God to live his whole life under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I can make my meaning clear in no better way than by referring you for illustration to the case of Rev. W. W. Carithers in his call to found the mission among the Indians.

As you all probably know, he was very happily settled as a pastor in one of the most desirable fields in our church, the congregation of Wilkinsburg. He

was also a member of the Central Board of Missions. It had been decided to open a mission among the Indians. Several ineffectual efforts had been made to secure a missionary. Each time, the candidate chosen declined the appointment. With each new trial the impression became stronger on the mind of Mr. Carithers that God was about to call him to undertake the work.

When he finally broached the matter to Mrs. Carithers he was surprised to find that a similar impression had been made upon her mind and had kept increasing.

At the next communion season each of them, without the knowledge of the other, made it a special subject of prayer while sitting at the communion table. They both gave themselves by a new surrender to Christ and asked that if He were calling them to any mission field, He would intimate His will unmistakably and they would cheerfully obey. They both resolved that they would regard the choice of the Board as decisive.

When the Board of Missions met it was agreed that no nominations should be made, but that the Board would engage in special prayer for divine guidance and then without consultation, should proceed to vote. The choice fell upon Mr. Carithers. His decision was made at once. When he returned home he found Mrs. Carithers fully prepared to acquiesce.

As soon as I heard of it, I hastened to their home, determined to do all in my power to dissuade them from their purpose. I found my sister alone and when I announced the object of my visit she simply said: "You can present your arguments against it, and I will listen; but before you begin let me tell you how we reached our decision." She rehearsed to me what I have related to you, and then quietly waited for me to commence. My lips were sealed. I would not have

dared to raise an objection. I knew in my heart that in so doing I would be speaking against God. There is no more reason to doubt their call to this work than to doubt the call of Abraham. God has placed his seal upon their labors.\*

## III

*Should One Who is Willing to be a Missionary Volunteer?*

The student volunteer movement has already brought this question before your minds and probably most of you have reached a conclusion. For this reason I offer my opinion with diffidence, and without any desire to influence your action one way or another further than frankly to make known my own thought on a subject on which you have a right to expect that I would have something to say. A few years ago I would have answered it unhesitatingly in the affirmative. To-day I will speak more guardedly. I shall state my present view in three particulars.

1. As candidates for the ministry you should make your surrender to Christ complete and promise Him that you will enter the field to which He calls you.

\* The author, at this point, was in the habit of describing the singing of a part of the seventy-second Psalm at the close of the farewell communion at Wilkinsburg, and again at the close of the first communion in the Indian Mission. A former student, writing of this says: "It was at such moments that we felt the sweep and the uplift and the inspiration of Dr. George's character. His eye kindled, his voice thrilled us, and his whole nature took fire under the memory of those impressive scenes which he made us see, almost with the living eye. 'His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall,'—his voice in the recital of that Psalm comes back to many of us to rekindle with an added glow the beauty of its imagery, and to recall moments of our loftiest aspiration as we turned our faces toward the ministry."

2. If your feeling toward missions is that of mere *willingness to go if you are appointed*, ask the Master to bring about your appointment if it is His will to call you to this work.
3. If your missionary spirit arises above mere willingness and you reach a settled conviction in your own mind that you are divinely called to be a missionary, then it becomes your duty to offer your services and to seek the appointment.

Beyond this I am not prepared to advise.

Our senior missionary to China, when parting from his congregation, as nearly as I can recall his words, said that he had expressed his desires to God as follows:

“Ask of me anything—but strengthen me to perform  
it,  
Send me anywhere—but go with me;  
Sunder any tie,—but the tie that binds me to thee.”

The last appeal was added to it when he received the appointment which called him to give up his congregation where he was living in most delightful pastoral relations—and to enter upon an arduous and perilous missionary life. In such circumstances it was sublime. And, oh, what ties have been sundered since that—yet not the tie that binds him to God. This is stronger than ever.

## LECTURE V

### THE CALL TO THE PASTORATE

HAVING considered the claims of foreign missions, we might very appropriately turn our attention to the claims of Home Mission Work. And this is a subject which has received too little attention in our church. In the mind of our people it is too largely overshadowed by the foreign field. The evil is beginning to be remedied and I earnestly commend to you the advocacy of the home mission cause—as a leading department of our church work. If we had more candidates for the ministry, home missions would receive more consideration. “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.”

*The Call to the Pastorate* is the subject now before us.

#### I

#### *Candidating for a Call*

The recognition of the divine right of the people to a voice in the selection of their pastors is one of the distinguishing features of Presbyterianism. To establish and maintain this right, martyr blood has been shed. This right of the people requires that those seeking to enter the pastoral office shall appear before them as candidates. The “Form of Call” which the church has prepared implies so. It reads:—

“Being without a pastor to take the spiritual charge

of us in the Lord, and satisfied by our own experience of the piety, prudence, literature and soundness in the faith and testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as also of the fitness to our capacities of the gifts of you—have with the consent of Presbytery agreed to call, as we do now most heartily call you to undertake the office of pastor among us.”

“Satisfied by our own experience” is the language, and it implies that the candidate has been before the people, and that their call is not due to the report of some “visiting committee,” or the manipulation of some wire-pulling Presbyter.

1. The position of the candidate for a call is a dignified and honorable one.

Such objectionable methods have been pursued by men seeking desirable fields and by congregations eager to obtain popular preachers, that it has become difficult for the self-respecting candidate to escape a feeling of humiliation in coming before the people as seeking a settlement. It is important both for your comfort and for your success that your minds be entirely relieved from that feeling.

To this end let me remind you of your true position as candidates for the pastoral office. You are not intellectual athletes entering the race-course to compete for a prize. Nor are you politicians seeking for office and begging for votes. You are consecrated men, seeking admission to a holy calling, not that you may serve yourselves but that you may serve Christ and His church. Confident that you have a call from God to this work, and, having faithfully gone through the necessary steps of preparation and having received the approval of Presbytery, you now appear before the Lord's people in the exercise of your gifts, that you may also have their approval.

From every point of view such a position is both dignified and honorable. To consent to be thrust upon

an unwilling people without their choice or approval—that is ignoble and destructive of self-respect; but to appear before a congregation of the Lord's people in order that by mutual acquaintanceship you and they may judge of your mutual fitness to each other, warrants only an attitude of manliness on your part and of prayerful judicious dignity on theirs.

2. The requirement that the candidate for a call should preach before the people is most reasonable.

The relation of pastor and people is too intimate and important to be entered into without some preliminaries. The interests involved are too sacred to be decided without consideration. That a people should be expected to bind themselves to wait upon the ministry of one whose voice they have never heard proclaiming the gospel, and to commit the care of their souls and the spiritual interests of their families to one who is a total stranger would be most unreasonable.

To say that a call frequently is made on such a limited intercourse as is of no practical value does not affect the truth of what I have said. That is an argument for a different method. The evil complained of can be remedied. If, instead of hearing all the candidates in the field, congregations were content to have the labors of one man for a sufficient length of time to enable them to judge intelligently whether or not they would be profited by his ministry, the matter of making and receiving a call would have more significance.

3. Candidating for a call is a critical test of character.

(1) Of humility.

While I have insisted that the position of a candidate is not a humiliating one, nevertheless it calls for humility. To enter the field with exalted views of one's superiority over other candidates, is to invite dis-

appointment. Phil. 2:3: "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

When one of our aged ministers entered his pastoral charge, the disappointed friend of another candidate said to him with much severity:—"I want you to understand that I did not vote for you; I wanted Mr. —." The reply was: "That proves that you are a discerning man; if I had been choosing a pastor I would have voted for him myself." This subtle but lowly reply won for him a life-long friend. That indicates the spirit which one must have who will preserve his peace of mind as a candidate.

(2) Of magnanimity.

The test will come in this way:—The people are hearing different men and are making comparisons. One is conscious that he is being weighed in the balance with other men. Whatever exalts the good opinion of others, lessens his chance for preference. It may be in one's power by a generous remark to add to the reputation of a fellow candidate or by a disparaging word to affect his prospects unfavorably, and so advance his own. The safety from such an ignoble temptation is to have a magnanimous spirit.

My advice is, gentlemen, not to be drawn into giving any estimate whatever of fellow-students or of making comparisons among them. You may find people surprisingly willing to draw you out on such subjects. When you can give true and generous praise of piety, scholarship or social qualities it may be allowable to do so, but even here you need to be cautious, lest in exalting one you disparage others.

(3) Of moral courage.

You will readily see how this test comes to the candidate for a call. It requires a man of backbone to say to people whom it is his interest to please just what he knows the truth of God demands should be said.

You are not called upon to display your courage by recklessly inviting conflict, and in a belligerent spirit assailing everything with which you do not agree. As a settled pastor you may be able to mold the opinions of people into harmony with your views whom you would only alienate, both from yourself and from the truth, by an uncalled-for attack upon them. But what you do require is the moral courage, not to modify your utterances as a messenger of God either in your public ministry or in private intercourse, for personal ends, through fear of man. No grander testimony to moral heroism was ever given than that which our Lord's enemies accorded to Him when they said:—

“Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.” (Matt. 22:16.)

## II

### *How to Seek a Pastorate.*

#### 1. Commit your way to God.

Having settled it in your mind that you are called of God to the ministry you should confide in His promised guidance to find your field. This does not imply that you will not use proper means to the same end, but that you will not undertake to manipulate your own future, or use questionable methods to secure what you conceive to be a desirable field. Whenever we employ wrong methods, we lose God's guidance, for He cannot assist us in wrong-doing.

#### 2. Seek your appointments through regular church channels.

You are to be the servants of the church. Congregations are under Presbyteries and receive their supplies through the court. The distribution of laborers

among the Presbyteries is made by Synod. My advice is to take the orderly course for securing a hearing before congregations. Never break through church order to get before the people. "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." (John 10:1.)

- (1) Is it proper to request to be sent to particular fields.

In reply to this question I should say that ordinarily it is better to let your name go before the church without pre-judgment. It is too much like taking the matter back into your own hands. "Commit thy way unto the Lord—*trust also in Him*, and He shall bring it to pass." Ps. 37:5.

If there are reasons known to you why you should be sent to one field rather than to another, it is proper to acquaint those having the distribution of laborers in charge with the facts in the case. Such facts may concern your health, your adaptation to country or city life, to mission work, and such matters.

- (2) Is it proper to arrange with congregations independently of Presbytery?

Neither congregations nor laborers should act independently of the courts under whose supervision they are. If, however, Presbytery authorizes a congregation to supply itself, and the laborer is free from official appointments elsewhere, then it is proper to make such private arrangements. Great care should be observed not to disregard Presbyterial appointments. Always seek release from the one before making the other.

3. "Do not go prospecting after the most desirable fields."

I have taken this point verbatim from Dr. Wilcox. He discusses it with reference to the question of salary. If one is disposed to degrade the office of the

ministry, to mere money-making, he had better abandon it for some more lucrative employment. There is nothing wrong in a minister seeking to better his condition and that of his family. The eighth commandment is binding on ministers as well as others, and it requireth "the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others." But not of "ourselves" at the expense of "others." The element of selfishness is foreign to the character of the true minister. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." Not the most attractive field from a worldly point of view, but the field of the greatest destitution, and the widest opportunity for usefulness should appeal to him.

4. In candidating do the very best work of which you are capable.

A student asked Dr. Wilcox:—Shall we on such occasions use our best sermons? He answers: "Some think it dishonest to do that. But not so of necessity. The people expect you to do your best. And if settled among them you will probably prepare many a sermon that for practical effect will be better than the best you have now. To use three or four discourses on each of which you have spent weeks, and which you have no hope of being able to equal in the usual time of preparation is hardly honest. But to take for a Sabbath one of such and one composed in a few days will fairly represent you."

This advice is quite sufficiently guarded. If you are faithful, studious ministers, you need have little apprehension that your sermons as students and licentiates have gone beyond what you will be able to do as pastors. You have not begun to reach your high-water mark in sermonic power. As to literary finish, and ornateness of style and diction, your weeks of labor may have produced more than an average sermon. But as pastors you will preach special sermons

that will far surpass them, and your people will be more built up by your ordinary sermons, than by your great ones.

The following points may seem trifling to you, but it is better that you should receive them from me than learn them by experience.

5. When candidating do not meddle with congregational difficulties.

Unfortunately these are especially common in vacant congregations. Frequently this is the cause of the vacancy. People will be anxious to tell you their story and equally anxious to draw from you an expression of opinion on their side. Respectfully but firmly decline. When the time comes when you must decide on a call to enter a particular field, and you feel it to be necessary for you to know their affairs in order to make an intelligent decision, it is better to seek the information from some Presbyter outside the congregation. An expression of opinion on an *ex parte* statement of a case is very hazardous.

6. Do not seek the honor of having many calls.

It is flattering to our vanity—and to that of our friends to hear that calls are coming in to us from all sides. But the candidate who seeks to raise his reputation, by multiplying calls which he has no purpose even to consider, is building on the shifting sands. Be anxious for *one call*—from the Lord and His people.

### III

#### *Deciding on a Call.*

1. Do not decide on a call until it is properly presented to you.

You will find persons anxious to know how you would dispose of a call if it should be made out for

you. You should not gratify them. I will tell you why:—

(1) Because you do not know.

You may think you do, but you are liable to be mistaken. The considerations which should enter into your decision are not all before you. You have no right to decide until you have submitted the matter to God. One way in which God intimates His will is through His people, and through the Presbytery. These should both be heard before you decide. You may not certainly know your own mind until the decisive moment when the moderator of Presbytery extends the call to you and demands your decision.

(2) Much harm may be done to a congregation by unwise intimations of your decision beforehand.

The congregation acts on the assurance given. Then unlooked for events occur: Opposition may develop; other calls may come in; in unaccountable ways your own feelings may be changed. When at last you meet the call regularly you are compelled to reverse your former decision. The result—the congregation is disappointed, oftentimes embittered. Congregations frequently insist on having a decision beforehand on the ground that it will injure them to have a call declined. It will do them immensely more harm to have it declined after being assured of its acceptance.

(3) You imperil your ministerial standing by a premature decision.

The candidate may have been perfectly sincere in promising that he would accept a call if made out for him and thoroughly conscientious in declining it when presented, but he will find it difficult to convince the people whom he has deceived and disappointed, that he has not lied. I counsel you therefore not to accept or decline a call until it comes regularly before you.

2. The formal act of Presbytery sustaining a call

as a regular gospel call expresses no opinion as to what should be your disposal of it.

This action simply means that the call is in regular form, that the candidate is eligible to the place, that the regular steps were followed in making out the call, and that proper provision is made for the support of the pastor in case the call is accepted.

3. If Presbytery presents a call accompanied by the advice either that it be accepted or declined, the candidate may or may not follow the advice.

The Presbytery by presenting the call declines to assume the responsibility for the decision, and thereby puts the responsibility upon the candidate. He must therefore be considered free to follow his own judgment—after giving due weight to the Presbyterianial advice.

4. In considering a call do not regard any congregation as beneath your notice.

Professor Phelps quotes from a private letter which he received from a pastor:—"I am throwing myself away on this shoe town," and adds:—"Very well; he probably could not make a better throw."

When a young man gives as his reason for not going forward to the ministry, that there are no first-class vacancies in the church, he either has a most exaggerated conception of his importance or a pitifully low estimate of the value of souls, and of the honor of the Redeemer. In either case it is a blessed thing for the church when he decides not to sacrifice his precious gifts on the altar of the holy ministry.

5. Do not accept a call merely as a stepping-stone to a higher position.

I do not mean by this that in accepting a call to a lowly congregation you are to decide that your whole life will be spent in that place. You do not know where your life is to be spent. You are to accept the lowly place with the profound conviction that this is

the will of God, and that as long as it is His will you will labor contentedly, and to your utmost power. The people are quick to detect whether their pastor is wholly theirs or not, and they resent being used in furthering sinister or selfish ends. Nor can the pastor properly respect the people whom he uses simply as an upping-block, from which to vault into the saddle of some wealthy, influential congregation.

Do not fear that in the seclusion of a small country parish your gifts will be lost sight of by the church. It was said of our Lord: "He could not be hid." Even if men do fail to appreciate your worth, the Lord has his eye on you in your quiet place.

#### IV

#### *Deciding Between Calls.*

I have already said that a candidate for settlement should not be ambitious to receive many calls. But when there are many vacancies and few candidates, one who has visited a number of congregations may receive conflicting calls. As the claims of the several places are urgently pressed, the conscientious candidate may be thrown into deep distress to decide between them. The advice given on this point will necessarily be very general.

1. Do not hold a call in hope of receiving a more desirable one.

At times the temptation to do this is very great. Such a course is humiliating to the congregation and tends to discredit the minister. It is like a young lady hesitating about an offer of marriage, in hope of receiving a proposal from a more desirable party. What noble spirited man would submit to be treated in that way? Such conduct on the part of the minister classes

him with the coquette. If you are disappointed and then decide to accept the first call, you are liable to find the ardor of the people toward yourself considerably cooled.

2. Other things being equal, if two or more calls are presented together, accept the call first made.

I say distinctly, "other things being equal." Some attach much importance to the *first* call, even regarding it as decisive. I do not regard it as having any more than sufficient weight to turn an evenly balanced scale. It has simply the claim of being made when there was no rival call. If other congregations follow, calling the same candidate, they appear as competitors for one already chosen. The presumption is in favor of the first call. Other considerations may be of more weight.

3. Do not aim to begin at the top.

To accept the most influential field offered you is not always a wise decision; but you may be called of God to fill a high and important place from the very first. If so you are not at liberty to shrink from it because it will expose you to trial and force you to hard work. If God puts before you such an opportunity you must decide on unselfish grounds whether you can serve the interests of His kingdom better there or in the smaller field that may seem better adapted to your immediate attainments. What God may choose for you is one thing; what you should seek for yourself is quite another. I would say with the prophet, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." (Jer. 45:5.)

## V

### *The Call to a New Field.*

1. A settled pastor is eligible to a call to another pastorate.

It is necessary to argue this point because some of our people strenuously deny it. This is true—

- (1) Because the relation of a minister is, first of all, to Christ.

One is ordained to the office of the ministry before he is installed in the pastorate. By his ordination he becomes Christ's messenger and He may send him to whom He will; he is Christ's ambassador, and He may accredit him to a new court. The claim of a congregation to his service as a pastor can never supersede Christ's claim upon him as a minister.

- (2) The minister has a relation to the whole flock of God.

It is true that he has a special relation to a particular congregation by virtue of his installation. This is to be sacredly cherished and never ruthlessly sundered. Yet another congregation may call a settled pastor without breach of the tenth commandment, "Thou shall not covet." It may be not only their privilege but their duty to call him. All fields are not of like importance. All ministers are not of like ability. Fields change in their importance. Men change in their abilities. There must be a power of adaptation in the church. Hence our Book of Discipline provides for the transportation of ministers. It says:

"The removal of a minister of the gospel from one congregation to another is called transportation. It is an authoritative act of the Presbytery and allowed for the sake of promoting the greater good of the church. In cases of this kind Presbytery must first decide whether transportation in any given case may answer this purpose." \*

\*(a) If a pastor desires to remove to a new field, his resignation must be made to Presbytery.

The congregation should be notified as a matter of courtesy, but the common practice of resigning to the congregation is wholly unpresbyterial.

2. Removals from one congregation to another should be made with great caution. Ambition to gain the new trust may lead you to betray the old.

(1) Guard against ambitious motives in seeking a new field.

I have said that a congregation has the right to call the pastor of another people—but only for a very definite reason, viz: because they believe *his* usefulness will be promoted by the change. And just so, the minister, in deciding to accept the call, will remember that, before he can be inducted into his new field, he will be required to answer to the court this searching question:—"So far as you know your own heart, is it the glory of God and the edification of the church, and not any selfish object that moves you to undertake the exercise of your office in this congregation?"

(2) Do not underestimate the claims of a relation already constituted.

The pastor of a congregation, when called to a new field, is not in the position of an unsettled candidate deciding between two calls. He is in charge of a flock which he cannot abandon without a warrant from the Chief Shepherd. "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" (Jer. 13:20) is the question he will be called to answer. And the Great Shepherd of the sheep has said: "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep. The

(b) The Presbytery has power to refuse to sever the Pastoral relation.

(c) A minister cannot be removed from one field to another without his own consent.

These points will be treated fully in the *Second Series*, under the head: "The Pastor in his Relation to the Church Courts." (See also The Book of Discipline, pp. 108-9, and the United Presbyterian Book of Discipline.)

hireling fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep." (John, 10:12-13.)

3. Do not regard it as any signal honor to receive a call outside of our own denomination.

Many of our ablest, and even most popular ministers never had a call from a sister denomination presented to them. It is difficult to make the incredulous believe that such a call has been thrust in your face without your having been first sounded as to whether you would consider such a call favorably. Such a call implies no compliment. For in calling you, they seem to think either that you do not believe the principles of your present profession, or that you are willing to sell both yourself and the truth. By the first supposition you are classed as a hypocrite, and by the second as a traitor, of which neither redounds to your honor.

If, therefore, you are so unfortunate at any time as to be made the victim of such an act on the part of an outside congregation, promptly return the call, and, by increased zeal and faithfulness as a Covenanter minister, endeavor to live down its pernicious effect.

## LECTURE VI

### ENTERING THE PASTORATE

BISHOP BROOKS in a lecture on "The Preacher and His Work," speaking of a recent interview with one who had just entered the ministry and who was under the glow of his new experience, says:—

"He revived for me the delight of that new and strange relation to his fellowmen which comes when a young man who thus far in his life has had others ministering to him, finds the conditions now reversed and other men are looking up to him for culture. There is the sober joy of responsibility. There is the surprised recognition of something which we have learned in some one of our schools or books or life and counted useless, which now some man we meet welcomes when we give it to him as if it were the one thing for which he had been always waiting.

"There is the hopefulfulness that fears no failure. There is the pleasure of a new knowledge of ourselves as others begin to call out in us what we never knew was there. There is the joy of being trusted and responded to. There is the deepened sacredness of prayer and of communion with God when we go to Him not merely for ourselves and for the great vague world, but for a people whom we have begun to love and call our own while we know that they are His. There is the interest of countless new details and the inspiration of the noblest purpose for which a man can live."

All these together make up the happiness and hope of those bright days in which a strong and healthy and devout young man is just entering the ministry

of the gospel. Such thoughts form a suitable introduction to the subject for to-day which is, *Entering the Pastorate*.

## I

*Ordination to the Office of the Ministry.*

Ordination is the act of the Presbytery. It is the solemn setting apart, by prayer and the imposition of hands, of one who has been examined and judged qualified, and called. Of the many things that might here be considered I select two:

## I. The deep solemnity of the ordination service.

This is implied in the nature of it as the setting apart of a consecrated man to a holy office. It is indicated by the outward ceremony when the candidate on bended knees, in the presence of a court constituted in the name of Christ, with prayer and the laying on of the hands of Presbytery, is inducted into this sacred calling.

The form of Church Government directs that: "Upon the day appointed for ordination which is to be performed in that church where he that is to be ordained is to serve, a solemn fast is to be kept for the congregation that they may the more earnestly join in prayer for a blessing upon the ordinance of Christ and the labors of His servant for their good."

Young gentlemen, I beseech you to pray earnestly that the day of your ordination may impress itself deeply upon your religious life. It should have such an uplifting power as should make it forever impossible for you to be as you were before. The danger is that in your anxiety about your examinations and trial pieces you will neglect the proper attention to your spiritual state and thus fail of the full measure of the grace of ordination. "But know that the Lord

hath set apart him that is godly for Himself." (Ps. 4:3.) Neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.

2. The sacredness and significance of your ordination vows.

I cannot do better than to direct your attention to the rules for examination of the candidates for ordination, section vi, Book of Discipline, page 52; and to the Formula of Queries addressed to the candidate in connection with the ordination service—Book of Discipline, pp. 117-119. The import of these solemn engagements should be carefully considered beforehand. Prov. 20-25: "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry."

The recent suspension from the ministry of the Covenanter Church of a number of young ministers who, but a little before, had entered into these solemn ordination vows, warrants me to remind you that the Covenanter Church does not induct any one into her ministry who does not publicly declare his belief in her principles as scriptural and who does not engage to propagate and defend them. He is not fulfilling his ordination vows when he refrains from propagating views contrary to her distinctive principles. His duty as a minister is positive, not negative.

One of the suspended ministers, above referred to, said on his trial: "If I were a student or a licentiate I could not conscientiously take the ordination vows required of her ministry." How then could he conscientiously maintain them? Can one conscientiously keep vows which he cannot conscientiously take?

Query—What then is the duty of one who, after entering the ministry, finds that he cannot conscientiously fulfill his ordination vows? I answer unhesitatingly that he should withdraw from the ministry in that church. If he remains he will either be

untrue to his own convictions, or he will be false to the church; and probably he will be both. That was a pitiful sight that was witnessed in our church when men whose hairs were silvered with age and with arduous ministerial labors in the service of the church, renounced their ordination vows, thereby confessing that their whole lives had been a mistake; but, sirs, even this is to be chosen rather than to remain in her ministry after having ceased to believe her distinctive principles.

Heartsick and weary of this unceasing defection of Covenanter ministers, I give you charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, "that thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 6:13-14.)

## II

### *Installation in the Pastoral Office.*

1. The act of installation is distinct from ordination.

Ordination inducts into the ministerial office; installation constitutes the pastoral relation.

2. When a call has been accepted, installation should not be unnecessarily delayed.

There is frequently a temptation to defer it. To defer settlement is usually unwise.

- (1) Because delay gives the impression of indifference to the relation. It is much like continued delay in a marriage, after the engagement has been announced.

- (2) Delay may lead to dissatisfaction.

The people having called a Pastor, and their call

having been accepted, are in a sense more unsettled than before. Then they were occupied in selecting a pastor, now they are waiting. It is no advantage to either party that other candidates should now enter the field. Having settled upon your field it is safer and better to enter it at once.

3. Recognize that the congregation is a party to the installation service.

This is sometimes overlooked in arranging for the services; and unless their attention is called to it, the people are liable to overlook it themselves. It is very important to begin your ministry by a scrupulous regard for the rights of the people.

- (1) Consult the congregation as to the time and place.

A spirited congregation is always anxious to make much of such an occasion. In a church of long pastorates it may be the only event of the kind in a lifetime. It is due to them to consult their convenience.

- (2) Consult their wishes as to the parties to participate in the service.

The Presbytery may arrange the whole service independently of both congregation and pastor-elect. It is customary, however, to defer to the wishes of the parties. It is of great importance that the congregation understand that they are to be present at the installation ceremony—not as spectators merely—but as “the party of the second part.”

4. Be impressed with the grave responsibility which the pastoral relation involves.

By your installation a flock of God's own people will be committed to your care. Remember that they have been purchased with His own blood. Under God their salvation will depend on you. You are to watch for their souls as they that must give account. As I write these words my mind is counting over congregations in our church whose pastors proved un-

faithful to the trust reposed in them and their beautiful flocks were all scattered and torn. The efforts still being made to rescue and heal them and keep them alive recall the words of the Prophet Amos:—"As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch." (Amos. 3:12.)

I charge you most solemnly, young men, that, if in the conflict of opinion, the time shall ever come to any of you when you can no longer maintain the doctrines and practice of the church from which you have received your pastoral charge, you will restore the congregation to her Presbyterial care unharmed by you, and that as you shall answer to God at the Great Day.

### III

#### *Beginning Work as a Pastor.*

When the vows of ordination have been recorded and the pastoral relation constituted, you will be conscious of a marvelous change in your feelings. All your work will take on a new color; life will open with a broader vision; men will have new worth; your earthly life will be more closely linked with the life eternal, and God will seem nearer to you than before.

It is a difficult thing to describe those exultant days in one's life—

"When as large as the birds are the bloom-loving bees;  
And the birds sing like angels in the tops of the trees."

Such are the opening days of the new pastorate to a young minister. I feel my heart beat quicker as I anticipate for you, young friends, the near approach of these halcyon days.

## 1. Making the acquaintance of the people.

- (1) Resolve to have personal acquaintance with each member of your flock.

Begin by making yourself familiar with their names. The good shepherd "calleth His own sheep by name and leadeth them out." (Jno. 10:3.)

The pastor cannot deal with his flock in the mass. He must individualize. His intercourse with them must be personal. His preaching, as far as his own mind is concerned, must be personal. His prayers should be personal. This is one of the most interesting features of our first experience in a congregation—coming to know the members personally.

## 2. Manifest a personal interest in each one.

Nothing gives a pastor a stronger hold upon a member of his congregation, than to make him conscious of his personal regard. Dr. Cuyler in "How to be a Pastor" says:—"The secret of a legitimate and permanent popularity is this: First, keep your heart strong and sweet and loving and courageous by a constant living in Jesus Christ; and secondly, *take a personal interest in everybody*. To each human being on the globe, nobody is quite as important as his own self. . . . This instinct is universal. Every ambassador of Christ should avail himself of it."

This is good advice from a very successful pastor. He says further:—"God never intended that this world should be saved by pulpit geniuses; or he would create more of them. While only one man in ten may have the talent to become a very great preacher, the other nine, if they love Christ and human souls, can become great pastors." No man can be a great pastor who does not maintain familiar personal interest in the members of his flock.

## 3. Avoid seeming favoritism.

You will not find all the members of your congregation alike worthy; much less will they be alike at-

tractive. Remember that it is not your business to have a good time in pleasant company, but to find those that need your help and aid them. You will be surprised to find how jealous people are of their pastor's attention. If you select certain places as your secret resort, or if you disclose your plans more fully to some than to others, the latter will feel wronged by this invidious distinction, and when you next approach them you will feel a chill in the air.

In the social gatherings of your people be careful to distribute your time so as not to seem to choose your company by affinity. Particularly do not add the charm of your special notice to those who are already the centers of attraction. Rather seek out those retiring ones who sit all the evening in seclusion, unattractive and unnoticed and use all your social powers to make them the center of a winsome circle.

4. Give special attention to the most imperfect Christians.

It must be confessed that in almost every congregation there are some knotty, gnarled and disagreeable people. One sometimes wonders to what purpose they were created. One important end they serve is to test and so strengthen the graces of the pastor. Others can avoid them; the pastor cannot. His work is to beautify them. The apostle says: "Those parts of the body which are uncomely, on them we bestow the more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need." (1 Cor. 12:23-24.) Be ambitious to see what a change you can effect in that rude, uncouth character.

In hard-wood finish nothing shows such a beautiful grain, or takes such a fine polish as a *burl*. Keep yourself in sympathetic touch with these rough, uncouth, imperfect Christians, and the friction will polish your own character as well as theirs.

5. Deal wisely with any who may be disaffected by your coming.

It is not to be considered a remarkable fact that there should be some members in your congregation who should have preferred someone else as their pastor. They may even have said mean, hard, untrue things about you. It may be in your power to crush them. It will be a far nobler victory to win them. Recognize in your own heart their right of preference for another. Let them see that you are magnanimous toward the one who was your rival in their affections. Be forgiving. Be considerate. Be frank and open, and you will probably find that in a few months they will be your fastest friends.

6. If you have taken the place of an aged retiring pastor be considerate of his feelings.

It is always a delicate thing if the former pastor remains in the congregation. What I have to say refers especially to an aged minister who can no longer perform the duties of pastor.

- (1) Do not manifest eagerness to supplant him in the affections of the people.

You cannot begin to realize the feelings with which an old pastor resigns to you the care of the flock which he has long tended, and submits that you should take his place in the affections of his people. Use the utmost care not to add a pang to a heart already sorely tried and very tender.

- (2) Do not unnecessarily, or violently, change his methods of work.

There is always a temptation to signalize the beginning of one's ministry by something that will make it an epoch in the life of the congregation. It is very possible, too, that the old minister has clung to the methods of church work belonging to a former generation and that changes should indeed be made. But do not seek to emphasize the fact that you are introducing

a newer and better way. Proceed cautiously. It will be to your advantage, and for the welfare of the flock, and for the honor of Christ, that you treat him with the respect due his years of service, and especially due from you who are entering into his labors.

- (3) Bear patiently with his criticism even if it seems unreasonable.

The old minister may be chafed and ruffled; he may even be imperious and unjust; but let yours be the charity that "beareth all things."

- (4) Seek to profit by his experience.

It will do the old minister great good to have the young minister accept him as his spiritual father. He loves to be regarded as "such an one as Paul the Aged" and to have his youthful successor as his own son Timothy. Besides, the old minister's experience in the congregation may be of unspeakable value to you. There are cases, however, in which it is necessary to guard against seeking advice which it may be impossible to follow.

7. Consult the officers of the congregation as to your plans of work.

The pastor is ex-officio commander-in-chief of the forces of the congregation, but he should discuss the plan of campaign with those without whose coöperation and support it cannot be executed. The other officers have taken their vows of service as well as himself. The Elders have spiritual oversight as real as his own, and ruling power equal to his own. He should undertake no important work for the spiritual advancement of the flock without first submitting it to them.

The Deacons have been entrusted with the financial affairs. It is altogether wrong for the pastor to assume to dictate the financial policy of the congregation, independently of the financial board. If the new pastor has a pet scheme of finance, let him seek to have

it accepted first by the financial board; to be submitted to the congregation as their scheme, rather than the pastor's.

So in all the other departments of church work, take counsel with the workers. The advantages of beginning work in this way may be summed up in three particulars:

- (1) It identifies the officers with the pastor in forming plans of work.
- (2) It secures their coöperation in the execution of the plans.
- (3) It impresses them with their responsibility for success or failure.

8. Seek the sympathy of the young people.

The relation of the pastor to the Young Peoples' Society will be discussed in the *Second Series*. Suffice it to say here that this is one of the subjects which must receive careful consideration in entering the pastorate.

9. Remember that the children are included in your pastoral charge.

The Church of Rome in making up her statistics includes all baptized persons. Protestant churches enroll only those in full communion. Rome is right. The children of believing and professing parents are church members by their birth; it is as such that they are entitled to baptism. And being baptized they are to be considered in the preaching of the word, in public prayer, in family visitation, and in every form of pastoral oversight. "Feed my lambs." (Jno. 21:15.)

#### IV

##### *Adjusting Relations with the Community.*

1. Seek fraternal relations with other congregations of our own church.

2. The same with congregations of other denominations.
3. Interest yourself in the intellectual progress of the community.
4. Interest yourself in the material prosperity of the community.

## LECTURE VII

### THE PASTOR'S DAILY LIFE

“THERE are two elements in preaching,—Truth and Personality. Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. The character and even the reputation of the preacher becomes of the utmost moment, because it is an element in his preaching. The same truth comes very differently to men as it falls from the lips of different men.”—Bishop Brooks.

A minister's daughter being asked why ministers' children are worse than others answered:—“Because they live with the minister.” Such a declaration, if true, is too serious to provoke a smile. It implies that to those who know him intimately, the minister's daily life vitiates his ministry. Familiarity does not breed contempt, except of contemptible things or in contemptible people.

I have already spoken of the minister's personal walk with God. I wish, to-day, to speak of the pastor in his daily life among men.

How should the daily life of the minister be characterized?

#### I

#### *By Dignity.*

1. He should be dignified in his dress.

We do not approve of gowns and vestments as badges of the ministerial office. Nevertheless it is the duty of the minister to make conscience of clothing

himself in a becoming garb. This does not necessarily mean a white necktie, and a clerical coat. But it does mean well-fitting garments, of good material, carefully brushed, neatly adjusted, and worn with immaculate linen. A minister is to look neither overdressed nor slovenly.

2. He should be dignified in his address.

I do not refer now to address in the pulpit. Everyone admits that the pulpit style of address must be dignified. But there are many ministers who in order to be hail-fellow-well-met with everybody, "condescend to men of low estate" in a bad sense. There are three things in this connection against which you should be especially watchful:

(1) Avoid the use of any form of *by-word*.

"Let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matt. 5:37.) These words of our Lord have a special significance to His ambassadors, and a word spoken unadvisedly may blight a preacher's usefulness for years.

(2) Avoid the use of slang words or phrases.

The temptation to this is constant. Sometimes it seems to give a sort of vivacity to conversation. But it is extremely reprehensible. It belongs to the rabble and the slums, or at best to the college-ninny and the Philistine. The pastor must not throw the influence of his example on the side of evil, even in what seems so small a matter. He must "keep himself unspotted from the world." Slang comprises all cant terms, and there is a pulpit cant which is just as reprehensible as the jargon of the college freshman or the lingo of the yeggman. In general, it includes all set forms of phraseology used as stop-gaps in thought. But this is a matter of "pulpit diction" and is more properly reserved for treatment in the study of Homiletics.

What I am now concerned with is the dignity of speech in the pastor's daily life. Slang, in this sense, includes words or phrases that are (1)\* coarse, (2)\* hackneyed, (3)\* meaningless. I would suggest that in your daily rounds of visiting and social duty you simply take pains to cultivate a ready sympathy, and a spontaneous but dignified expression of it.

(3) Avoid the outbreaking of temper.

2 Tim. 2:24: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle toward all men." If you have a quick, hot temper, be thankful for it; it will make a splendid servant; but if it becomes your master, woe to you; you will be a slave indeed. Nothing more certainly lowers ministerial dignity than hot inconsiderate words. The minister who burns with righteous indignation against moral wrong has an element of char-

\* (1) "Hike!" This is well enough to steers, about a straw-stack, but not seemly among the flock in the pastor's care. Yet a young university man, calling on a worthy elder's family, rose with the remark: "Well, I must *hike* for my train." No effort was made to detain him.

(2) "Knee high to a duck;" "cut it out." . . . Expressive, but outworn. An expression is not slang merely by reason of its being picturesque. But a picturesque phrase is likely to become slang by reason of its over-use; and, the more picturesque, the sooner will it be outworn. Picturesque language is to be commended only so long as it bears the mark of originality and dignity.

(3) At present there is a certain expression current—I shall not mention it further than to say that it is a number between twenty and thirty—which for sheer vapidness surpasses every expression known to me, in any language, ancient or modern. Its purpose seems to be to raise a laugh without the expense of wit. In certain circles, it appears, it may be used as the final retort in any passage of repartee. I do not mean to insult your good taste by intimating that you are likely to use this expression, or in fact any meaningless expression, for the sake of raising a laugh; but its use is somewhat akin to the recurrent "amen" in prayers, when that expression is used in an attempt to *create* a feeling rather than to *express* one.

acter which has tremendous power, but if he flares up at every supposed indignity offered to himself, while he is unmoved by the insults offered to his Lord, it is easy to see that the fire of his anger is not kindled by a coal from God's altar, but by a spark from the pit. "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me." (Ps. 39:1.)

3. He should be dignified in his social relations.

I can only indicate what I mean by two points:

(1) Avoid gossiping.

There is a certain kind of small talk, silly twaddle, that to a great extent furnishes the staple of conversation in parlor and dining-room, that really is beneath the dignity of true manhood and womanhood, and much more of the minister of Jesus Christ. There should be a very determined effort to elevate the tone of social conversation, and ministers should lead in the reform. You cannot spend an evening in that trifling, gossipy chit-chat without a sensible loss of self-respect. Not that a pastor cannot enter with dignity into the little affairs of his parishioners' lives, but he must be able to deal in little affairs without becoming little; he should be big enough to be interested in trifles without becoming a trifler. Our moral earnestness will be judged by the tone of our conversation, and our appeals from the pulpit in regard to the seriousness of life must seem wholly insincere, if in our daily intercourse, we give ourselves up to the vanity of fashionable gossip.

(2) Avoid jesting about sacred things.

It is a grievous mistake for a pastor to aim to be the clown in any company. Some ministers have a reputation for relating funny stories. It is a perilous talent, and, if there is not along with it the balance wheel of a profound, quick sense of propriety, it is almost sure to lead the minister to play the mountebank.

One aspect of this evil is scathingly rebuked by Dr. Brooks, as follows :

"I think," he says, "there is another creature who ought to share with the clerical prig, the contempt of Christian people. I mean the clerical jester in all the varieties of his unpleasant existence. He appears in and out of the pulpit. He lays his hands on the most sacred things and leaves defilement upon all he touches." A Bible passage may be forever lightened by an easy jest. What is simply stupid elsewhere, becomes terrible here.

4. He should be dignified in official relations.

This point will be discussed when treating of the pastor's public work, in the pulpit, the session and the higher courts.

In closing this point let me earnestly warn you against a false dignity which frequently characterizes the empty-headed, vain-hearted, upstart of a clergyman, and which is the furthest possible remove from a truly dignified ministerial character and deportment.

## II

### *By Politeness.*

This is not a Chesterfieldian lecture on etiquette, but there is a moral effect of true politeness as an element of ministerial deportment, which claims consideration. I have had much to say about courage; courtesy arises from the same source—the heart. It is a matter of manner, rather than manners. Courtesy is not polish; it is in the fiber of character, the grain of the heart. If the grain is right for the ministerial office, the daily friction of pastoral cares will but bring out the polish. But there are some grains that will not take a polish. Without reverence and sympathy, there is no hope of true courtesy; yet it is possible to

cover one's defects somewhat, and, while praying for hearts filled with reverence and sympathy, it is well to at least have good manners.

1. Have regard for the amenities of society.

Some ministers affect such an antipathy to laws of etiquette that they are in danger of neglecting to be gentlemen. This a pastor cannot afford to do. In the desire to be frank and outspoken men become rude and boorish. When a man determines that he will always say just what he thinks, he needs to give great attention to what he thinks, and to be certain, first of all, that he does think. It may be taken for granted that the pastor will always maintain good manners in his home and that he will be polite in his treatment of women and of the aged. But I will venture one word more:

2. Use politeness toward the lowly.

Nothing is a truer test of character than the manner in which one treats those who are dependent on him and cannot assert their rights. To speak to a servant in angry, authoritative, abusive language, shows a lack of true nobility. The pastor who is less polite toward the poor of his flock, the laboring men, the servant girls and others in like positions, than he is toward their employers, is not worthy of the respect of either. But, believe me, these former will not be the last to detect a want of sympathy in a merely patronizing air.

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing; and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (Jas. 2:1-4.)

## III

*By Business Integrity.*

1. By meeting promptly all financial obligations.

The minister must live within his means. The man who spends more than he makes, spends other people's money. To do this without reasonable prospect of being able to pay is dishonest. The adage, "The world owes me a living," is not true unless you have rendered some service that furnishes you with a basis for the claim. The truth is, we brought nothing into the world, and ran a large account on the debtor side before we had anything placed to our credit. It is dangerous to permit ourselves to set up a false claim.

The pastor is under special obligations to meet promptly his financial obligations.

- (1) He cannot preach honesty if he is not honest in daily life.
- (2) The care and distraction arising from unpaid bills unfits him for his duties.
- (3) His financial failures reflect dishonor upon his people and upon his Lord.
- (4) A dishonest minister is a great stumbling block to the unbelieving.
- (5) The minister with unpaid bills loses his self-respect.

Pay your household bills, pay your tailor bills, pay your rent, pay your taxes, pay your subscriptions for magazines and papers with scrupulous promptness and care.

2. By the careful use of clerical favors in business life.

(1) In the use of clerical orders on the railroad.

Some ministers decline to accept such orders, as in some sense making themselves a charity, and as placing themselves under an obligation to the railroads

that would silence their testimony against the wrongdoing of these corporations. These objections are not well founded. In 1904 the Pennsylvania Railroad sent out with its orders for clerical rates a circular letter containing the following:

"The concession is granted by this company in recognition of the great good already accomplished by the clergy, and with the hope that the order may be of assistance in furthering your efforts in behalf of those among whom you are called to labor."

Such a message greatly enhances the value of the order. Never be tempted to make any use of your order which the company does not stipulate in granting it. Be as strictly honest with the corporation as with an individual. No excuse of railroad extortion will palliate double dealing on your part. Your own integrity is at stake. Even if "corporations have no souls," you have one yourself.

- (2) Accept but do not abuse clerical discounts on books and legitimate merchandise.

These discounts are offered on business principles. Ministers are patrons of the world of books and entitled to special rates. Your custom as the pastor of a congregation has a real, though incidental value, to business men. Ministers have given up the ordinary business of money-making, and devoted their lives to a service that barely secures a livelihood, while at the same time it promotes the temporal welfare of the community. It is an honorable thing for business men to recognize this, and ministers can honorably accept it. Only do not be beguiled by men who would use you to the detriment of others.

- (3) Do not sell the influence of your name to book-agents.

If an agent, full of disinterested benevolence, offers to donate you a book provided you will allow him to place your name on his list of subscribers, with the

price of the book opposite, and flatters your vanity with the assurance that you are the most influential minister in the place,—do not be caught in the snare. It is too much to say that book-agents are evil, only evil, and that continually. It is not the agent I am discussing: it is the minister.

3. By paying taxes cheerfully.

I do not accept the theory that in this country Covenanters should pay their taxes only “for wrath’s sake.” We enjoy splendid advantages of civil and religious liberty under our government, protection of life and property, privileges of education, and of public improvements. It is a just debt we owe; and where it is not exorbitant or imposed unjustly, we should set an example of prompt, cheerful, honest payment.

4. By dealing honestly with the Lord.

The pastor should stand at the head of the list as a generous and cheerful supporter of the gospel and of the poor. Ordinarily, however, it is not to be expected that he should subscribe to his own salary.

#### IV

##### *By Purity.*

“Keep thyself pure.” (1 Tim. 5:22.)

1. Guard with jealous care your deportment, yea, your very thoughts toward the women of your flock.

2. Watch against all impurities in conversation.

I am moved to speak thus because I once heard an elder remark on returning from Synod, that he never had heard so many “peculiar” stories in his life as since he left home to attend the meeting of Synod. It ought to be said that this remark involved only two or three ministers with whom he happened to be thrown and who themselves had been drawn together by an

evil affinity. But in his mind the stigma fell upon ministers as a class. One of the highest tributes ever paid to General Grant was that he never heard an obscene remark without manifesting his displeasure. If a minister does not so live that no one will dare to utter impure words in his presence, he is not worthy to be pastor of a flock of Christ's people.

## V

*By Moral Earnestness.*

I am fully persuaded that the lack of this element in the minister's daily life has much to do in weakening the force of the ministry. It is related that a minister asked the great actor, Garrick, why people were so deeply moved by his representations of fiction while they listened unmoved to the minister's presentation of truth. To which Garrick replied:—"I speak the false as if it were true; you speak the truth as if it were fiction." The lack of moral earnestness in the daily life of ministers creates the impression that they do not believe the things of eternity which they preach.

## VI

*By Cheerfulness.*

You will wholly mistake all that has been said if you interpret it to mean that you are to be morose and melancholy. If anything will drive men away from religion it is a bulrush preacher.

Spurgeon says: "The Christian minister should also be very cheerful. I do not believe in going about like certain monks whom I saw in Rome, who salute each other in sepulchral tones and convey the pleasant information 'Brother, we must die,' to which lively

salutation each lively brother of the order replies—'Yes, brother, we must die.' I was glad" he says, "to be informed on such good authority that all these lazy fellows are about to die. Upon the whole it is about the best thing they can do. But until that event occurs they might use some more comfortable salutation."

It is enough to say that the minister's message to men is not the message of death, but of life and life eternal. "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me shall never die!"

Let the pastor lead the flock through the valley of Baca up to the Delectable Mountains and into the land of Beulah—"Where they shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

## LECTURE VIII

### THE PASTOR IN HIS STUDY

THE pastor in his habits of study will claim our attention to-day. Dr. Wilcox says:—"You are apt while in the Seminary to feel intellectually rich. Without very large occasion for giving out thought, you are incessantly receiving. It may seem to you that you can hardly exhaust your stores of theology and exegesis. But these are your years of plenty. After them will come those years of famine, when the lean kine will swallow up the fat kine." These remarks sufficiently indicate that the lecture has its application to students as well as to pastors. Now is the accepted time for accumulating material.

Let us consider—

#### I

#### *The Necessity for Study.*

Murphy says:—"It should be firmly settled by every pastor, that close study is the one great business of his whole life. That his life is to be one of incessant study, he should fix upon as a fact from which there is to be no escaping if he would serve God in the gospel. He should make all his arrangements with reference to it, and he should give himself up to it with his whole heart and purpose." So writes Paul:—"Give attendance to reading; meditate upon these things, that thy profiting may appear to all, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that

hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:13-16.) "Thy God commands thy strength." (Ps. 68:28).

Note some of the things which make this demand for study imperative.

1. This is an age of intelligence and of intellectual force.

"The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places," but not for the pleasures of idleness.

The common schools have made education the common heritage of all. The international Bible lessons have made the people somewhat familiar with the Book. The daily paper and the current magazine-literature will be found on the center-table in many homes. The people are reading and inquiring. There is intense intellectual activity. The minister must keep abreast of it. To do this he must study. One may keep up with the times by reading the current magazines, but to keep ahead of the times he must study his Bible.

2. The age demands qualities in preaching which can be acquired only by habits of intense study.

I am well aware that it is common to decry this a superficial age, an age of shallowness. But it will not be satisfied with shallowness in the pulpit.

(1) Profoundness.

It is an age of questioning and investigation, nay more, of doubt and skepticism. However shallow much of this unbelief may be, it cannot be successfully met without profound and careful work in the pulpit. In fact it is the want of deep, strong thought on the part of the ministry that has put in question the great fundamental doctrines of christianity. The doctrines of the church's faith were drawn from the scriptures by thorough scholarship and profound study, and they cannot be maintained without the use of the same weapons.

(2) Incisiveness and comprehensiveness.

The pew whispers in the ear of the pulpit, "make it short." This sentiment is not born wholly of the wicked desire to have done with the religious services. It is rather an appeal for close, compact thought. It is a protest against an endless trickle of words unburdened by thought. "You must be very fond of coffee," remarked the landlady as the boarder passed up his cup for the tenth time. "Yes, Madam," was the cheerful reply, "I am, or I would not drink so much water to get a little of it." This demand for short sermons is not a call for less coffee, but for less water in it. "Boil it down." It is a demand for more study.

Spurgeon says:—"If you ask me how you may shorten your sermons, I should say study them better. Spend more time in the study, that you may need less in the pulpit. We are generally longest when we have least to say. A man with a great deal of well-prepared matter will probably not exceed forty minutes; when he has less to say he will go on for fifty minutes; and when he has absolutely nothing he will need an hour." The age is a busy one, other duties are waiting till you get through. A farmer once complained to Spurgeon of one of the young men of his college. "Sir," he said, "he ought to have given over at four o'clock, but he kept on till half-past, and there were all my cows waiting to be milked. How would he have liked it if he had been a cow?"

The age demands comprehensive, incisive sermons, and this demands study.

### (3) Clearness.

The age demands a profound gospel, but we must not mistake muddiness for depth. It is possible to see the pebbles in the bottom of a very deep stream, provided the water be perfectly clear. But clearness and depth will not be found together, unless the minister is a conscientious and faithful student. Many

gospel themes require a careful regard for shades of meaning in words if accuracy of statement is to be secured.

In delivering his message to men, God inspired the very words of the sacred text, and the minister who undertakes to declare the message, without a prayerful and painstaking preparation is wanting in appreciation of his great responsibility.

(4) Vivacity.

I can think of no better word to express the quality I mean. We must all have felt the difference between sermons possessing or lacking this quality. There is great diversity of gifts in this regard, but the uplift in the minister's heart as he enters the pulpit is a great factor in producing it, and this uplift is there only when he carries with him the sense of a sermon well studied out.

(5) Forceful delivery.

A vast amount of preaching falls lifeless on listless ears. Why? Not for want of strong thought, but for the lack of forceful utterance. We cannot compensate for pithless, lifeless sentence structure due to careless composition, by thundering forth our common-places in orotund tones, but we may sacrifice the most painstaking preparation upon the altar of a meaningless delivery. This, however, belongs to another department. It is only introduced here in its relation to the necessity for habits of study.

Profoundness, comprehensiveness, clearness, vivacity, force—these qualities are demanded of the modern pastor, and he cannot meet the demands without constant, unwearying study.

I will close this point with a quotation from Murphy:—"The pastor must *study*, STUDY, STUDY, or he will not grow or even live as a true workman for Christ. He must study God in His word, in His works and in His providences. He must study the

great writings of human piety and wisdom which a rich religious literature furnishes. He must study man in his varied character and prospects. He must study everything that would enrich his discourses, draw men to Christ and glorify God."

## II

### *Methods of Study.*

#### 1. Be systematic in your studies.

In no other calling in life is there greater need for systematic work than in the ministry. So manifold and so varied are the duties pressing upon the pastor that, if they are not carefully arranged and proportioned, in time it will be utterly impossible to overtake them all.

You all intend to be systematic in your work when you get settled down in your parish; but not one of you will be unless you have the habit so firmly fixed that it is like a second nature to you, and you have a clearly defined purpose backed up by an inflexible will. The rules which you lay down for yourself cannot be like the laws of the Medes and Persians that could not be altered, but they must have behind them a persistent force that will not too readily yield to lazy self-indulgence within, or to unreasonable demands from without. It is the purest nonsense for a minister of the gospel, or even for a student of theology, when in health, to neglect his studies on the plea that he "doesn't feel like it." *He must make himself feel like it.* The man is wicked, who does the things which he is morally bound to do, only when he feels like it. Make rules for yourself and enforce them on yourself like an autocrat.

Dr. Theodore Cuyler suggests the following general

rules as to the distribution of time: "Recreate mind and body with easy occupation on Monday. Get at your sermon on Tuesday, the minister's best day; and never commit the idiotic sin of writing a sermon on Saturday evening. Make the most of those hours when your mind works like a trip-hammer, and then put your best thoughts on paper, whether you ever carry the paper into the pulpit or not. Use the forenoons for study, the afternoons for pastoral visitation, and your evenings for meetings, readings, recreation, or social purposes. Sleep as soundly as possible all night, if you want to keep your congregation awake on Sunday. . . . The man who invented midnight oil deserves a purgatory of nightmare. My rule is, never to touch a sermon by lamp-light. One hour in the morning is worth five at night."

On the same subject Murphy says:—"In order that our counsels may be as explicit as possible we will give a scheme of daily ministerial work which has been long tried and proved practicable. In general—Spend the forenoon up to two o'clock in study; the afternoon in visiting; the evening in reading and correspondence.

"More especially—

- (1) Two and a half hours on the morning sermon.
- (2) An hour or an hour and a half on general Bible or other studies.
- (3) Then half an hour to an hour on the sermon for Sabbath evening.
- (4) In the afternoon about two-and-a-half hours in various duties of pastoral visiting.
- (5) Divide the evenings between meetings, correspondence and general reading.
- (6) Let other smaller matters come in between."

The peculiarity of this scheme is that it gives from two to four times as much attention to the morning

sermon as to the evening sermon, besides giving it the first hours of the day: that it divides the studies of each day between the two sermons: and that it divides the study of sermons by an hour of general reading or study on other subjects.

These rules by two eminent and very successful pastors will have some value for us all. They are adapted to a city pastorate, rather than to a widely scattered country charge.

In answer to the question, How many hours should be devoted to study? Dr. Wilcox says:—"As many as your parochial work will allow. The hours at best will be few enough. You have heard of the German professor who said he got sixteen hours a day with his books except his wedding day when he could get only fourteen. But you must be out on numberless errands. If you have two hours of the twenty-four in your study count yourself a favored man."

Against this last remark I enter my most earnest protest as utterly unsafe advice for any young minister to follow. Much nearer the truth is the view of Murphy, who says:—"We have already spoken of the necessity for very diligent and persevering study, and need but add that just as much time daily as prudence will allow should be spent at it. But we will also say that the other extremity should be avoided. There should not be too much undertaken—either here or in any other branch of ministerial work. If too many hours are spent in mental work, other duties will be neglected; the health will be endangered; the vigor of the mind will not be so great; and the wearying effects of over work may so discourage as to create a dislike that will alienate from all mental effort. We would venture to suggest as a rule about five hours a day, or from eight o'clock in the morning until two o'clock P. M., with a recess of one hour. Our program then, for the ordinary day's work would be—

- (1) One hour of devotion before breakfast.
- (2) Five hours of study.
- (3) Two and a half hours of visiting.
- (4) One and a half hours for reading and correspondence, making ten hours a day for these various duties of the office."

But these short hours of study should be spent in real work. There should be no dreaming, no frittering away of minutes, no languid spaces spent in getting ready for work. The business in hand should be plunged into at once and the whole powers toned up vigorously till the allotted period is ended.

2. I am now prepared to submit to you the following schedule which may be found helpful—viz:

General suggestions as to distribution of the time.

- (1) Systematize the work for the days of the week.
  - (2) Reserve the forenoons for study; the afternoons for study and visitation; the evenings for reading and correspondence.
  - (3) Take Monday for recreation, not idleness, and Saturday afternoon as a half-holiday.
  - (4) Announce to the congregation your days and hours of study and request them, as far as possible, to respect them.
3. A schedule for daily work.
- (1) Give one hour to personal and family devotion.
  - (2) Give three hours to study of sermon or lecture.
  - (3) Give one hour to luncheon.
  - (4) Give two hours to study of sermon or lecture.
  - (5) Give two hours to visiting in the congregation.
  - (6) Give two hours to dinner and family intercourse.

- (7) Give three hours to reading and correspondence.

This provides for five hours of close study on the work for the Sabbath each day except Monday and Saturday, and for three hours on Saturday. These are the hours to be sacredly guarded. The others will necessarily be very flexible.

### III

#### *Be Discriminating in Your Reading and Studies.*

1. The Bible should have the first place.

If the minister permits any kind of study to supplant God's own book it will be injurious if not fatal to his ministry. The constant study of the scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek tongues will be the most prolific source of fresh, original, and inspiring thought. It is a great mistake for the young minister to drop his Biblical studies in the original at the close of his seminary course. The original Biblical text will supply material for the sermons of a life time. Nothing else will.

2. Have variety in your reading.

No one department of literature should be wholly neglected. Theology, philosophy, history, poetry, all have their place. They are all hand-maidens to your work and the change of subjects is restful to the mind. As to fiction the minister should read sparingly, and only the very highest class of such writings and such as he can make tributary to his work.

3. Read only the best authors.

Brethren, the time is short. You cannot read everything; read only the best. Shedd lays down one rule as a sufficient guide, i.e., "the daily, nightly, everlasting study of standard authors." The mastery of

one great writer is all you can manage in a lifetime.

But it is enough. John Foster says, and the words are timely and well spoken:—"Few have been sufficiently sensible of the importance of that economy in reading which selects almost exclusively the very best order of books. Why should a man, except for some special reason, read a very inferior book at the very time that he might be reading one of the highest order?"

Gentlemen, I would warn you against the allurements of the sensational stuff in the daily paper. It beguiles ministers of many a precious hour, weakens the intellect and pollutes the soul. Sketch the morning paper for a few moments for the events that are of interest to the Kingdom of God, and then cast it aside resolutely and give your mind more wholesome food.

4. Read the same book several times. It is significant that the Covenanter ministers who are known for their literary taste, are "one-book" men.

#### IV

##### *How to Make all Study Tributary to the Pulpit.*

1. Make a book of texts and outlines.

Your Biblical studies will be continually suggesting fruitful texts and outlines of sermons. This is especially true of your studies in the original tongues. Do not deceive yourself with the thought that you can hold these in your memory. Take them down at once, and this itself will enable you greatly to improve, while you garner the results of your study. This will do much to solve the problem of how to find texts.

2. Make a book of notes and references.

You can buy an "Index Rerum" systematically arranged in which to make notes to your reading and

references to valuable discussions, or you can make such a book for yourself. Until the habit is formed you will need a whip of not very small cords to drive yourself to it.

3. Make a scrap-book.

Many of the very best things as helps to popular discourse are found in ephemeral form in a daily or weekly paper. It is a good idea to start a scrap-book, to keep it weeded out, and to be ready to discard it when it becomes burdensome and useless. All methods are not suited to all minds. Study thyself.

4. Make a book of illustrations.

This is much better than to buy such a book. The propriety of enforcing truth by illustration cannot be questioned. The great Teacher used this method. "Without a parable spake he not unto them." A sower casting his seed into the ground, or a fisherman casting his net into the sea; a woman kneading her dough, or a merchantman trading in pearls; the sparrow that flew over his head; and the lily that bloomed under his feet. Such familiar things as these furnished Him with illustrations of the profoundest truths and the holiest duties. FOLLOW HIM!



PART II  
SERVICES OF THE PASTOR  
PUBLIC AND SOCIAL



## LECTURE IX

### THE PASTOR'S PUBLIC PRAYERS

“LORD, teach us to pray,” was the request that sprang to the lips of the disciples at the close of one of the public prayers of Jesus. No doubt they were accustomed to pray, but when they listened to our Lord in prayer to His Father, they seemed to feel that they had never prayed at all.

Most of us are too little impressed with the importance of this part of the pastoral office. The failure here has borne its fruit in the mind of the people. Many of them have come to think of the sanctuary as a place where they are to be entertained by an eloquent sermon, instead of as a place of worship. Hence, if they do not like the minister, they remain at home. In my early ministry I received a sharp arrow from the bow of an old Christian soldier, which I did not forget. The old saint was so deaf that he could not hear a word of the preaching, and I innocently inquired why he came to church, seeing he could not hear my sermon. “I go to church to worship God,” was his piercing answer.

When ministers give the place to the devotional exercises which their importance demands, the people will soon cease to speak of them as preliminaries.

#### I

#### *The Importance of Public Prayer in the Services.*

1. It is addressed directly to God.

Dr. Shedd says:—“In treating of sacred rhetoric

we were occupied with the address of an individual to an audience, but in considering the nature and province of liturgics we are concerned with address of the audience itself to Almighty God." There is a sense in which this is a more direct act of worship than is the sermon. In our forms of worship the minister is the mouthpiece in both services. In the sermon he speaks for God to men; in the prayer, he speaks for men to God. Let us not make less of the sermon; but let us make more of the prayer.

2. The prayer is a preparation for the other parts of the service.

(1) True prayer gives a lively sense of the divine presence.

Spurgeon says: "Many a time a sermon has been a kind of Jacob's ladder upon which we have seen the angels of God ascending and descending, and the covenant God Himself at the top thereof. We have often felt when God has spoken through His servants to our souls: 'This is none other but the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.'"

No doubt this is true. But that it may be true, our public prayers must erect the ladder and open the heavenly gate that the angels may come forth; yea, and open the eyes of the people to behold the heavenly vision. The mountains may be full of horses of fire and chariots of fire, but until the eyes of the worshippers are opened they will see no vision of glory. It was said that Rutherford preached as if he saw Jesus standing beside him. It is important that the people see the same. A truly spiritual prayer will lead many to say—"Surely God is in this place."

(2) It brings the people into a receptive frame of mind.

"Make the men sit down" is the text of a very suggestive and helpful sermon by Bishop Brooks. It was not by arguing and disputing about his claims,

but by sitting down quietly and being fed from His gracious and almighty hand, that their doubts were removed—*they became receptive*. This is what the opening prayer should do for the people. It should “make the men sit down.” It should hide them in the secret of God’s presence from the strife of tongues. It should draw them apart from the turmoil and confusion of the world until they become as the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration when “they saw no man save Jesus only.”

3. This is the appointed means for securing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Ezek. 37:1-10. Ezekiel’s vision is a sad and striking picture of the result of much of the most popular preaching of our times. It is not without some effect. There is a moving among the dry bones. But there is no breath in them. They are as dead as before. What is needed?

“Then said He unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, Son of Man and say to the wind: Thus saith the Lord. Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”

Dependence on preaching, and the neglect of prayer will make a barren ministry. The minister’s public prayers should be the channel, along which the Holy Spirit will descend upon the waiting congregation. “Praying in the Holy Ghost,” and praying for the Holy Ghost will make spiritual worship, and spiritual preaching and spiritual hearing.

## II

*How Shall the Pastor Prepare for his Public Prayers?*

1. He should cultivate the *gift* of prayer.

By the gift of prayer is meant the ability to frame suitable petitions, and to express them in appropriate language. The gift can be cultivated.

(1) Study the devotional parts of the Bible.

Commit to memory Psalms abounding in petitions. Fill your mind with promises which are God's checks to be presented at the bank of heaven. Memorize many of the exalted forms of adoration and thanksgiving and confession with which the sacred writings abound. Thus you will be furnished with the vocabulary of prayer, and with the phraseology of the Holy Spirit which is the language of the court of heaven.

(2) Read and study devotional works.

Henry's "Meditations on Prayer" has been found helpful by many; the prayers contained in Dodridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," the Books of Prayer prepared by Liturgical Churches, which abound in selections from the prayers of eminently spiritual men. I do not recommend you to memorize these prayers, with a view to reciting them, but to make yourselves familiar with them for the sake of enlargement in the gift of prayer.

2. We should cultivate the *grace* of prayer.

This is still more important; for if you have the grace of prayer, you will not long lack the gift: and the gift without the grace is a poor endowment for the ministry. The wicked and unregenerate may be eminent in the gift of prayer but they cannot have the grace of prayer.

By the *grace of prayer* is meant that disposition of heart and mind that finds its true expression in prayer to God.

(1) Humility—i.e., the sense of dependence and unworthiness.

There are two classes of being—i.e., Independent and Dependent. *Independent being* is that which is self-existent and self-sufficient. *Dependent being* is

that which derives existence from another, and looks to another for its well-being. There is only one independent being in the universe; that is, God. Prayer belongs to dependent being. Humility is also becoming in the dependent. And this humility is deepened by the sense of unworthiness. Man is not only dependent but he is sinful. Two men went up into the temple to pray. Only one of them had the grace of prayer. He cried: God be merciful to me a sinner.

(2) Love to God and to men.

“The preface to the Lord’s prayer teacheth us to draw near unto God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children unto a Father who is able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.”

(3) Faith.

“He that cometh unto God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6.) “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven of the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” (Jas. 1:6-7.)

(4) Zeal.

There is a wide difference between praying, and saying prayers. Spurgeon says:—“The pleader in public must be in earnest, for a sleepy prayer—what can be a worse preparation for a sermon than that?—Cast your whole soul into the exercise. If ever your whole manhood was engaged in anything let it be in drawing near unto God in public. So pray that by a divine attraction you draw the whole congregation with you up to the throne of God.” Such a result belongs not to the *gift* but to the *grace* of prayer.

3. Cultivate the spirit of prayer, i.e., calling into exercise both the gift and the grace of prayer.

The spirit of prayer may be cultivated:

- (1) By holy meditation—
  - a. Upon God as the hearer of prayer.
  - b. Upon men as the subjects of prayer.
  - c. Upon God's promises as the grounds of prayer.
  - d. Upon the Lord Jesus as the intercessor.
  - e. Upon the Holy Spirit as our helper in prayer.

Ministers of Christ must find time for holy meditation if they would have the spirit of prayer.

- (2) By secret prayer.

A prayerful spirit is kept up by communion with God in the closet, and the fires of devotion should be fanned into a flame by private prayer if you would kindle the flame in the souls of your people by your public prayers.

Now, in the preparatory days of your student life, cultivate the gift of prayer, the grace of prayer, and the spirit of prayer. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (Jude, 20-21.)

## LECTURE X

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC PRAYER

It is usually felt that prayer is not a proper subject of criticism. It is hard enough to preach trial sermons, to be reviewed by critics whose business it is to point out their defects; but to offer prayers subject to the same consideration is scarcely possible. And yet, in view of what has been said of the difficulty and importance of this part of the minister's public work, it is reasonable that candidates should expect instruction in regard to it.

In the ritualistic churches, prayers are made ready to the minister's hand, and the instruction may be restricted to the *manner* of the service, but we are concerned with both the manner and the matter of our prayers.

The principal topic of to-day's lecture is:—*The Characteristics of Public Prayer.*

#### I

##### *The Minister's Public Prayers Should be Reverent.*

God is our Father, but He is our Father *in heaven*. Eccl. 5:2. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth: therefore, let thy words be few."

Prayer should be reverent—

1. In *attitude*.

The minister leading in prayer should either stand or kneel, with hands folded and eyes closed. The habit of the congregation sitting during prayer is growing, even in our own church. This is due to the growing spirit of irreverence. It is utterly destitute of warrant from the scriptures. The pastor should firmly resist it. It is dishonoring to Christ even at the throne of grace. Who ever saw an advocate addressing an earthly court without rising to his feet. Kneeling is also a scriptural position. If you are asked to pray in a congregation where it is the custom for the minister to kneel, do not hesitate to conform to the custom.

Gesturing in prayer is not commendable. It gives the impression that the prayer is addressed to the people rather than to God. Some years ago a student offering prayer in connection with his trials before Presbytery let his hands hang by his side, swinging them back and forth as he prayed. An aged minister criticised it by saying that "Since the Mosaic ceremonies had been abolished there is no scriptural warrant for presenting a *wave-offering* before the Lord." A hand reverently uplifted is not objectionable provided it is not assumed for effect.

2. In *manner*.

(1) Avoid abruptness in engaging in prayer. Give the call to prayer and allow time for the congregation to respond by assuming a reverent attitude. Do not address God in the midst of the confusion arising from the change of position, but wait until quiet is restored.

(2) Avoid using loud and boisterous tones.

There is a tendency to mistake loudness for fervency, just as in the sermon men compound for the lack of sense, by increasing the volume of sound. It is a grievous wrong for a minister to pray in so feeble and indistinct a voice that the people cannot unite in

the petitions, yet true devotion does not consist in volume of voice. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," but not by the force of lung power. Clear, distinct, fervent, quiet tones, are suitable for prayer.

3. In the forms of address.

(1) Guard against too great familiarity in addressing God. Sometimes men pray in a sort of peremptory tone. Spurgeon says: "It is delightful to hear a man wrestle with God and say,—'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'" But that must not be said in a hectoring spirit as though we could command and exact a blessing from the Lord of all. Jacob was made to halt on his thigh after that night's holy conflict, to let him see that God is terrible, and that his prevailing power did not lie in himself.

(2) Avoid the frequent use of endearing terms.

Lecturing to his students, on this delicate subject, Spurgeon says: "When 'Dear Lord' and 'Blessed Lord' and 'Sweet Lord' come over and over again as vain repetitions they are among the worst of blots. I must confess I feel no revulsion in my mind to the words 'Dear Jesus,' if they fall from the lips of a Rutherford, or a Hawker or a Herbert; but when I hear fond and familiar expressions hackneyed by persons not at all remarkable for spirituality, I am inclined to wish that they could in some way or other come to a better understanding of the true relation existing between man and God."

My own conviction is that such terms are appropriate only if used sparingly, and when the matter and manner of the petition assure the worshipers that the endearing term is the expression of a sincere and loving heart. Our people are not much accustomed to the use of these terms in prayer, and we should remember that they may grate unpleasantly on their unaccustomed ears. We may use greater familiarity in

the intimacy of closet communion, than would be proper when speaking as the mouth-piece of the people.

- (3) Avoid the too frequent repetition of the divine names.

This is a serious blemish. It is a breach of the third commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." One used language more forcible than elegant when he said: "God's name is not to be a stop-gap to make up for our want of words." The ancient Hebrew refused to pronounce the name Jehovah, through too great superstition, and in this was wrong; but the careless and irreverent use of the divine names in prayer, is much less defensible. In one of my professors, in my student days in the academy, this fault grew to such a degree that, while he prayed, the irreverent kept tally of the number of times he repeated the name of God. Young gentlemen, guard yourselves carefully on this point. It is not necessary to address God by a specific title in each petition you offer.

## II

### *Public Prayers Should be Supplicatory.*

1. They should not be *didactic*.

God alone is the object of prayer,—not saints, nor angels, nor the Virgin Mary. Hence there is no need to convey information. After the Prohibitory Amendment was defeated in this State, I heard a certain minister preface a petition with "According to the latest reports the majority against the amendment is" so many thousand. He might have taken for granted that the latest returns were known in heaven. Nor is it well to preach an oblique sermon to the people while professing to address God in prayer.

2. They should not be *hortatory*.

It is a misuse of prayer to employ it as the means of administering reproof. Praying *at* people is not so good as praying *for* them. Of course, genuine prayers may convey information, and may imply reproof, but this should not be the conscious aim of the petitioner.

3. They should not be *complimentary*.

What could be in worse taste than the practice of using the prayer as the vehicle for conveying a compliment, e.g., to "the gifted brother who has just addressed us" or on "the eloquent sermon to which we have just listened" or to "the very intelligent congregation to which we have just spoken." It may be fitting to refer to the precious message from God, but not to the messenger.

There are cases, where an excellent gospel sermon has been preached in a weak and unpopular manner, in which a judicious recapitulation of the thoughts of the sermon by another minister in such a way as to reveal their real worth and importance will go very far to redeem the defects of the discourse and to elevate the preacher in the estimation of the people. If properly done in the form of petitions this is unobjectionable.

### III

#### *Public Prayers Should be Practical.*

1. They should be adapted to the peculiar circumstances and needs of your people.

Timeliness is a most important element in public prayer. This is what gives variety. Circumstances are constantly changing. The prayer suitable for one Sabbath may be altogether out of harmony with the environments of the next Lord's day. The prayers of

the pastor should spring from his acquaintance with the lives of his people.

2. They should be pointed with reference to different classes of people.

a. Those who have special responsibilities.

The officers of the congregation, not only the elders but the deacons—the financial board; Sabbath School officers, teachers and workers; parents in the home, teachers in the public schools, public officials.

b. Those who have peculiar trials.

The pastor should pray tenderly for the afflicted, the suffering, the bereaved, and with still deeper tenderness for the tempted and fallen.

c. Those for whom God has made special promises.

The promises of God are of great use to guide us in prayer. He has given particular promises for the widow and the fatherless and the stranger. These are his special wards. The pastor must lead the people to plead their claims before the throne of grace. Men who wrong the defenseless widow will tremble when the pastor appeals to God as the widow's judge, in His place of holiness, in her behalf.

d. Those who are especially upon the hearts of your people.

The pastor should be thoughtful about those who are away from their homes in mission fields, at school, or in travel. The mother of a young seaman complained—"My pastor never prays for the sailors." I heard a policeman plead for special prayers for policemen, and he pleaded their claim to be remembered because of the peculiar responsibility and difficulty of their duties and the special temptations and dangers which beset them as the guardians of public morals, peace, and safety.

I would urge you as pastors to cultivate that great fatherliness of heart which will yearn with anxious

solicitude over your flock so that, when you pray, every one, even to the lowliest member and the little child, will be made to realize that you have them on your heart.

#### IV

##### *Public Prayers Should be Comprehensive.*

1. They should comprehend all the parts of prayer. The principal of these are—

- a. *Adoration*, i.e., ascribing to God what belongs to Him.
- b. *Confession*, i.e., taking to ourselves what belongs to us.
- c. *Petition*, i.e., asking God for what we need.
- d. *Thanksgiving*, i.e., praising God for what He has already bestowed.
- e. *Intercession*, i.e., pleading in behalf of others.

It is not meant that all of these shall be found in every prayer; but they should all be before the mind of the minister, and if any one of them is omitted it should be done intentionally and for a reason.

*Adoration* has a large place in the recorded prayers of scripture and a very small place in the prayers of the modern church. Candidates for the ministry should seek enlargement in this element of prayer.

I would say the same of *Intercession*. The old divines excelled in this more than does the modern pulpit.

2. They should be comprehensive of all the *subjects* of prayer.
  - a. The interests of the *congregation* as a whole.
  - b. The cause of *education*.

In the public schools and in colleges, universities and theological seminaries, reform schools and special schools.

- c. *Reforms*: Temperance, Sabbath, marriage, labor, child-labor, civic righteousness, national reform, peace, anti-secrecy.
- d. *Religion*: Revivals, evangelism, missions, witness bearing, Bible societies, benevolent societies.

“Thy kingdom come” is a petition of vast scope which must never be forgotten.

## V

### *Public Prayers Should be Moderate in Length.*

Even God is wearied with long unspiritual prayers. You cannot pray too long in private. The more you are on your knees the better. But some men do pray too long in public. No fixed rule can be laid down as to the length of public prayers, and men differ in their views.

I think it is wise for ministers to have a clock before them, and to bring all the parts of the service to the test of the time-piece. You may rest assured that there are persons in the audience who are bringing them to that test. The results will often surprise you. It is difficult for many preachers to believe to what extent they do lengthen out their public prayers. It is no easy task to be both brief and comprehensive. A minister who suspects himself of this fault will find it a helpful rule to add to his private devotions the time by which he is able to curtail his public prayers.

## VI

### *Cautions to be Observed as to Public Prayer.*

1. Be careful not to expose the secrets of any life or of any family in your public prayers.

As pastors, you will receive in confidence many secrets intended for no ear but your own. The desire on your part to be specific and sympathetic in your prayers may betray you into an unwarrantable liberty as to matters confided to you. Be scrupulously careful lest you wound, where you are seeking to help. It is a grievous offense to betray the confidence reposed in you as a pastor.

2. Do not give over to strangers your position as public intercessor for your flock.

As a rule, do the praying yourself. Another can take your place better as the preacher, provided your prayers are what they ought to be to your people. There must be no putting up of anybodys and nobodys to pray, and then the selection of the abler man to preach. Appoint the ablest man to pray and let the sermon be slurred over rather than the approach to heaven.

3. Never ask a man to pray for the sake of giving him something to do.

Our pulpit is too sacred in its relation to both God and man to be degraded to the position of a mere compliment. Never lose sight of the fact that the ministerial office in all its holy functions is a trust and that the care of a flock of Christ's blood-bought people is the most precious stewardship that God can commit to any man. May the Hearer of Prayer make you all praying ministers.

## LECTURE XI

### THE PASTOR AND THE PRAISE SERVICE

THE responsibility of the pastor for the service of public praise will now occupy our attention. The weakest point in our church services is in the devotional exercises. The attempt to force upon the Church of the Covenanters by prelatie authority an unscriptural and sensuous liturgy drove our fathers to the opposite extreme of a disparagement of the outward forms of the spiritual services of praise.

It is a strange inconsistency that we who hold tenaciously to the exclusive use of the inspired Psalms are so regardless of the repeated exhortations, in these Psalms, to the skillful performance of this part of public worship. The very meager place given to this subject in the Directory for Worship is sufficient evidence that the fathers were not infallible. One sentence embraces all they have to say as to the manner of this service: "In singing of Psalms the voice is to be tuneably and gravely ordered," and then, as if fearing they had given too great prominence to the outward form, they immediately add,—“but the chief care must be to sing with the understanding and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord.”

#### I

#### *The Importance of the Praise Service.*

1. It is a direct act of worship.  
In the reading of the scriptures and in the preach-

ing of the word, the address is to the people; but in prayer and praise the service is addressed to God. We frequently hear of "singing the gospel into people." The divinely appointed way is to preach the gospel unto people, and let them sing it forth in praise to God.

2. It is a preparation for hearing the gospel.

The singing of praise uplifts the soul from earthly things and calls into lively exercise the gracious emotions of the heart. It opens the windows of the soul toward the heavenly Jerusalem and prepares the way for the entrance of the word that gives light.

All this is true when the service is entered into in the true spirit and is skillfully conducted. But when it is blundered through as in some of our congregations, it becomes a hindrance rather than a help to the preaching and hearing of the gospel.

3. It has great influence in molding the religious life.

Praise is an educator. The effect of music is to soften and to make pliable; and upon the heart thus affected the divine truth in the inspired songs comes with wondrous power. The effect of music and song has long been recognized in estimating the social forces. "Let me make the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws," has passed into a proverb.

4. Praise is very important in Sabbath School work.

Music wins childhood. Children delight in a religious service in which they can take a part. But in many places the condition of our praise service is such that it proves a hindrance rather than a help in Sabbath School work, and especially in mission Sabbath Schools. This is a most serious matter. It reflects dishonor upon the Psalms. It turns the most delightful service of all our Christian worship into a tiresome time-killer; it is a burden upon the heart of

earnest Sabbath School workers; it is the strongest temptation that comes to our youth to accept hymn-singing and instrumental music. It should be the fixed purpose of the coming ministry to improve the praise service in our Sabbath Schools.

5. It could be made a most efficient arm in reform movements.

Not even an ordinary political campaign is undertaken without campaign music. The Holy Spirit has furnished us with matchless Messianic songs, well adapted for use in the movement for the enthronement of Christ. We might greatly increase the spiritual power of the movement in conventions and conferences by using these golden censers filled with the incense of exalted praises to our King. If in our reform conventions we could have a choir of fifty warm-hearted enthusiastic friends of the King to lead the assembly in the sublime strains of the second Psalm—

“Yet according to my will have I set my King to reign—  
Him on Zion’s holy hill, mine anointed I’ll maintain;”

Or of the Seventy-second Psalm—

“The just shall flourish in His day.  
While lasts the moon shall peace extend,  
From sea to sea shall be His sway—  
And from the river to earth’s end;”

would it not fill the movement with a spiritual power such as it never has had?

I believe that the Covenanter Church is the church of the future; and that to be the church of the future she must be *conservative*; but her conservatism must be *progressive*, and one of the great lines of her prog-

ress must be in the improvement of her praise service. I bespeak your utmost diligence in exalting the praise service to its true position in public worship.

## II

*The Duty of the Pastor in Connection with the Praise Service.*

1. To guard the sacredness of the service.

That the service is sacred is self-evident. This is its essential feature. If it loses its sacredness it ceases to be praise. Therefore any effort to improve this service at the expense of its sacredness is doomed to failure.

How can the pastor guard its sacredness?

(1) By keeping before the mind of the people that it is worship.

Announce it as praise to God. The old minister who expressed his sense of the unfitness of certain accompaniments by saying, "Let us fiddle and sing to the praise of God," had the true idea of the essential character of the service. "Up with your hearts," was an old form of the call to praise. Whatever form of words we employ it should be such as will instinctively bring God to the mind of the worshiper.

(2) By avoiding any appearance of irreverence during the service.

The habit of going down to bring up some one from the audience during the singing is not good. And the custom of arranging services while in the pulpit, and of carrying on conversation to that end during the singing, is utterly bad. Better to make a break in the services while you arrange it.

Revivalists have a habit of asking people to come in or go out or change their seats during the singing. It

is in bad taste even when singing hymns; when using the sacred songs of the Bible it is unpardonable.

(3) Do not sacrifice the sense to the music.

The sacredness of the Psalms as the word of God must control the service. You cannot retain that, if, for the sake of the music, you make nonsense of the Psalm.

In an old controversy about lining out two lines at a time instead of one, the argument was used that reading line by line turned the Psalm into nonsense. For instance, the precentor read, "The Lord shall come, and He shall not," and stopped to sing it, and again broke in with—"Keep silence, but speak out."

There is not a little danger that in our efforts to popularize the Psalms by adapting them to sensuous tunes, such as "Drink to me only with thine eyes," we will sacrifice both the sense and the sacredness of the Psalms. The mental association of an idea with a tune is most tenacious. I remember well the first time "Auld Lang Syne" was sung in the old church at home, how a good brother as he passed out of the door, plucked the sleeve of one of the elders and said:—"I want my certificate." To his mind the tune smelled of the bar-room.

This illustrates a psychological fact that may be made much of. It argues for the constant use of certain tunes with certain Psalms, especially in the Sabbath School, where the constant association of a choice Psalm with a fitting tune will fix it in the young mind for life. Speaking at a Sabbath School convention some years ago, a Covenanter girl of musical talent above the average and of that warmth of feeling that goes far toward winning and molding child-nature, impressed these truths upon my mind: "The Sabbath School is the best place to teach the children *how* to praise God. They have no prejudice of any kind to begin with, and we should be careful to impose no

prejudices on them. To those who are old and gray, no tunes of modern times are as sweet as the old familiar ones used long ago. They are connected in their minds with the pleasant associations of childhood and their younger days, but the children, of course, do not have these delightful memories clustering around the old tunes." The essential thing is that the tune fit the sentiment of the Psalm and be suited to the young mind and the childish voice; then, whether it be a new tune or an old one, the delightful clusters will form, and mature, and ripen.

Much depends on the leader, and, as the same speaker remarked, "to lead well, it is not enough simply to be able to start the tune." \*

- (4) Do not employ ungodly persons to lead the singing.

A student asked Dr. Wilcox—"Would you insist on a choir of professed Christians?" He replied, "Professed or not, I should very much want them to be real ones." This is sometimes difficult to settle, when the non-professors are the best singers. But this much is settled that the leading in the praises of the sanctuary cannot be entrusted to the unholy and profane. No gain in the excellence of the music by employing such persons can compensate for the loss to the sacredness of the service.

2. The pastor should carefully select the Psalms.

It is just as safe to trust the chorister to select the Psalms as for the minister to pick them up hap-hazard on his way to the pulpit. The Psalms should be chosen as an integral part of the service.

- (1) The opening Psalm may be of the nature of a call to worship, but should not precede the prayer of invocation. The Directory for Public Worship is specific on this point.

\* "The Service of Praise and the Sabbath School," by Gertrude Martin, *Olive Trees*, October, 1901.

It says: "The congregation being assembled, the minister, after solemn calling on them to the worshipping of the great name of God, *is to begin with prayer.*" Confession of Faith, p. 481.

There are good reasons for this established order of worship and pastors and sessions have no warrant for changing it.

- (2) The second selection of Psalm may refer to the coming sermon or to anything special in the day—or to any striking providence that is on the mind of the people. Such events may occur when it is too late to adapt the sermon, but may be made prominent in the devotional services. The Psalms have wonderful resources for such occasions.
- (3) The Psalm after the sermon should be closely in line with the subject. You must all have noticed how the power of a sermon is increased when the closing Psalm takes up and repeats its thought.

3. The pastor should read the Psalm effectively.

You need to devote attention to this. When you blunder in reading the Psalm, you lose the confidence of the people. The confusion created by having two authorized versions requires great care to avoid mistakes.

4. The pastor should cultivate the musical talents of his congregation.

It is unfortunate for the minister who has neither voice nor ear for music, yet if he has the appreciation of the importance of it, he can in some measure make up for his own defects by cultivating the gifts of his people. The unmusical pastor needs to realize his deficiency. His people may not be indifferent to the singing even when he gives them good preaching. He should consult with some one of musical ability as to

means of bringing the entire service to a high standard.

(1) Urge the study of music as a religious duty.

If you cannot instruct them yourself, insist upon the officers securing a competent instructor, paying him from the church funds and inviting all to attend. Make it a matter of consecration to the Lord's service to attend and practice music.

(2) Secure the best leadership which the talent of the congregation affords.

It is not always easy to do this. The person best qualified may be too diffident. A more serious difficulty arises when an incompetent leader has gotten into the position and cannot be persuaded to yield it. In such cases the pastor must proceed cautiously and patiently but with a settled purpose. If your congregation is opposed to choirs, a choir is not essential—though I think it is an advantage to have a few choice singers together to control the time and sustain the parts. It is better to limit the number of these so that no one will feel slighted if not chosen. If the precentor is a man or woman of discretion, let him choose the assistants. The pastor should be careful not to involve himself in personalities connected with the selection of singers.

(3) Insist upon the whole congregation singing.

This requires attention. Some young people get a notion that it is unfashionable to sing. They want to pattern after the large churches, with paid choirs, and to praise God by proxy. Do not permit that fad to take root among your people. Exalt the privilege of singing so that no one can remain silent. Refer them to such men as Pierson and Moody and Spurgeon until you make them feel that, after all, singing is in good form. Be enthusiastic over the singing. Never miss an opportunity to speak of the support given to your preaching by the singing.

(4) Resist earnestly the tendency to substitute

choir and solo singing for congregational worship on funeral occasions.

- a. It is an invasion of the right of God's people to engage actively in His worship by praise.
- b. It is an unwarranted departure from the usage of the Covenanter Church—and a stepping stone to further departures.
- c. It is contrary to the express teaching of our standards. Tes. Chap. xxiv, Sec. 8.

“Singing of God's praise is a part of public social worship in which the whole congregation should join.” Directory for Worship, Con. of Faith, p. 501, of Singing of Psalms.

- d. It is unscriptural.

Ps. 51:15: O Lord, open thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Ps. 67:5: Let the people praise thee O God: let all the people praise thee.

5. Seek to promote intelligent expression in music.

Our people know little about modulating the voice to suit the sentiment. They are prone to sing with “loud noise,” but not “skillfully.” Young gentlemen, there was never a live congregation that was not given to warmth in the praise service. Look for it as a sign of spiritual growth. Work for it unceasingly. Plan for it from the first.

## LECTURE XII

### THE EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

THE explanation of the Psalm to be sung at the opening of the Sabbath morning service is a long established custom in the Covenanter Church. Formerly other Presbyterian churches had the same practice. Now it is scarcely known except in the two Covenanter bodies.

In regard to this service let us observe—

#### I

#### *The Importance of the Explanation of the Psalm.*

1. It is essential to the intelligent use of the Psalms.

The Psalms need to be expounded. They cannot be seen in all their beauty, or felt in the fullness of their power without explanation. While their truths are adapted to all times, many of them are set forth in the imagery and phraseology of a former dispensation—which need to be unfolded to reveal their spiritual import.

Not only do they need to be explained, but they will bear explanation. In this they differ from hymns of human production. Dr. James Kennedy was accustomed to tell of an old Scotch minister who in his native land was used to explaining the Psalm. Removing to this country and finding the hymns in use, he undertook to explain a hymn. After several unsatisfactory efforts to expand the thought he closed the service in disgust, saying: "Brethren, I can take

naething oot o' that, for there's naething in it." But the Psalms of the Bible are wells of salvation out of which we may draw water with joy, and the well is deep.

2. The explanation of the Psalm is a beautiful and appropriate introduction to the services.

The Book of Psalms is the devotional book of the Bible. It is eminently fitting that assembled worshippers should turn at once to a lesson from the Divine Word. And what could be more reasonable or natural than to find that morning lesson in the devotional book. And this is what many do, even of those who do not employ the Psalms for praise. A Presbyterian minister recently said to me: "I always take my morning lesson from the Psalms." This is very suggestive.

Young gentlemen: Instead of regarding the practice of Explaining the Psalm as an old-fashioned, antiquated custom to be borne with only until it can be gotten rid of, we should recognize in it a beautiful and helpful service which places our church in the foremost rank of those who are striving to restore the word of God to its true and commanding position in the services of His house, and which should inspire us with a purpose to advance this part of our public worship to the highest possible perfection.

3. It is, in itself, a delightful service.

- (1) It must be so from the character of the Book of Psalms.

I will quote one or two testimonies on this point. *Athanasius* writes:—

"They appear to me a mirror of the soul of every one who sings them. They enable him to perceive his own emotions, and to express them in the words of the Psalms. He who hears them read receives them as if they were spoken to him. We cannot conceive of anything richer than the Book of Psalms. If you need

penitence; if anguish or temptation have befallen you; if you have escaped persecution or oppression, or are immersed in deep affliction; concerning each and all you may find instruction and state it to God in the words of the Psalter."

*Ambrose* says: "The law instructs, history informs, prophecy predicts, correction censures, and morals exhort. But in the Book of Psalms you find the fruit of all these as well as a remedy for the salvation of the soul. The Psalter deserves to be called the praise of God, the glory of man, the voice of the church, and the most beneficial confession of faith. In the Psalms delight and instruction vie with one another. We read for instruction and sing for enjoyment."

Many such eulogies have been pronounced upon this book by the most eminent and saintly men of all ages. It cannot be otherwise than a delightful service that brings forth the rich treasures of this book for the devotional exercises of God's people on the Sabbath morning.

(2) This is the testimony of our people.

The most spiritual members of a congregation will often say that the explanation of the Psalm is to them the most uplifting service of the day. So unanimous is the testimony of good people to the delight they have found in the service that when it is otherwise there must be a fault either in the manner of explanation, or in the complaining hearer.

(3) This is the testimony of outsiders.

By these I mean attendants from sister churches which do not use or do not explain the Psalms. They frequently speak of this as a unique, striking, profitable, and even beautiful service.

Young gentlemen: Let me urge you to exalt in your minds the claims of this service and to devote to it your best gifts—let the entrance to the temple of

worship be by the "Gate that is called Beautiful," so that on the very threshold, the worshipers will be reminded that it is God's house, and that God Himself is within.

## II

### *What Should be the Character of the Explanation?*

1. The exposition should be concise and clear.

This service differs from expository preaching and even from lecturing. It is explanatory, not argumentative. It is devotional, not didactic. We can say of the Psalms what one has said of the Song of Solomon, viz.—"They are like some curiously wrought oriental lamps, which do not reveal the beauty and significance of their transparent emblems until they are lighted up within." It is the purpose of the explanation to kindle the inner light and to flash out before an expectant congregation the beauty and significance of these lamps of sacred song filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit.

2. The address should be experimental.

It is the personal and experimental character of the Psalms that gives them much of their value. They are pointed and practical. This we should recognize in the use of them. This does not necessarily imply that the explanation will be hortatory. It may be. The character of the Psalm will determine. Let the minister get into the spirit of the Psalm and add his comments, simply to bring its divine truth into closest contact with the moral elements in the soul.

3. The service should be devotional.

The Psalms are recognized as the devotional book of the Bible. They appeal to every gracious emotion of the soul: penitence for sin; resignation under affliction; hope in the midst of despair; faith in the face

of difficulty; courage in the presence of danger; joy under the sense of forgiveness; thanksgiving for deliverance; and lowly reverence in the presence of the Holy God.

The whole range of gracious affections finds expression in these heavenly songs—often within a single psalm. That minister is skillful in this service who is able to set all the chords of the soul vibrating in harmony with these notes of praise. Always keep in view the devotional character of the service.

4. The delivery should be characterized by spiritual fervor.

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.”

Whatever else this may mean it certainly implies that his soul is capable of being lighted with the fire of God, and of thus becoming “a burning and a shining light.” This is what the true minister must be. A live coal taken from the altar of God must touch his lips, that he may become a flaming torch, in the hand of God, with which to kindle the fires of devotion on the altars of other hearts. He should come to this morning service from his secret communing with God, as Moses came from the Holy Mount, with shining countenance—the outward manifestation of the spiritual fervor burning within. This is the “unction of the Holy One.”

5. This service should be brief.

This kind of a service cannot be long sustained. The explanations of the Psalm, that occupy fifty minutes, or an hour, travel far outside the specific aim of this service. If you permit your explanation of the Psalm to become a loose, half-studied, desultory, rambling, common-place talk about a number of good things that may be suggested by six or eight verses of Psalm, it will become a two-fold murderer, killing both time and devotion. A lump of common coal has the same elements as a precious diamond and vastly

more bulk, but who would choose it for the crown of a king. Make your explanation of the Psalm a *polished gem* and you will have no difficulty about its length.

Exact limits should not be placed upon a devotional service, but as a rule fifteen minutes are better than ten; and twenty minutes vastly better than thirty.

### III

#### *Suggestions as to Methods.*

1. Explain the Psalms in course, because—

(1) This honors the Book as a whole.

We should be surprised if we knew how few of the Psalms are ordinarily sung in public worship, and how many are never announced at all. Explaining in course obviates in some degree the slight thus put upon the Holy Spirit's work in providing us with a complete Psalter.

(2) It avoids loss of time in selecting.

It is an advantage to have one part of your work laid out ready to begin.

(3) It enables the people to know beforehand the subject of the morning devotions.

The number of those who will avail themselves in any practical way of this privilege may not be large, but even if a few do so it is an argument in its favor. If people would thus employ the moments when they are waiting for the services to begin, it would save them from becoming moments of dissipation.

2. Select suitable Psalms for special occasions.

There are some ministers who are so wedded to explaining in course that they go right on with it,—Fast Day, Thanksgiving, Communion Sabbath, and every other occasion. The advantages of selecting are:

- (1) It breaks up the routine.
- (2) It avoids the temptation to distort the Psalm to suit the occasion.

You will be surprised how frequently it occurs that the Psalm occurring in your regular course suits the special occasion. Then it is the more effective. But do not force it.

- (3) It deepens the impression of the Book as suited to all circumstances.

It is important to the spirit of devotion to have the subject in harmony with the time and circumstances. It is one of the evidences that the Psalter furnishes a complete manual of praise that it contains matter suited to the changing circumstances of life.

3. Discriminate as to the length of the portion to be used.

- (1) Use so much as contains a sufficient number of *devotional* ideas.
- (2) It is not essential that the verses sung shall be commensurate with the verses explained.

4. Read and examine the Psalms carefully in the Hebrew.

- (1) To assist in keeping up familiarity with the language.

There is a great temptation to allow the critical study of the Hebrew and Greek Scripture to fall into disuse. This is to lose the practical value of that which has cost years of study to acquire.

- (2) To enrich your exposition.

The deeper you go, the richer the vein. The surface may have dust of gold and nuggets even, but the mother lode lies deeper. The best critical commentaries cannot take the place of your own use of Grammar and Lexicon.

5. Study the Psalms with a purpose to find Christ in them.

This is not to come to the Psalter with a purpose to

find something that is not there. Christ is in the Psalms. He says so Himself. The charge so often made that they are Christless reveals the ignorance of those who make it. The truth is, the Psalms are Christo-centric. This will be fully set forth when we come to discuss their exclusive use in the worship of God.

6. Provide a good selection of commentaries on the Psalms.

Calvin, Delitzsch, Barnes, McLaren, Spurgeon, Henry, Caldwell. In preparation begin with your own reading in the Hebrew, with assistance of a good critical commentary. Then select and arrange your thought: expository, practical, devotional, and then fill up by reading practical and devotional commentaries.

The final test of a good explanation of the Psalm, is that it shall result in a fervid devotional uplift in the hearts of the hearers. The pastor may well question his chance of success if his study of the Psalm has not resulted in this thrill within himself.

## LECTURE XIII

### THE LECTURE

THE true idea of the *Lecture* as a distinct form of pulpit address is exposition and direct application of scripture. It is a matter of congratulation that the churches everywhere are beginning to return to this ancient and honorable custom and that the demand for it comes from the pew. The best people are calling for more Bible in the ministrations of the pulpit. It is a satisfaction to find that a custom which our church has so long maintained almost alone, is becoming popular.

As a scriptural warrant for Lecturing it will be sufficient to refer to two passages: Neh. 8:8. "So they read in the book distinctly and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." That is an exceedingly good description of Lecturing; first, as to its method, and, second, as to its purpose. 2 Tim. 4:2: "Preach the word." This is Paul's charge to Timothy, and is pre-eminently characteristic of the Lecture as above defined: *The exposition and direct application of scripture.*

#### I

*Note the Difference Between a Lecture and a Sermon.*

- I. The Lecture is based on a longer portion of scripture.

This could hardly be called a generic distinction, as there are no fixed rules for the length of texts in sermons, or of passages in the lecture.

2. The Lecture aims to explain a portion of scripture; the sermon aims to discuss a specific doctrine or duty.

It will be shown later that the center of unity in a lecture may be a doctrine or a duty. But in the lecture it is discussed from the point of view of biblical theology; in the sermon it is usually from the point of view of systematic theology. This is especially true in topical sermons.

3. The Lecture treats the subject more generally; the sermon treats it more exhaustively.

The lecture because of its wider range is less profound; the sermon because of its restricted theme tends to run deeper. This distinction is the most marked when the historical books of the Bible are taken as furnishing the subjects of consecutive lecturing.

4. The Lecture blends imperceptibly with the expository sermon.

Treatises on homiletics do not generally discuss lecturing as distinct from sermonizing, but very much of the instruction as to the expository sermon applies equally to the lecture.

## II

### *The Advantages of Lecturing.*

1. The advantages *to the pastor*:

(1) It avoids the loss of time in choosing texts. In answer to the question, "Is there any difficulty in obtaining texts," Spurgeon says:

"I remember in my earlier days of reading somewhere in homiletics a statement which considerably alarmed me at the time. It was something to this effect, 'that if a man shall find a difficulty in selecting a text he had better, at once, go back to the grocery-shop, or to the plow, for he evidently has no capacity

required for a minister.' Now as such had very frequently been my cross and burden, I inquired within myself whether I should leave the ministry. I was so much in trouble of conscience that I asked my grandfather who had been in the ministry fifty years, whether he was ever perplexed in choosing his theme. He told me frankly that this had always been his greatest trouble compared with which preaching was no anxiety at all. 'The difficulty is not because there are not enough texts, but because there are so many that I am in a strait betwixt them.' " Then speaking of his own experience Spurgeon says: "I confess that I often sit hour after hour praying and waiting for a subject and that this is the main part of my study."

With this testimony from such a man as Spurgeon you will the more readily believe that to have the question of one of your texts settled each week without loss of time is no small consideration.

(2) It gives a more comprehensive view of the Bible.

One of our modern movements is to study the Bible as a whole. Summer schools for Bible study are held in many places. Some of the colleges have placed it in their curriculums. A course of lecturing kept up for twenty-five years, should leave no dark continent within the lids of the Bible.

(3) It gives variety to his work.

The argument for using the different species of sermons—topical, textual, etc.—that it relieves the mind from a treadmill sameness in study, has still greater weight in favor of a change from the sermon to the lecture. The tendency of most ministers is to confine their ministry to a very narrow range of subjects. Nothing is so well calculated to give variety in preaching as the use of large portions of the Book. It is not possible to get into a rut in lecturing if you are a true expositor.

Spurgeon says: "Let us abhor all one-sidedness, all exaggeration of one truth and disparagement of another, and let us endeavor to paint the portrait of truth with balanced features and blended colors, lest we dishonor her by presenting a caricature instead of a copy."

In lecturing, however, you do not so much paint the portrait of truth, as you simply lift the veil that the people may look upon the symmetrical portrait drawn by the Holy Spirit Himself.

- (4) It enables him to preach on personal subjects without giving offense.

Our Lord's preaching was personal. "They perceived that He spake of them." The offense in personal preaching arises from the conviction that the minister has chosen his subject for the purpose of making a personal thrust. Dr. George P. Pleays used to relate that a lady visited his study one Monday morning and poured out a torrent of abuse upon him for his attack upon her in his sermon of the day before. He produced the manuscript of his sermon, showing that it was written years before when he was pastor in another charge, and she went home happy. The minister lecturing in course cannot be charged with using offensive personalities, when he simply expounds what was written centuries before either he or his hearers were born.

- (5) It trains to extempore address.

Dr. Sloane puts this among the advantages of lecturing. It probably is. But the Lecture would be more satisfactory if it were less extempore. Let it not be mistaken as implying that the lecture is to be less carefully studied than the sermon.

2. The advantages *to the people*, of lecturing:

(1) Lecturing consecutively enables them to consider the subject beforehand.

Few people use the privilege. But some will be

found in almost every congregation who delight in anticipating their pastor and are pleased to find that their preconceived views harmonize with his.

(2) It helps them to see truth in its connections.

I have already spoken of its value to the minister in giving him a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible. The same is true of the people. It is a great privilege to have a pastor who is gifted as a Bible expositor.

(3) It brings the word of God to bear directly on the conscience.

God alone is the Lord of the conscience. Protestantism has taught men the right of private judgment and the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures. We are not priests but ministers of the word, and that preaching which brings the word of God to bear most directly upon the conscience is the most honoring to God, and the most saving to men.

### III

#### *The Essential Characteristics of the Lecture.*

1. It should have *unity*.

This element is as essential in the lecture as in the sermon. The unity is of a different kind but not the less real. A necklace of pearls may be a unit as really as a solitaire diamond ring. The unity of the lecture is the unity of a landscape, not that of a cathedral; it is the unity of a constellation, not that of a single star. The center of unity may be—

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| (1) A person or character. | N.B. The success of lecturing depends very much upon the wise selection of the center of unity. |
| (2) An event.              |   |
| (3) A subject.             |   |
| (4) A doctrine.            |   |
| (5) A duty.                |   |

The fourth and fifth blend with the expository sermon.

2. It must be a *structure*.

The method of making the lecture a running commentary on a series of verses will be successful in very few hands. It requires a unique gift of making sententious, racy, pithy, pointed, epigrammatic remarks. Without this it becomes a series of common-places.

A center of unity implies a structure, built around that center. As the passage is opened up by exposition, the materials thus furnished are placed in proper relations to one another and to the central theme, so that the people will be conscious that the structure is rising, or that the tree is sending out its branches. The lecture, like the sermon, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

3. It must have an *aim*.

The preaching that aims at nothing is sure to hit it. Of all the aimless things in this world, the most useless is aimless preaching. The idea that a lecture is necessarily more aimless than a sermon is a mistake. The fowler with a shotgun aims at the bird as certainly as the one with a rifle, and he has a better chance to hit it. The Bible is full of definite purpose. The more scriptural a lecture is, the more direct will be its aim, for the Bible is the most purposeful book in the world.

4. It must have *movement*.

This is the secret of interesting lecturing and requires the careful selection and arrangement of materials. An old minister gave as one of the advantages of lecturing that—"if you were persecuted in one verse you could fly to another." The reason assigned may not be the best, but it contains a good suggestion, namely, that lecturing is to be done *on the wing*.

The first impression made by reading of a long passage is that there will follow a tedious, tiresome dis-

course. By the celerity of your movements at the very first, you should indicate that yours is a through train, limited,—stopping only at the main stations, and taking water on the run. A good lecture has more movement than an ordinary sermon. The lecture that has these four characteristics—unity, structure, aim and movement, will be both interesting and profitable.

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON LECTURING

## IV

*The Selection of a Book for Consecutive Treatment.*

1. Honor the whole Bible by choosing from both the Old and New Testaments.

2. Begin with the historical books.

In the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings; in the New Testament, Matthew, or Luke, Acts.

3. Follow with the doctrinal books.

Old Testament—Selections from the Prophets; New Testament—Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, Gospel by John.

4. Then the practical books.

Old Testament—Ecclesiastes, Proverbs; New Testament—Pastoral Epistles, James, Jude, Peter.

5. Deeply spiritual and prophetically dark books.

Old Testament—Song of Solomon, Daniel; New Testament—Revelation.

## V

*Methods of Treatment.*

Several methods will suggest themselves.

1. By *Characters*.

Genesis would give something like this: Adam, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Melchizedek, Hagar, Isaac, Rebecca, Esau, Jacob, Joseph. On some of these a single lecture would suffice, on others four or five would be necessary. There are fifty chapters and it would probably require a year's study.

2. By *Topics*.

Genesis would be treated as follows: The Creation, The

Covenant of Works, The Fall, The Promise of a Savior, Total Depravity, The Flood, The Covenant with Noah, The Call of Abraham, etc.

3. By *Consecutive Portions*.

Half a chapter or a whole chapter, or two or three chapters,—the amount always determined by what can be properly treated with unity and clearness. Do not mistake a lecture for a sermon and give a whole discourse on one verse.

## VI

### *Methods of Preparation.*

1. Make a careful study of the Book as a whole.
  - (1) Because the parts cannot be understood except in their relation to the whole.
  - (2) This enables one to give due proportion to each part.
  - (3) It will assist in studying the difficult portions.
  - (4) It will aid in treating subjects which occur several times in one book.

As for instance in Romans where Paul outlines and then develops; or in Acts, where the story of Paul's conversion is given several times.

- (5) It will be a safeguard against hurried preparation.

2. Formulate a plan of treatment.

Determine as nearly as possible the time to be given to the Book, and outline the subjects of treatment.

3. Fix clearly in mind the Geography, Chronology and Cotemporaneous History of the Book.

4. Study the passage for each lecture in the original Hebrew or Greek.

Your obligation to do this arises from the sacredness of your trust as a messenger of God. Use Grammar, Lexicon and Critical commentaries.

5. Determine for yourself the exact import of the passage—words, phrases, and verses.

Preach the things you know to be true and say little about the doubtful passages.

6. Analyze and outline the passage, carefully selecting the center of unity, and the strong points.

7. Apply as you proceed, and if necessary apply as a whole at the close.

8. Depend implicitly on the Holy Spirit. Remember that you are trying simply to draw the veil from the Spirit's teachings.

## VII

*Errors to be Avoided.*

1. Avoid excessive explanation. Show the work, not the tools; the results, not the process.
2. Avoid recounting various erroneous opinions.
3. Avoid too long delay on critical points.
4. Avoid too great a display of learning.
5. Avoid being too easily discouraged by apparent want of success in lecturing.

## LECTURE XIV

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

THE dispensation of the sealing ordinances is the most sacred duty of the pastoral office. The right to perform this service does not belong even to one who has been licensed to preach, but is reserved until the candidate has been fully inducted into the ministerial office. And even those who do not hesitate to intrude upon the sacredness of the holy ministry so far as to preach the word, *unlicensed*, pause on the threshold of the sacraments, and would not presume to administer these, unordained.

Baptism is the initiatory ordinance of the New Testament Church. It constitutes a badge of membership. It belongs to the pastor to administer it to the members of his flock. It is a service in which spiritual fervor and piety should shine forth with more than ordinary manifestation.

#### I

#### *The Duty of the Pastor in Respect to the Sacrament of Baptism.*

- I. He should instruct his people as to the nature of the ordinance.
  - (1) By concise remarks in connection with its administration.

It is customary, just before imposing the baptismal

vows, to explain briefly the nature and significance of the ceremony. This is eminently appropriate and under favorable circumstances may be made very impressive. But it has its difficulties. The time is necessarily very brief. The parties are not always at ease. The mother is often weak, and nervous lest the child become restless,—which it frequently does. The publicity of the occasion is distracting to the mind. Evidently we cannot depend on this service fully to instruct the people on this momentous subject.

(2) By occasional sermons.

Such sermons should deal with the doctrinal significance of the ordinance and with its use. They should have special application to parents as the representatives of their children in the baptismal covenant; and to children and their right to this sacramental seal, and the binding obligation of their baptismal engagements; and also to the unconverted and non-professing world.

2. It is the duty of the pastor to guard his people against the neglect of this ordinance.

(1) This neglect of baptism is a prevalent evil.

Even in the churches which hold to infant baptism there are some who permit their children to grow up unbaptized. In some communities Baptists and Disciples, who deny the right of children to baptism, exert a baleful influence upon our people. Especially is this the case when they intermarry with those who reject infant baptism. Even if both parents unite with the church, they are apt to neglect the baptism of their children. The pastor should follow them up because—

(2) It is a great wrong to the children who are thus deprived of their privilege.

The children of believing and professing parents are born in the church. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." To treat the children of the covenant as if they were aliens, is to despoil them of their birthright.

(3) It is a sin against the church.

These are the lambs of the flock. They belong within the fold. To refuse to permit the under-shepherds who have the oversight of the flock to place upon them the badge of ownership is to rob the church of her claim.

(4) It is a grievous sin against Christ.

He says: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The church is to be built up by the godly seed of believers. And the Lord claims them as His own. "Lo, children are an heritage of Jehovah; and the fruit of the womb is His reward." (Ps. 127:3.)

3. The pastor may have set-times of administering baptism, but should not restrict himself to these.

(1) It may be administered on either Sabbath or week-day.

(2) Frequently it is administered in connection with the Lord's supper.

Some administer it on Fast Day, because of the solemnity of the services of fasting, humiliation and prayer; some on Saturday, because the terms of communion are that day exhibited; some on Monday, after communion, as a fitting sequel; parents having renewed their covenants for themselves, now claim the same privileges for their children.

(3) It should not be unnecessarily delayed.

Life is too uncertain to permit us to defer important duties for a more convenient season. It is the occasion of sore distress when we allow the opportunity to pass unimproved and it never again returns.

(4) Private baptism is disapproved by our church standards.

The Directory for Worship says: "Baptism, as it is not unnecessarily to be delayed, so is it not to be administered in any case, by any private person, but

by a minister of Christ called to be a steward of the mysteries of God.

“Nor is it to be administered in private places or privately, but in the place of public worship and in the face of the congregation where the people may most conveniently see and hear, and not in the place where fonts, in the time of popery, were unfitly and superstitiously placed.”

The testimony, Chap. XXV, condemns as an error, “That a private administration of the sacraments is as proper as the administration of them in the presence of the church.”

Dr. Sloane says: “Private baptism is properly disallowed, but, in extreme cases, services may be held and the ordinance administered, though not in private, e.g., the case of a parent dying and not able to get to church. But the administration from all reasons should be public.”

We should steadfastly resist all efforts to introduce the custom of private baptism into our church. Instruct the people as to the true relation of the child to the church, and the true significance of baptism as the public official recognition of that fact by placing upon the brow of the child in the presence of the people, the sacramental seal.

## SUGGESTIONS.

### II

#### *The Manner of the Administration.*

1. It may be done either before or after sermon.

Usually it seems better to perform it before, in order to relieve the parents of anxiety; and to attend to it before the children of the congregation become weary.

2. Announce a Psalm and say: “After the singing of this Psalm let the parents present their child (or their children) for baptism.”

In the case of an adult say: "Let the candidate present himself (or herself) for baptism."

3. Make a few carefully prepared remarks explanatory of the ordinance.

These remarks are necessarily brief and, to be of value, they must be clear and definite. They should assist the faith of the parties to look through the outward ceremony to Christ Himself. The observance of the sacrament may be the stretching forth of the hand to touch the hem of His garment; but the healing virtue is not in the garment but in the Lord Himself.

4. Take the profession of faith of the parents, or of the candidate.

- (1) In taking the profession use the terms of communion.

It is better that the terms be thoroughly memorized than that they be read. The terms may be simplified but there must be no departure from their true significance.

- (2) The fourth and fifth terms may be abbreviated.

For instance the pastor may say: "Do you believe in public covenanting by churches and nations; and in the descending obligations of public covenants; and in the obligations upon us of the covenants of our fathers, and especially of the covenant of 1871?"

- (3) After the enunciation of each term say: "Do you so believe?" and pause for a reply.

- (4) A profession of belief in the Trinity is sometimes prefixed to the terms as follows: "Do you believe in one living and true God: and that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three are one God?"

Of course this profession is embraced in the terms of communion along with all the other doctrines of grace. The propriety of thus particularizing it here lies in the fact that the ordinance is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

5. Impose the baptismal vows.

These are of two kinds:

- (a) With respect to the child, as follows:

- (1) To pray with and for it.
- (2) To provide for its temporal well-being.
- (3) To give it education such as will fit it for usefulness.
- (4) To acquaint it with its lost condition and need of a Savior.
- (5) To instruct it in the plan of salvation and the principles of our covenanted profession.

- (6) To set before it a godly example.
- (7) To use parental authority with firmness, and yet with love and tenderness, for its training and correction.
- (8) To seek its present and everlasting salvation.

Close this enumeration of vows with the words: "Do you so promise?" and pause for a reply.

(b) With respect to the parents themselves as follows:

- (1) To engage regularly in secret prayer.
- (2) To observe family worship morning and evening.
- (3) To attend social fellowship meeting.
- (4) To attend public worship and the sealing ordinances.
- (5) To be duly subject to the session and to the superior judicatories of the Lord's House.

Then say: "Do you so promise?" and pause for reply. Then add: "Remember the vows of God are upon you." This should be spoken with fitting solemnity, and some add, "and for the same he will call you into judgment."

6. Consecrate the sacramental element.

(1) This is done by prayer—the congregation rising and remaining standing until the ceremony is closed.

(2) The formula used is—

"Bless so much of the element of water as shall be employed upon this occasion, which we hereby, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, set apart from a common to a sacred and sacramental use."

It is not customary to say "Amen" at the close of this prayer setting apart the elements.

7. Performing the ceremony.

(1) The administrator quietly and with reverent bearing leaves the pulpit and takes his position on the floor in front of the parents or candidate, holding the baptismal bowl in the left hand.

(2) Pronounce the name distinctly and say:

"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—one God, blessed forever—Amen." If more than one are to be baptized the words "Blessed forever—Amen" are added only after the last.

(3) The administrator ascends the pulpit and concludes the ceremony with prayer. This closing prayer should have special reference to the baptized and will naturally pour forth from the deepest emotions of a pastor's heart.

## III

*General Remarks.*

1. Get the name beforehand, and repeat it quietly to the parents before pronouncing it to the congregation.  
Dr. Sloane says: "The name of the child is no part of the ordinance, but is eminently proper." I have never known of a baptism without the use of the name.
2. In the case of adults give careful instruction beforehand as to the mode of procedure. This will set them at ease and prevent blundering. It is better for women to remove their hats before coming forward.
3. Be careful to use the proper amount of water and to place it on the brow.

It is not necessary to overwhelm the person by lifting a handful of water and pouring it over them; neither should the amount be so sparse as to take away the symbolical significance of the ceremony.

4. Keep a careful register of all persons baptized, with the date, the names of child and parents.

The names of infants baptized should be reported by the pastor to the Session and noted on the Sessional Records, and the pastor should have his own baptismal record. Registers for the purpose can be secured at church book-stores.

## LECTURE XV

### THE DISPENSATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

ON the administration of sacraments, Murphy says, in substance:—One of the most characteristic and impressive elements of the sacred work to which the pastor is called is that of administering sacraments. It has a dignity connected with it from the fact, acknowledged on all hands, that it is the exclusive prerogative of the minister. The sacraments set forth in sensible emblems the same great truths which are preached from the sacred desk, so confirming them and making them more emphatic. They furnish both the occasions and the themes for the most impressive discourses. In no place is the Ambassador of Christ so much honored as when he stands serving the Lord's table, or when he applies the baptismal water.

Let us consider:—

#### I

#### *The Importance of the Lord's Supper as Related to Our Pastoral Work.*

1. It exalts and honors the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the first great purpose of the institution. "Do this in remembrance of me." The whole service centers about Christ. The lifting up of Christ is the great power of the gospel ministry. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

2. The communion seasons are the reviving times.

This is the testimony of all conscientious pastors. These are the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." The attendance increases; the interest grows; careless souls are awakened; the graces of God's people are revived. Although the Lord's supper is not in its nature a converting ordinance because only those already converted are entitled to partake of it, yet the sacramental season is peculiarly favorable to conversions in the congregation.

3. The Lord's supper is especially suited to the edification of the church.

Worthy communicants "eat and drink to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace." It is a strengthening ordinance. Passing through the valley of Baca in the preparatory services they make it a well; the rain filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

4. It is a harvest time.

- (1) For ingathering into the church.

The practice of receiving applicants only at communion time is not good. But the unusual interest and the protracted services tend to bring gospel hearers to a decision.

- (2) For bringing to fruitage in the lives of the people the seed sown in their hearts.

Murphy says: "It ought to be made a standpoint in the progress of the church and of each of its members, from which there would be an honest survey of the past and an earnest planning of the future. It should be the fixed epoch in the church's life around which its hopes and projects and activities cluster."

If this be the true place of the sacrament of the supper in the economy of our church life, and I think it is, then it demands the very highest and most consecrated efforts of the pastor. It has been well said: "Pastors should make much of the sacraments. They

should exalt them to a very high eminence in their own estimation. In public addresses and private conversation they should be frequently alluded to and their value should be impressed deeply. The times of their celebration should be looked forward to and anticipated with gladness and benefits expected from them. Their solemnization should be engaged in, as a great event, in which heart and hopes should be elevated and the Divine presence felt and a foretaste enjoyed of the heavenly banquet."

It has always been admitted that Covenanter communions excel in beauty and power. It makes me sad at heart to hear it suggested, as I sometimes do, that they are losing something of their former impressiveness. I beseech you, study to make them a distinctive feature of your ministry. Aim to have great sacramental days.

## II

### *Services Preparatory to Communion.*

- I. It is well to have regular days of the year for communion.
  - (1) In fixing the time, have due regard to the convenience of the people.
  - (2) Avoid two extremes, viz.—
    - a. Holding too tenaciously for the regular fixed date.
    - b. Yielding too readily to a change of time, for insufficient reasons.

When people have arranged their business, perhaps with some difficulty, to suit the regular time of communion, it is annoying to them to find that for some insignificant reason the time has been changed.

2. Make timely arrangement for assistance.
  - (1) It is as easily done early as late.

- (2) Secures your own peace of mind.
- (3) Provides for the convenience and preparation of your assistant.
- (4) Avoids distractions and disappointments at the last.

As a rule the pastor should be permitted to choose his assistant, but he should willingly listen to suggestions from his session and have regard to the wishes of his people. Members of session have no right to arrange for the assistant independently of the pastor.

3. Plan a series of discourses to lead up to the communion.

It was said of Dr. Musgrave that he planned all his discourses with this end in view. This would unduly circumscribe your pulpit themes. But the sermons for a month before the communion may lead up naturally and directly to that event as their crown and perfection.

4. Carefully observe the preparatory days.

These days are not integral parts of the service in such a sense that its observance would be invalidated if they were omitted; but they are important to its right observance. The essential thing is the sacramental frame of the communicant; these preparatory services are a means to that end.

- (1) The Sabbath before communion is the *Preparation Sabbath*.

Call it by that name. Do not be troubled about these old-fashioned terms. Keep the names if you want to keep the things. And keep the day true to its name. Make the services bear directly upon the approaching solemnity.

My old pastor, William Slater, always used the same Psalm in opening of services on the afternoon of Preparation Sabbath. I vividly recall the exultant tones with which his voice rang out in the words of the Eighty-first Psalm—

"Sing loud to God our strength; with joy  
 To Jacob's God do sing—  
 Take up a psalm, the pleasant harp—  
 Timbrel and psaltery bring.  
 Blow trumpets at new moon; what day  
 Our feast appointed is,  
 For charge to Israel, and a law  
 Of Jacob's God was this."

It seemed as if the whole congregation stirred under the thrill of these exultant words, and the sacramental host turned their faces toward the summit of the holy mount and began to move forward.

Such subjects as the following are appropriate: The Nature of the Lord's Supper, Nature of Covenanting, Sacramental Graces, Evidences of Sonship, the Bridegroom Cometh.

- (2) The week following Preparation Sabbath should, if possible, be observed as a week of prayer.
- (3) Have a specific aim in the Fast-Day services.

The danger here is from mere formalism. Encourage the people to observe the whole day religiously. Literal fasting is helpful. The sermon should deal with sin—faithfully, pointedly, and severely, i.e., with the severity of love, as the Apostle John was severe. Do not scold or berate in meaningless generalities; but, with tender, anxious solicitude for the flock which you are about to lead into the presence of the Great Shepherd, deal with them faithfully; and neglect not your own soul in these searchings of heart.

- (4) The exercises of the day of "immediate" preparation.
  - a. A sermon similar to that of Preparation Sabbath.

This sermon should be replete with the love of Christ and calculated to arouse the spiritual affections of His people. Such texts as—Luke, 22:15, "With

desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer"; John 21:15, "Lovest thou me? . . . Thou knowest that I love thee."

b. The explanation of the Terms of Communion.

The aim of this service is to bring before the minds of intended communicants the terms of the covenant into which they are soon to enter, or which they are about to renew. It is a reasonable and necessary service. That any one intending to commune should be indifferent to it, indicates an overestimate of his own intelligence and attainments, or a sad underestimate of the solemnity of the act of covenanting over the sacramental symbols. The frequency of its observance must not betray the pastor into a neglect of preparation for it. Usually the pastor should explain the terms himself.

The nature and use of Terms of Communion are set forth in the Testimony, Chap. xxxii, Sec. 4.

### III

#### *The Order of Procedure in Explanation of the Terms of Communion.*

1. Sing an appropriate Psalm: e.g., 48:12-14; 78:5-8.
2. Cite the scripture authority for Terms of Communion, Rev. 11:1; Isa. 26:2.
3. Constitute the Session by prayer.
4. Read the Terms of Communion as a whole.
5. Remark briefly on the Terms seriatim.
  - (1) To secure brevity, select one term or two for each exercise, passing briefly over the others.
  - (2) Adapt the exercises to the youth, the less informed.

- (3) If the matters contained in any term become the subject of immediate controversy, follow the explanation by a defense. For instance, at the present time, the doctrine of inspiration, under the first term.

## IV

*Two Analyses of Our Terms of Communion.*I. *First analysis.*

Our terms embrace the following:

- (1) The acceptance of the whole system of revealed truth—contained in first and second terms.
- (2) The maintaining of the institutions of Christ in their purity—contained in the third term.
- (3) An acknowledgment of the binding obligations of the church's covenants—in the fourth term.
- (4) Exhibition of prominent features of a Christian character.
  - a. As faithful witnesses for the truth.
  - b. By a regular life and conversation.
  - c. By due submission to the supreme judicatory of the church.

2. *A second analysis.*

- (1) By the first term we are Bible Christians.
- (2) By the second term we are Calvinists.
- (3) By the third term we are Presbyterians.
- (4) By the fourth term we are Covenanters.
- (5) By the fifth term we are Witnesses.
- (6) By the sixth term we are Practical Christians.

## V

*The Distribution of Tokens.*

In 1883 our Synod took the following action on the use of tokens:

1. "That the distribution of tokens on a weekday previous to the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's supper has never been considered an integral element of the ordinance;
2. "That it is in no sense an act of worship, nor is the token a religious symbol;
3. "That it is simply a custom relating to the well-ordering of the church, that has come down to us from persecuting times, and as such has a strong hold upon the minds of many in the church;
4. "That it cannot in any way be productive of mischief unless elevated into a prominence and significance that does not in any sense attach to it.
5. "In view of all these circumstances we advise all our people to observe the custom as heretofore until such time as the church in its wisdom may deem it proper to dispense with it." (Min. of Synod, 1883, R. P. & C., p. 235.)

In 1897 the following action was taken:

"Inasmuch as the use of tokens is not a part of the sacrament of the supper, we recommend that their use be left to the discretion of individual sessions with due regard to the peace of our congregations. It is understood that this action in no way affects the doctrine and practice of the church in the matter of close communion." (Min. of Synod, 1897, p. 25.)

From these actions the following observations are suggested:

1. The token is not a sacramental symbol; has no

sacramental significance and is not essential to the integrity of the ordinance;

2. It belongs to our Covenanter traditions and, as such, has a certain value in our church life;
3. Synod's action does not warrant sessions to discontinue the use of the token at the expense of the peace of their congregations;
4. The token is given in constituted session, and in connection with the exhibition of terms of communion.
  - a. It is significant to communicants of their engagement.
  - b. It impresses Session with their responsibility for the character of members and the purity of the holy sacraments.
  - c. If cards for signature of communicants are used, they furnish a roll of those present and of the absentees. This can be preserved for reference and be of much service in pastoral work.

## LECTURE XVI

### COMMUNION SABBATH

ON Communion Sabbath it is proper that the celebration of the Holy Supper should dominate all the other services. The Sabbath School and the Young People's meeting should give way so far as is necessary, and the time usually devoted to them should be made tributary to the communion. Let the minds of all be concentrated upon one supreme object.

#### I

*The Explanation of the Psalm should be a Communion Meditation.*

The Psalm should be selected with this end in view and the method of treatment should harmonize with this purpose. Too much time should not be occupied. If this service is assigned to the assistant it may be necessary tactfully to remind him of the limitations of time.

#### II

*The "Action Sermon."*

1. As a general rule the pastor should preach his own Action Sermon.

This is customary in city congregations. In country congregations which have no second service it is frequently assigned to the assistant. The reasons for the pastor's doing it are:

- (1) He can come nearer to his people than a stranger can.
  - (2) It is his greatest opportunity to impress himself on his people.
  - (3) Action Sermons will furnish the highwater-mark of his preaching. It is an easy time to preach. His own mind is aroused and the people are peculiarly receptive.
  - (4) If he does not preach his own, he will not prepare Action Sermons at all. He will use old sermons when assisting at communions.
2. Action Sermons should be prepared with special care.

The text should be selected weeks before. Reading, thought, meditation, and prayer should center around it. The sermon should be fully written out and wrought with his own spiritual experience. It should be delivered with all the resources at his command.

3. The Action Sermon should center in Christ.

"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," should be especially true of communion sermons. "Sir, we would see Jesus," expresses the longing of every believing soul in approaching the Lord's table. The Plan of Redemption, The Person and Work of the Redeemer, The Sufferings and Glory of Christ, The Love of the Father in the Gift of His Son—such are appropriate themes for Communion Sabbaths. The Action Sermon should be a full, well-rounded, masterly discussion of a great theme. It may be a little longer than the ordinary sermon, but beware of infringing on the exercises to follow.

### III

*The Explanation of the Words of Institution.*

I Cor. xi, 23-27:

1. Note the authority of Christ in instituting the supper, Verse 23. "Received of the Lord," "The Lord Jesus took bread."

It is of the utmost importance that communicants be impressed with the divine appointment of the sacrament.

2. Note the time of its institution. Verse 23. "The same night in which He was betrayed."
  - (1) A humbling truth—the wickedness of man.
  - (2) An awakening truth—the danger of having a traitor's heart.
  - (3) Exalts the love of Christ—at the very time of His betrayal and His impending agony, He instituted this feast of love for His people.
3. Note the sacramental elements: these are *Symbolical*.

The bread is the symbol of Christ's body, the wine of His blood; together, of His true human nature.

4. Note the Sacramental acts: these are *significant*. They are six: four on the part of the administrator, two on the part of the communicant.

- (1) Taking the elements.

"The Lord Jesus *took* bread." "After the same manner also He *took* the cup."

As the bread and the wine are symbols of Christ's human nature this act is significant of the Incarnation. Our testimony condemns it as an error, "That *taking* the sacramental elements before they are set apart is not a sacramental action." (Testimony, Chap. xxv, error 10.)

- (2) The blessing or consecration of the elements—Verse 24. "And when He had given thanks."

This act is significant of the anointing of Christ in His human nature for His sacrificial and atoning work. It involves consecration, substitution, and im-

putation. It points to the descent of the spirit upon Christ at His baptism.

(3) The breaking of the bread.

Verse 24. "He brake it"; "Broken for you." This act is significant of the sufferings and death of Christ upon the cross. It directs the faith of communicants to the atonement. It reminds them that the sacrifice of Christ was both voluntary and vicarious.

(4) The giving of the elements—Verse 24, "and said,—'Take.'"

This act is significant of Christ's giving Himself as a crucified Savior, with all the fruits of His atoning work, to those who believe in His name. It points to the free offer of the gospel.

(5) The taking of the elements by the communicants. Verse 24. "Take."

This act is significant of appropriating faith. It is the believer's voluntary acceptance of Christ and the benefits of redemption, as freely offered to us in the gospel.

(6) The partaking of the elements. Verse 24. "Eat"—"This is my body which is broken for you." Verse 25. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

This act is significant of the believer's feeding upon Christ as the bread of life—and his trusting in the blood of Christ for the remission of sins. It exhibits the vital union between believers and Christ. Some refer to the passing of the elements from one communicant to another as a seventh sacramental act, signifying the duty of those who have received Christ to communicate Him to others. This may be referred to as suggesting an important truth, but there does not seem to be sufficient warrant for regarding it as a distinct sacramental act.

The Lord's supper is thus seen to be wonderfully rich in its doctrinal significance. The Incarnation,

the Substitution, the Imputation, the Atonement, the Gospel Offer, Appropriating Faith, Union to Christ, Abiding in Christ. It embodies in its outward symbols and sensible signs the whole system of gospel truth for the salvation of men. It leads to Bethlehem where Jesus was born: then to the Jordan where He was baptized; thence to Calvary where He was crucified; and on to Pentecost, where, as the Ascended Lord, He gave gifts to men.

5. Note the *Design* of the Lord's supper.

This is threefold:—

- (1) It is to be a loving memorial. Verse 24. "This do in remembrance of me."
- (2) It is an exhibition of the death of Christ. Verse 26. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death."
  - a. The manner of it, "Broken body," "Blood shed."
  - b. The purpose of it. "Broken for you." "Shed for you."
  - c. The fruits of it. "For the remission of sin."
- (3) It is a profession of our faith in the second coming of our Lord, "till He come"—Verse 26.

#### IV

##### *The Warning and Invitation.*

- I. The authority for this service of warning and invitation:
  - (1) The command of Christ. Verse 28. "But let a man *examine himself* and so let him eat."
  - (2) The example of Christ. Matt. 26:21. "One of you shall betray me."

Debarring is often objected to as inappropriate: that it chills the ardor of devotion; that it distracts the minds of communicants with needless fear, just at the moment when they should repose confidently on Christ. This objection has no weight as against the command and example of our Lord. When Jesus said "One of you shall betray me" it did disturb their peace of mind. Their hearts were filled with sorrow. They began every one of them to say—Lord is it I?

2. The design of this service.

- (1) To exhibit the purity of Christ's house. Ezek. 43:12—"Upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house."
- (2) To prepare communicants for coming to the Lord's table—"And so let him eat." "That they may keep all the ordinances thereof and do them."
- (3) To deter those who continue impenitent.

This service deals with intended communicants and no others. It cites them to the bar of conscience. It deals particularly with sins which may not be of such a scandalous character as to warrant the session in excluding from church privileges and which nevertheless, if unrepented of, will mar the communion with Christ. It deals with secret sins. The old formula:—"In the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I debar from this holy table of the Lord," is not too strong when aimed at the impenitent enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (4) Its gracious purpose is to guard His people against the danger of unworthily communing.
  - a. This is a very aggravated sin. Verse 27. "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily,

shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

It is difficult to determine the full significance of these words; but they can hardly mean less than that the unworthy communicant takes his place with the murderers of our Lord. "They crucify the Son of God afresh."

- b. It involves fearful consequences. Verse 29. "For He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."
- (a) It tends to spiritual decline and slumber. Verse 30. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

I have no doubt that much of the spiritual apathy and decline of to-day is due to unworthily receiving the sacramental seals.

- (b) Divine chastisements may be necessary to save one from the consequences of having unworthily communed. Verse 32. "But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord."
- (c) This sin is not in its nature unpardonable. Verse 32. "We are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world."

The unworthy communicant does not necessarily *seal* himself to eternal "damnation."

- (5) It is designed to increase the confidence and joy of believers—by extending to them Christ's loving invitation.
  - a. This should be as authoritative as the warning.
  - b. It should exhibit the gracious and forgiving character of God.
  - c. It should lay much stress on the communi-

cant's love for Christ and his desire to honor Him by receiving the sacrament.

d. It should be affectionate and assuring.

From all this it appears that the service is a very solemn one. It is the last careful scrutiny of the flock by the under-shepherd before he leads them into the immediate presence of the King. If there is any moment in a pastor's life more solemn than another it is when he stands at the door of sealing ordinances, and in the name of His Master warns and invites.

## V

### *Methods of Debarring.*

1. By the use of the decalogue.

The old method of debarring, still followed by many and preferred by some in nearly all of our congregations, is to take up the commandments, seriatim. If wisely done, this is a profitable method. Followed too exclusively it tends to formalism.

2. By the use of a suitable scripture portion.

- (1) Psalm 24:3-6, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" This gives four tests of character.
  - a. Uprightness of outward conduct. "Hath clean hands."
  - b. Purity of heart. "And a pure heart."
  - c. Undivided affections. "Who hath not lifted up his soul unto idols."
  - d. Fidelity to covenant engagements. "Nor sworn deceitfully."
- (2) Psalm 26:1-8. Gives four tests of character—"Judge," "Examine," "Prove," "Try."
  - a. Consistency between the profession and the life. V. 3. "I have walked in thy truth."
  - b. Companionship. V. 4-5. "I have not sat with vain persons."

- c. The method and purpose of worshipping God. V. 6-7. "I will wash my hands in innocency." "That I may publish with voice of thanksgiving."
- d. Attachment to God's house. V. 8. "Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house."
- 3. By classifying sins.
  - (1) Secret sins.
  - (2) Besetting sins.
  - (3) Sins of omission.
  - (4) Sins of our holy things.
  - (5) Participation in the sins of others.
- 4. By classifying sinners.
  - (1) The unconverted.
  - (2) The unforgiving.
  - (3) The irreverent.
  - (4) The unconsecrated.
- 5. Passages read in debarring.  
 Rom. 1:28-32, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Tim. 1:9-10, 2 Tim. 3:1-5, Rev. 22:15. Other passages suited to particular methods of debarring: Ps. 50:16-23, Jer. 3:17, Matt. 6:24, Luke 14:22-27, 33, 2 Cor. 6:17-18, 2 Cor. 13:5, Heb. 4:12-13, Matt. 5:23-24, 6:14-15, Lev. 10:1-3, Heb. 12:18-19, Matt. 22:11-14, Ezek. 43:11-12.
- 6. Passages for invitation.  
 Matt. 5:3-9, Matt. 11:28-30, 1 Cor. 6:11, Gal. 5:22-24, Prov. 9:1-5, Song of Solomon 2:10-12, 5:1, Isa. 55:1-3, Luke 14:16-17, Rev. 22:17, 1 Sam. 9:11-13.

## VI

*Practical Suggestions in Administering the Lord's Supper.*

1. Give careful instruction as to the manner of coming to the table.
2. Announce Psalm 24:3-10. Instruct the elders to un-

cover the elements, and, during the singing, take your place at the head of the table.

3. Uplift and exhibit the elements, using such words as follow:

“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread and also the cup, a sacramental act significant of His assumption of a human nature into union with His Divine Person: Agreeably to His institution, appointment and example, I, ministering in His name, take this bread and this cup (here lift the elements from the table and hold them forth) and exhibit them to you as the sacramental symbols of the body and blood of the Lord.”

4. Consecrate the elements by prayer.

After having exhibited the bread and the cup replace them quietly on the table and say: “After the Lord Jesus had taken the bread He blessed it,—a sacramental act significant of the consecration of His human nature to the work which He came to perform. Still following His example, let us engage in prayer and consecrate these elements.”

*The formula is:* “Bless so much of the elements of bread and wine as shall be used upon this occasion, which we hereby set apart from a common, to a sacramental use—in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.”

This prayer should be carefully meditated beforehand and should be full of deepest reverent feeling.

5. Give the elements, using carefully the very words of institution.

The form will be in substance this:—“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread and blessed it; both of which sacramental acts have been performed in His name: And, when He had given thanks He brake it—a sacramental act significant of His suffering and death upon the cross; still following His example, I, ministering in His name, do break this bread (here the bread is broken) and give it to you His disciples using His own words: (here the bread is offered) ‘Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.’

“After the same manner also He took the cup; when He had supped (here the cup is presented), saying: ‘This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.’”

6. It is usual to remain silent during the passing of the elements.

7. In serving the subsequent tables, a few remarks may be made before giving the elements.

All table addresses should be carefully adapted to assist communicants in proper exercises at the table. It is of the utmost importance to observe propriety in themes, and language and tones of voice. Bunyan tells of the supper provided for the pilgrims in the Palace Beautiful. And with a touch of matchless beauty he says: "All the talk at the table was about the King of the country; who He was; and what He had done! and why He did, what He had done."

## VII

### *Closing Exercises.*

1. If services have been short a brief address may be given. This may refer to the various experiences of communion at the table, or to the keeping of vows; and words may follow to the children, or to members of sister churches, or to the unconverted, or to non-professors.
2. A prayer of Thanksgiving should be offered.
3. Close by singing Psalm 72:16-19.

## VIII

### *Monday Services After Communion.*

1. These services should be maintained. There is a manifest tendency to follow the example of the other churches in discontinuing them. We should seek to counteract it.
    - Monday services are important.
      - a. As a thanksgiving service. "Were there not ten cleansed: but where are the nine?" is Christ's word of reproof.
      - b. As a means of deepening the impression, and so conserving the fruits of the communion season.
      - c. As a favorable time for ingathering.
- The great revival in the Kirk of Shotts in which five hundred were converted under one sermon, was on the Monday after communion. I have known at least three men, now elders in our church, who were converted to our position by the Testimony-Bearing sermons on Monday.
2. The themes especially appropriate are:
    - a. Our distinctive principles.
    - b. The binding obligation of covenants.
    - c. Holy living and practical godliness.

3. It is profitable to close this service by reading scripture passages such as: Deut. 6:4-6, Rom. 12:9-21, Eph. 6:1-19, Col. 3:12-25, 1 Thes. 5:14-25, 1 Pet. 5:1-5, Num. 6:24-26, 2 Cor. 13:11.

## LECTURE XVII

### FAMILY VISITATION

WE have an old custom in our church called Pastoral Visitation. In 1639, the year after the swearing of the National Covenant of Scotland, the General Assembly passed the following decree:—

“That there shall be a weekly catechising in some part of the congregation: that the families shall be catechised at home by heads of families, of which duties the ministers shall take account, assisted by an elder, and that family worship shall be performed in each house morning and evening.”

In harmony with this action is the declaration and testimony of our church which says:—

“It is the duty of the pastor of every christian congregation to inspect the state of his flock, acquaint himself as much as may be with the knowledge, the character, the disposition, the conduct, and the progress in spirituality of every member thereof, in order that he may rightly divide the word of truth, giving unto each his portion in due season. He is to visit from house to house, not merely as a friend, but as one who watches for their souls.” (Tes. Chap xxxii, Sec. 1 and 2.)

Among the errors condemned is this: “That the fear of giving offense, or the people’s having been unaccustomed to it, is any excuse for a minister’s neglect of the duties of ministerial visitation or catechising.” (Error 2.)

This custom is thus recognized as a peculiar feature of our church life, to which we owe much of that family religion for which our people are distinguished.

## I

*What is Meant by Pastoral Visitation?*

1. It is to be distinguished from mere pastoral calls.

In all works on pastoral theology you will find much on the duty and importance of pastoral visits; and little or nothing on pastoral visitation. It means the regular and systematic visits of the pastor with a member of Session, for the purpose of official supervision.

2. It has special reference to religion in the home.

The testimony says: "In family visitation, the minister is to inquire how they attend upon the duties of personal and family religion, and the various ordinances of public worship, giving them suitable exhortations, and praying for them and with them."

a. The family is a moral person.

b. It is to be in covenant with God.

c. It has institutions of worship peculiar to itself.

d. It is embraced in the bosom of the church.

These are principles which the Covenanter church has always recognized. The children born in a Christian home are born church members, and entitled to the sacramental seal of baptism. The church imposes obligations upon her members to maintain family religion, and one purpose of family visitation is to see that these engagements are kept.

3. It is the exercise of Pastoral care over the flock.

Dr. Shedd in his work on Pastoral Theology says: "The clergyman bears two characters and sustains two different relations. He is an orator, that is, one whose function it is to address public assemblies. And he is a pastor whose duty it is to go from house to house and address men privately and individually on the subject of religion. This kind of labor as necessarily forms a part of the ministerial service as preaching. A perfect clergyman, if such there be, would combine

both the oratorical and pastoral character in just proportion and degree. The clergyman is liable to be deficient upon one or the other side of this double character. He is a better preacher than he is a pastor: or else a better pastor than he is a preacher. It is a mistake to suppose that these two offices are independent of each other, or that the clergyman can secure the one by neglecting the other."

These words should be carefully weighed, because the common excuse for neglecting family visitation is that the time is needed for study. The minister cannot atone for his neglect of pastoral care by superior efforts in the pulpit.

4. It is Sessional oversight.

The pastor is accompanied by an elder. The Testimony says: "The elders of the congregation are in their station to attend to the visitation of the flock, with or without the minister." One of the errors condemned is:—"That ruling elders are not under obligation to watch over and promote the spiritual improvement of the flock." (Tes. Chap. xxxii, Sec. 3, Error 3.)

Why should an elder accompany the minister? One answers this question by saying:—"He is taken along to open the gates." Another says:—"He goes along to answer the hard questions." The true answer is that given in the Testimony.

- a. It is his business as truly as that of the minister. There is nothing connected with it that might not be performed by elders alone, and in some cases it has been.
- b. It has the same advantages to the elder as to the minister.

## II

### *The Advantages of Family Visitation.*

1. It promotes acquaintance with the people.

Both Doctor Cuyler and Doctor Wilcox particularize the importance of the pastor's being able to "greet all the saints by name," and to address by name the smallest children.

2. It increases mutual interest.

Dr. John Hall says: "The experience of the church is that, that pastor effects the most in the end who comes into closest personal contact with his charge. No amount of organizing, no skill in creating machinery and manipulating committees, is a substitute for this. Who feels the power of a tear in the eye of a committee? The minister who would be like the Master, must go, and, like Him, lay the warm kindly hand on the leper, the diseased, the wretched. He must touch the blind eyes with something from himself. The tears must be in his own eyes over the dead who are to be raised to life."

Another writer, referring to the prophet's servant laying his staff upon the face of the dead child, says, "You cannot raise the dead with a stick."

Nothing but your own experience as pastors in the work of family visitation will make you understand how it increases your interest in the families of your people, and theirs in you.

3. It increases the pastor's power in the pulpit.

a. By greater nearness to the people.

Pulpit power is not the power of the platform lecturer to entertain and amuse the audience. A stranger can do that sometimes better than an acquaintance. Pulpit power is the power to influence and persuade men to a new and better life. Nearness is essential to this personal power. In the physical world the attractive power of bodies on other bodies depends upon nearness as well as upon size. The good pastor who gets near to his people influences them more than the great preacher standing at a distance.

b. By acquaintance with their daily living.

If the pastor is to speak helpfully to his people he needs to know something of their home life. He will learn something of this in his social visits, but very much of their trials, temptations, and aspirations will come out in the spiritual atmosphere of a wisely conducted family visitation.

c. By a knowledge of their spiritual state.

One of the great advantages of settled pastorates is that the shepherd comes to know his sheep. A congregation depending upon supplies soon becomes conscious of a lack. The preaching may be beyond that of the ordinary pastor, for if they are a desirable congregation they will likely hear the best sermons of every "supply" sent to them. And yet they soon begin to say, "We are tired listening to strangers." Their own pastor, who has entered into their personal experiences, who knows their doubts and fears, their struggles and longings, is the one who can best feed their souls and comfort their hearts. Family visitation is the most direct way to secure such a result.

4. It cultivates the power of dealing with men personally.

Most of us are conscious of two things: namely, a deep sense of the importance of dealing with men personally; and the difficulty of getting at it. Family visitation brings us into the service by a systematic plan. Speaking of this Shedd says: "There is no way so sure to overcome the indisposition of a reserved or a studious man towards direct personal conversation with individuals as working according to a plan. He may enter upon the discharge of the unwelcome service from a sense of duty, but before long he begins to work with spontaneity and enjoyment. There is no fact in the Christian experience better established than that the faithful performance of labor from conscience, ends in its being performed with relish and pleasure. Conscience is finally wrought into

the will in a vital synthesis. Law in the end becomes an impulse instead of a commandment."

Family visitation brings the pastor directly into this personal work, and discovers to him how profitable, easy, and even delightful it may be.

5. It promotes attendance upon ordinances.

This is the testimony of all experience. The increased interest between pastor and people; the renewed concern on religious subjects; the conscience awakened as to past neglects: all find expression in more careful attendance on social and public ordinances.

### III

#### *How to Conduct Family Visitation.*

1. Plan the work systematically.

a. For the time to be devoted to it.

The faithful pastor is a very busy man. It is always worth while to consider the amount of time that can be allotted to any one thing. "Brethren, the time is short." We cannot afford to use it at random.

b. Select the elder to accompany in each district.

If the congregation is districted among the elders, it may be well to take each elder in his own district. But where the elders and districts have remained the same for a number of years it might be helpful to exchange. The pastor should be careful to bring together those who can be agreeable to each other. Harm may be done by taking an elder to whom there is a dislike into a "touchy" family.

c. Decide upon the places to be visited each day.

This will be determined largely by locality and wisely done will save your time. Do not undertake too much in one day.

d. Select the subjects to be talked over.

It is a good plan to have some *leading topic* common to all the families. It makes the work easier for the pastor, and allows the people to know beforehand what the subject will be. Such subjects as the following are appropriate:

- a. The Early Covenants.
- b. The Person and Offices of Christ.
- c. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.
- d. The Means of Grace.
- e. The Evidences of a Gracious State.
- f. The Sacraments.
- g. The Church Covenant of 1871.

These are all subjects possible to be adapted to the different members of the family; they are important matters of instruction, and it is easy to pass from them to the duties of personal and family religion.

2. Announce your plan from the pulpit.

Name the general subject, the families you expect to visit, the hour when you may be expected, and give the members the opportunity to have the time changed, if the time named is inconvenient.

3. Be punctual to the time and prompt to begin.

You will find some people, like college students, willing to shorten the time by painfully polite conversation. Do not permit them to fritter away your time. As soon as the greetings are passed, announce that you are ready to begin; and if all the members of the family are not present inquire for the absent.

4. Adapt the exercises to the different members of the family.

*Begin with the small children.*

They will be excited and very anxious until their part is attended to, and your intercourse with them will prepare for the more advanced members of the family.

- (1) Easy questions for children: the shorter catechism, Psalms, Bible questions.

- (2) Their habits of devotion and their knowledge of the spiritual nature of worship.
- (3) Christ's love for children and theirs for Him.
- (4) Their relation to the church as baptized members.

By the time you are through with the children you should be pretty well acquainted with the state of religion in the family. You will have obtained light as to the family instruction, family worship, Sabbath keeping, family government, and many things, both pertinent and impertinent. The children will be open and frank in their replies and the parents will be conscious that you know pretty much all about how they are attending to family duties, when they hear the children's answers.

Now take up *the general topic* which you have announced. Include in your questions all present except the small children. It is not well to have any mere spectators in your family visitation. If strangers are present and do not withdraw, take for granted that it is their desire to participate. Begin with the doctrinal, lead up to the practical, end with the experimental.

*Ask special questions to the young people.*

- (1) As to their knowledge of the scriptures.

You need not ask—"Do you read the Bible every day?" But such questions as these:—Do you find pleasure in reading God's word? What portions of the Bible do you find most helpful? What Bible character do you like best and why? Name the most eminent for particular Christian graces, e.g., Faith, Patience, Purity, and give illustrations.

- (2) As to their social relations and companionships.

This subject needs to be handled very wisely. But the pastor should know whether his young people are

exposing themselves to the perils of worldly amusements, and dangerous associates.

(3) As to their mental tastes and culture.

There is so much of pernicious literature in circulation that the church should exercise watchful care over her youth. It is proper to inquire what books they are reading, what kind of reading they enjoy. There should be earnest effort to cultivate a taste for solid reading, and for literature connected with the history of the church, and for books of Christian experience such as missionary biography.

(4) As to their religious experience.

There should be a very earnest effort to break through the reserve that characterizes the intercourse of pastors and people on this most vital of all subjects. Seek to have the young people open their hearts to you. Do not be severe with their honest confessions of failure.

*Ask special questions to the parents.*

The parents are the head of that moral personality—the family; and as this is family visitation the questions to them should be pointed and direct.

(1) As to the regular observance of family worship.

It is not sufficient to ask whether they have a family altar. They would be able to answer that affirmatively even if they only read a chapter or had prayer, or had it only once a day, or on Sabbath. Your inquiries should bring out whether they have family worship in all its parts—singing, reading, and prayer—whether they have it regularly morning and evening, whether they seek to have present all the members of their households, including servants and domestics.

Impress these duties on the wife also, and encourage them to have all the members of the family take part by reading around, and occasionally praying around.

- (2) As to their asking a blessing and returning thanks at meals.

Do not inquire whether it is their custom "to say grace at meals." The custom of expressing thanks is largely falling into disuse even in Covenanter homes. The pastor should throw his influence in favor of the old custom by keeping it up in his own home and encouraging the people to do so.

- (3) As to their religious instruction of their children.

This is one of the specific engagements made by parents when their children are baptized. There is a tendency to delegate this work to Sabbath Schools. This cannot be done. The old custom was to recite the shorter catechism every Sabbath evening. Modern methods of church services are crowding it out. This should not be.

Fathers are too apt to leave the whole burden of teaching the children on the mother. The pastor should press the duty back upon both parents.

- (4) As to their observance of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is the home day. The manner of its observance in the home will determine the manner of its observance everywhere. The secularizing of the Sabbath in the home is the weakness of the Sabbath cause to-day. The fourth commandment is addressed to parents and holds them responsible for the conduct of their children and of their servants on the Lord's Day. "Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor the stranger that is within thy gates."

- (5) As to the supply of literature in the home.

Inquire whether they have the standards of the church, church papers and magazines, and historical and biographical literature. Children brought up in the church frequently present themselves to be received into full communion and yet have never read

the *Confession of Faith*, the *Testimony* or the *Covenant*. This is the fault of parents. They should be reminded of their duty.

(6) As to systematic beneficence.

This is a subject that needs elucidation. It is a very proper question to ask whether the family has any rule for Christian giving, and what proportion is regarded as belonging to the Lord. Right giving is a great means of grace.

*Give special attention to the aged.*

- (1) Endeavor to draw from them a testimony for God.
- (2) Comfort them on the near prospect of heaven.

5. Adapt your questions carefully to the attainments of each one.

This requires tact. There is a great difference in families. Though you use the same general topic in all, the method of treatment must differ widely. It is better to be too easy than too hard. The people are nervous and cannot do their best. Be very considerate of the timid and diffident.

A cruel story is told of one of the old fathers in our ministry. A poor woman conscious of her ignorance and dreading exposure, presented her pastor with a fine pair of dressed chickens and tremblingly asked him to be easy with her in his family visitation. He accepted her gift and then as he related, "asked her two questions for every one that he asked any one else." When he told that boastfully he was "glorying in his shame."

Dr. Thomas Sproull used to tell his students of a family which he visited, where the husband was very intelligent and proud of his attainments and the wife very ignorant and easily abashed.

The first question he asked, she was unable to answer, and her husband twitted her on her ignorance.

He asked another much easier, but, still more confused, she could not frame an answer and her husband broke in with sharp reproofs. Determined to help her out, the doctor asked a question so simple that any child could answer it, but the poor woman had lost all power of speech and the old man, her husband, expressed his disgust by a "tut-tut-tut-tut!"

Then Doctor Sproull turned his attention to him and propounded a series of the most difficult questions he could frame, not one of which the old bear could answer. The doctor said he took good care that if he upbraided his wife after they had gone she would be able to retort that she had answered as many questions as he had. I am quite sure the good lady would love her pastor, whatever she might think of her husband.

6. Give opportunity for others to ask questions.

7. Close the exercises with family worship.

This should be made an integral part of the service; the Psalm, scripture reading, and prayer, all carefully ordered with reference to the occasion.

#### IV

##### *Precautions.*

1. Guard against the appearance of the Confessional.

One of the most common objections to family visitation is that it is too much like the Catholic Confessional. If properly conducted, it has nothing in common with it. The pastor is not a priest. Caution should be used in framing questions, so as not to call out information which you do not desire and will not know what to do with when you get it.

2. Do not make your questions a temptation to equivocate.

You can ascertain the habits as to secret devotion

and scripture reading without putting them in the form that may force one either to an unpleasant admission or to telling a falsehood.

3. Do not ask any question, of which anyone present has not the right to hear the answer.

It is more or less of a hindrance to the service to have anyone outside the family circle present. Circumstances may arise in which it will be necessary to omit the direct questions on some matters and let the service take the form of exhortation and encouragement to duty, supplementing it at a more convenient season, if thought necessary.

4. Beware of stirring up family difficulties.

There may be a skeleton in the closet which you do not wish to have appear on the scene. Mutual criminations and recriminations between husband and wife are among the possibilities. Such things are ruinous to the whole service.

5. Do not refer in the pulpit to disclosures made to you in the privacy of the family and not intended for others. It is wholly unprofessional to do so—even when you imagine no one will know to whom you refer. Others may know more than you think.
6. Do not speak of family visitation as an irksome service.

This is very often done. Pastors feel that their people have a dislike for it, and they deprecate that duty requires them to perform it, and they give that impression to the people. All this is damaging. Go about the work cheerfully. Let everything connected with it testify to your delight and joy in the bosom of your flock and in the sweet sanctuary of their home circles.

## LECTURE XVIII

The pastor's duties in connection with the Sabbath School and the Weekly Prayer Meeting will be treated in the second series of lectures, in considering *Congregational Activities*. We will pass on to a discussion of the pastor's relation to certain classes.

### ATTENTION TO STRANGERS

"LOVE ye, therefore, the stranger" was an ancient Hebrew law. (Deut. 10:19.)

"And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself." (Lev. 19:33-34.) "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13:2.)

Does God take care for strangers? Verily he does. He regards the stranger as his special ward along with the widow and the fatherless. That which is done to the stranger He regards as done to Himself.

"I was a stranger and ye took me in," says Jesus. "When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in?" "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt, 25:35, 38, 40.)

This is sufficient to show that the church's treatment of strangers is important in the eyes of her Lord, and that the true minister of Jesus Christ must give special attention to this subject; and it is a sufficient warrant for giving it a place in Pastoral Theology.

Let us consider—

## I

*The Pastor's Duty Toward New Families Coming Into the Neighborhood.*

1. He should call on them at the first opportunity.

Murphy says: "When persons are strangers in a new community a little attention is peculiarly grateful. It will not soon be forgotten. Instances could be given, where it has at first gratified, then interested, then softened the feelings, then led to sincere inquiry and then landed the soul in the happiness of the salvation in Christ."

God said to Israel: "Ye know the heart of a stranger, for ye were strangers in a strange land." This means a great deal. For no one who has not himself been a stranger can appreciate what a stranger feels. If we were more thoughtful about this we should not miss so many golden opportunities to find our way into people's hearts at a time when they are strangers and feel the need of friendship.

a. The minister does not need to wait for an introduction.

He is an officer of the King. He has a warrant from Christ, to whom all families belong, for his call upon families.

b. His people should notify him of the arrival of such families.

It should be understood between pastor and people that the people are to be eyes and ears for their pastor to keep him informed of such accessions to the neighborhood. The Pastor's Aid Department of the Missionary Society should render efficient service in this.

2. Ascertain whether or not they have a church home.

Your call is an official one. Do not let it be misunderstood.

- a. Let it be known that you are pastor of a church in their neighborhood.

You do not need to make any apology for being interested in the spiritual welfare of all within your bounds.

- b. Inquire where they have been accustomed to worship.

I think it is well to take for granted that they have some church connection. Use directness and simplicity of speech, carefully avoiding any approach to rudeness or of meddling in their affairs from mere curiosity.

- c. Make your call brief, informal, cheery, and such as to leave a pleasant memory.

Much is gained if you can make such an impression that your visit will be remembered as something they would desire to have repeated. If there are children, or aged people, or invalids in the family, enter into their sympathies.

- d. If the way opens for it, pray with the family.

This should not be a general prayer, but one that centers around their home, and makes them feel in their new relation that they have been commended to God by one who is truly a man of God.

3. Do not seek to proselyte strangers belonging to sister denominations.

Dr. Wilcox was asked: "Ought the pastor without knowing something previously of the stranger, to call on him?" He answers: "Not as a rule. First, learn through others what you can. If he proves to be a professed Christian and of your denomination you have a right to presume that he will unite with your church. But, if possible, before calling on him become sure as to his antecedents; otherwise you may find yourself stealing sheep which belong to another

shepherd. If he is of another communion you have, unless he should voluntarily unite with your flock, no concern with him."

I would modify this answer and say: As a rule, yes. Call on him and ascertain from himself what his church relations are. If you find him to belong to a sister church, take for granted that is where he will desire to go—and,

- a. Direct the stranger where he will find a church of his choice;
  - b. Give him the name and address of the pastor of that church;
  - c. Send his name and address to that pastor—informing him that the family belongs to his church.
  - d. Do not call again officially unless invited.
4. Do not seek to draw in families that naturally belong to another congregation of our people.

The case referred to is this: Where there are two or more congregations of our people in the same vicinity and the bounds of these congregations are not geographically determined, what is the duty of a pastor toward a new family of our people coming into the common bounds?

- a. The family should be allowed to select its place of worship by natural affinity.

If there are any ties of past friendship or kinship which would naturally draw the family to one congregation rather than another, these should be allowed to operate undisturbed.

- b. If there be no such affinity then the family would be expected to attend the nearest church.
- c. They should always be expected to attend the nearest, if, to reach the more distant, would require them to use the street cars on the Sabbath.

Remember that I am speaking of new families just moving in. Whatever excuse may be made for old families that have their settled places in old congregations which they cannot break up without endangering important interests, this does not apply to the case before us. Ordinarily, however, the evil resulting from breaking up congregational ties even in the case of old families, would be far less than that which arises from the unnecessary use of the street cars on the Lord's Day.

d. In case two congregations are organized having exactly the same geographical center, the golden rule must be the pastor's guide.

Such cases are anomalous. Their existence is to be deprecated. Where they do exist they will put Christianity to a test which few of us are able to bear. But the Golden Rule will go far to make the path of duty plain. It will at least prevent the use of any mean, underhanded methods in winning those who might just as naturally belong to the flock of a brother minister of the same church. Never become so confused as to read the Golden Rule thus: "Do unto others as they do unto you." If you should be so unfortunate as to have a ministerial brother of any church who uses peculiar methods in dealing with you, do not permit him to set the standard for your conduct. "One is your Master, even Christ."

## II

### *The Pastor's Duty Toward New Families Coming Into the Congregation.*

These are strangers who will need no special care. Still the transition from an old home to a new one has its temptations. At such a crisis many have commenced a lapse into worldliness.

Hence I remark—

1. The pastor should seek them out.

You may say it is their duty to find the pastor. So it is. But they may not do it. When Henry Ward Beecher was examined for installation at Brooklyn he was asked (so the story runs) if he believed in the perseverance of the saints? He replied that he was brought up to believe in that doctrine, but after he settled in the West and saw how eastern Christians acted when moving to that region, he began to be troubled with doubts.

Now what is lacking in the perseverance of the saints must be supplied by the perseverance of the pastor.

2. He should seek to obtain their certificates.

Our church has a rule that when a member moves from one congregation into the bounds of another, the session should furnish him with a certificate, and also send a duplicate to the session into whose bounds he has removed. This is an excellent rule, but is seldom observed. It frequently happens that persons are loth to lift their certificates from the congregation they are leaving. The excuse often is that they are undecided how long they shall remain. This is not a good reason. It is easy to certify them away when they decide to return or go elsewhere. It is no discourtesy to the other session for their new pastor to persuade them to transfer their membership to the congregation in whose bounds they are living. You may even request the privilege of writing for the certificate if they will not attend to it themselves. Nor is it a discourtesy, when a member is leaving your bounds for another congregation, to request him to take his letter with him.

3. When new families are received, see that they are introduced to the congregation. This can be done through the officers or the social committee of the con-

gregation. But it must be done systematically and you must see that it is done.

4. See that a pew is assigned to them.

It is not the work of the pastor to assign the pews, but it is his place to inform those in charge of the sittings that a new member or family has been enrolled and should be provided for. They will always be strangers until they have their own pew.

5. Seek to find work for them in the church.

No one feels at home until he begins to work. The sooner you can ascertain what their accustomed church work has been, or what is suited to their gifts or congenial to their tastes, the better. You cannot do a better thing for a new family than to explain to them all the various schemes and activities of the church life, taking for granted that they will bear their proportion of all. That is the best compliment you can pay them.

6. Manifest an interest in their temporal affairs.

a. In their finding a home.

The securing of a comfortable home in a desirable locality, convenient to the church and suited to their means is one of the first things they need. As strangers, a suggestion from you may be of great assistance.

b. In the introduction of children to the school.

If you have not had the experience of a little child entering a new school, you would wonder how their little hearts are beating with anxiety and dread of the strange teachers and scholars. You may bind them to you for life by sympathetic aid. Besides they will fare better if it is known that someone of influence is interested in their welfare.

c. By assistance, in securing employment.

Some of our most successful pastors, as, for instance, Dr. Andrew Stevenson of Second New York congregation, and Dr. S. O. Wylie of Second Phila-

delphia congregation, were remarkable for their tact in this direction. Nevertheless, the pastor is not expected to run an employment office.

7. Use discretion in dealing with strangers.

A certificate of good standing even from a Covenanter session is not an absolute guarantee of trustworthiness. You cannot afford to endorse even in a business way any one who is a total stranger to you. Wolves have been known to enter the flock in sheep's clothing, and religion may be a cloak to conceal an irregular or even an unclean life. Be careful about putting strangers into important places in the church. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." (1 Tim. 5:22.)

### III

#### *The Pastor's Duty Toward Those who are Without a Church Home.*

There are those who are not strangers in the neighborhood who are "strangers to the covenants of promise." To these the pastor owes special duties.

1. He should take a systematic way to discover them.

It is a sad thing to read in a morning paper that an old man or a little child has starved to death in the midst of a city rolling in wealth, because no one knew of his destitution. It ought not to be possible that such a thing should occur. And yet it does occur. Why? Because proper effort is not made to discover the destitute. It is everybody's business and nobody's business.

But a far more tremendous fact is that multitudes are perishing in spiritual destitution at the very doors of the church. It will not do to say they might come in. They do not come, and we must go out into the hedges and highways and compel them to come in.

Missionary societies and young people's societies can render efficient service here. The pastor should organize his forces for this work and set about it systematically. This matter will be dealt with in connection with the second series of lectures, "The Pastor in his Relation to the Activities of the Congregation."

2. He should enlist his people individually—in calling on them.

Good can be done by calls during the week. Not all persons are qualified for this service. It is what is called house to house work. The pastor does well to select carefully his helpers in this line.

3. They should be invited to attend church entertainments.

Church sociables, holiday entertainments and summer picnics are not worth their cost if they cannot be turned to account as missionary agencies. Congregations, on such occasions, should call in the maimed and the halt and the blind *spiritually*.

4. If possible they should be offered a regular sitting in the church.

This is an effective way of making the invitation to attend seem real. Many congregations have what they call "the stranger's pew."

#### IV

#### *The Church's Duty Toward Wayfarers and Travelers.*

There is a vast army of people traveling all the time and spending their Sabbaths in hotels and boarding houses. Many of them have been religiously brought up. But they are in immense peril. The restraints of home are largely removed. They are separated from the church life. They are surrounded by powerful and insidious temptations. What can the churches do to save them?

1. Place in the depots, hotels and boarding houses neatly framed invitation cards.

These cards should give the name and location of the church, the hours of service, the name of the pastor and a cordial invitation to strangers to come and unite in the worship.

2. Address personal invitations to the persons whose names appear on the hotel registers.

This is a very effective method and far less difficult than it seems. The cards in neat envelopes are printed, all but the name. A young man drops into a hotel, learns from the clerk the names of the guests staying over Sabbath. In a few minutes time he can have a personal invitation neatly addressed, to be handed to each guest when he appears in the morning. By such a simple service one may draw worshipers to the sanctuary and win souls for heaven.

## V

### *Receiving Strangers at the Church.*

1. Have genial, warm-hearted ushers, men of standing and judgment.

This should not be left to the sexton unless he is an extraordinary character, selected with reference to this service. It is a service that may well be committed to men of standing and influence.

2. Provide Psalm-books and Bibles for the use of strangers.

It is not enough to have them here and there in the pews. Let the usher, as he seats a stranger, place the books in his hand; and, if Psalm or text has already been announced, find the place for him.

3. Strangers should be invited to remain to be introduced after the service.

This may be done by the usher, or by a committee

for that purpose, or by any member. Some one should detain the stranger until the pastor has the opportunity to speak to him.

4. The elders should be especially impressed with their duty in this regard.

It is difficult to get the officers of the church to appreciate the importance of such things.

5. Strangers should be remembered in the prayers.

If the pastor only can keep these strangers lovingly in his heart, and, conscious that he does not know their needs, commend them to the care of him who knows the need of all, it may do more to win their souls to Christ than all that he has been able to say. The stranger may feel that he has received nothing from your sermon, and that he must go away hungry, as he came; but, when your prayer reveals that he has a place in your heart, he will not doubt that he has a place in the heart of your Master. A story is told of a little boy, who being asked what he intended to be when he became a man answered: "I intend to be a stranger." He had observed that strangers in his father's house had the best of everything: the parlor, the best chamber, the best provisions, the cake and the preserves,—and the child decided that the best position open to men was to be a stranger. It would not be well that men should come to feel that to be a stranger is better than to be a dweller in God's House, but that when such favor is shown to the stranger it must be delightful to be a Son.

## LECTURE XIX

### THE DUTY OF THE PASTOR TO THE SICK

AMONG the manifold parochial duties of the pastor, one of the most important, and at the same time one of the most difficult, is that of visiting the sick. In the Directory for Worship you will find very helpful instructions on this subject. These should be carefully studied.

#### I

#### *The Pastor is Under Special Obligations to Visit the Sick.*

The Directory for Worship says: "It is the duty of the minister not only to teach the people committed to his charge in public, but privately; and particularly to admonish, exhort, reprove, and comfort them so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will permit. He is to admonish them in time of health to prepare for death; and for that purpose they are often to confer with their minister as to the state of their souls, and in times of sickness to desire his advice and help, timely and seasonably, before their strength and understanding fail them. Times of sickness and affliction are special opportunities put into his hand by God to minister a word in season to weary souls."

The special obligation of the pastor to visit the sick arises from several considerations.

1. Their consciences are more awakened to spiritual and eternal things at such times.

I cannot say that a sick-bed is a favorable opportunity for attending to the interests of the soul. Too

often have I heard the cry of distress from the bed of suffering:—"This is a poor place to prepare for death." It is nevertheless true that one shut in the sick room, and impressed with the sense of weakness and frailty, is freer from the world and more ready to listen to the counsels of the minister than in the days of health. Such opportunities should not be allowed to pass unimproved.

2. It is frequently a time of sore temptation.

Afflictions, in themselves, are not necessarily softening. The flint may be shivered to pieces by a blow and each fragment will be as hard as it was before it was broken. And a human heart may be crushed by trial, and yet remain as hard as the flint. Not only is this true, but the unregenerate or imperfectly sanctified heart is often sorely tempted to fly in the face of God, when smarting under the strokes of His rod. We know from the scriptures that Satan uses such times for his fiercest assaults upon God's dearest children. He will insinuate doubts into the mind concerning the promises, the faithfulness, and even the justice of God. The minister should hasten to the sufferer that he may grapple with the powers of darkness and rescue the imperiled soul. There will be times when you will become so conscious of the hand to hand struggle with the Prince of Darkness that every energy of your nature will be aroused to repel his assaults upon the afflicted child of God. He hates them with a malignant and fiendish hate; and when he knows that he cannot drag them down to hell he will buffet them to the gate of heaven.

3. It is according to the example and command of Christ.

"In all their affliction He was afflicted; and the angel of His presence saved them." (Isa. 63:9.)  
"Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."  
(Matt. 8:17.)

The whole record of Christ's ministry on earth testifies to His regard for the suffering and afflicted. How often it is written—"He had compassion on them." If the pastor intends to represent Christ to His people, he must recognize his obligations to the sick. Nor should we ever forget that our Lord regards what is done to them as done to Himself. "He will say to them on His right hand, I was sick and ye visited me. And they shall say, Lord when saw we thee sick and visited thee? And He will answer them, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." (Matt. 25: 36:39-40.)

4. Christ has directed His people to send for the pastor in time of sickness.

James 5:14. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church." If it is the duty of the people to call for him it is his duty to respond to the call.

The faithful pastor's heart will so certainly prompt him to this duty that it seems unnecessary to enforce it by argument, but the truth must be confessed that a frequent complaint against ministers is that they neglect the sick. Where the charge is true the complaint is just.

## II

### *How to go to the Bedside of the Sick.*

1. Teach the people to send for you in sickness.

The people will know without any instruction that it is your duty to visit them; but strange to say it seems seldom to occur to people to send for the pastor. They take for granted that he will hear of the sickness or certainly he will miss them from church or from prayer-meeting and will inquire and so learn

of the sickness. Of course it is the duty of the pastor to go without being sent for, provided he knows that the sickness is serious; but it should be distinctly understood, that, until the parishioner has sent for the pastor, he has no ground to complain of neglect, and that the pastor has a right to complain of neglect if he is left in ignorance of any serious sickness in his flock.

2. Go promptly when you hear of the need, whether sent for or not.

Doctor Cuyler, in "How to be a Pastor," says:—"However busy you may be in preparing a sermon or in any commendable occupation, everything else must be laid aside. A pastor should be as quick to hasten to the room of sickness as an ambulance is to reach a scene of disaster."

Sometimes you will be annoyed at being called away from your studies unnecessarily, but do not permit this to deter you from responding promptly to these calls. It is better to err on the safe side, and to make many journeys that are seemingly uncalled for, than to fail of one where your presence is essential. Do not be deterred from going where you are needed by undue concern for your own life and health. "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

3. Make special preparation for going to the sick room.

The pastor's mission to the sick room is not made in neighborly solicitude, to ask for the condition of the afflicted. His mission should be as clear and definite as that of the physician who ministers to the body.

- a. Select a subject or text on which to converse.

The usual questions, such as "How do you find yourself to-day?" "Do you sleep well at night?" "Are you able to take nourishment?" are all well enough in their way, but they do not represent the pas-

tor's errand to the sick bed. If you depend on the spur of the moment to furnish you with suitable and appropriate thoughts, your visit will probably not be worth sending for. A physician might as well open his medicine case, and prescribe out of the first bottle he lays his hand on as for the minister to open the Bible at random in the sick room.

- b. Offer special prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This is the privilege of the pastor in every duty or emergency. The Holy Ghost has made him Overseer. He will assist him to oversee. The Holy Spirit is always dealing with God's people in their afflictions, and if the pastor will put himself into His hands he will be used.

4. In serious cases, seek to learn the condition of the patient before entering the sick room.
  - a. When convenient consult the physician before entering.

Much is said of the difficulty of getting along with physicians, and of their readiness to interfere with the pastor in his work. My experience is that if the minister is thoughtful and considerate in the sick room, in nine cases out of ten the physicians will regard him as an ally in the battle with disease.

- b. Do not *unnecessarily* run counter to the physician's orders.

I emphasize the word, *unnecessarily*, because the pastor has a commission from the Great Physician and he cannot always take his directions from any lower authority. If he knows that he has a message from the Lord to the sick person, he will deliver it independently of the physician's advice. But this requires great caution. The pastor is assuming much responsibility.

- c. Do not interfere with the doctor's prescriptions.

The physician has the care of the body; you have the care of the soul. If he may not properly interfere with your work, neither may you with his.

A minister usually has some knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and he may know something of the *Materia Medica*. But he must not yield to the temptation to prescribe for the case when a regular physician is in charge. Nor is it wise to be suggesting patent medicines and cure-alls as a supplement to the physician's remedies.

I have consulted a noted physician of long experience on the matters presented on this subject and he bears most emphatic testimony to the beneficial effects of the minister's counsels and prayers in the sick room.

### III

#### *The Pastor in the Sick Room.*

- I. Be considerate of the weakness and sensitiveness of the sick.

- a. Enter the room quietly and speak softly.

In cases of severe sickness everything is hushed. Nurses move about quietly suppressing every sound. Voices are toned down, out of consideration for the nervous state of the sufferer. When the minister breaks in upon this stillness with a heavy tread that shakes the floor, and a trumpet voice that seems to lift the ceiling, the effect is anything but pleasant.

A lady who had been very low and had recovered said to me that the only recollection she had of her pastor's prayer at her bedside was the feeling that he was "knocking her to pieces with his loud petitions for her recovery."

Dr. Wilcox offers these homely and helpful suggestions: "Wear into the sick room no damp clothes.

Have on no creaking shoes. In winter remove your gloves and warm your hands before going to the bedside."

b. Be cheerful and buoyant.

It is not well for the minister to carry gloominess and despair into the sick chamber. At the same time do not mistake a light, frivolous, jesting manner for the spirit of hopefulness, courage, and faith. Your efforts will not be appreciated if you attempt to perpetrate a huge joke on one who is suffering acute pain.

c. Avoid exciting news and doleful stories of similar cases resulting in death.

It is very natural to seek to arouse the sick person by carrying to him something of the excitement of the outside world. And the sight of his sufferings quickens the memory to call up similar cases. The afflicted in a weak state of mind often suffers torture by being forced to listen to the recital of dismal tales of disease and death similar to his own case. Avoid suggesting to the patient blood-curdling remedies for his disorder. I knew a case of blood-poisoning where the weary sufferer was urged to apply such measures as the following:—"Cut open a live chicken and apply it while still hot." "Make a poultice of crushed fishing worms." "Take a black cat and split it open lengthwise and lay the poisoned arm inside of it." That the patient did not die from listening to such tragic suggestions in her extremely weak and nervous state was probably due solely to the fact that her time had not come.

d. Do not be drawn into discussion either with the patient or with others in the sick room.

The sick person often is irritable and unreasonable. He may even reflect upon you in the most unjust and unwarranted way. The considerate pastor will always avoid being drawn into discussion. A thought-

less visitor or attendant may be spoiling for an intellectual bout with the minister, and step into the ring with a chip on his shoulder. Do not knock it off. It is an inexcusable thing to start up an argument by a sick bed. The following testimony from Dr. Cuyler is very suggestive:

"There are many cases of extreme and critical illness when the presence of even the most loving pastor may be an unwise intrusion. An excellent Christian lady who had been twice apparently at the brink of death said to me: 'Never enter the room of a person who is extremely low, unless the person urgently requests you, or unless a spiritual necessity compels it. You have no idea how the sight of a new face agitates the sufferer, or how you may unconsciously or unintentionally rob the sufferer of some of the little life that is fluttering in that feeble frame.' . . . I felt grateful to the good woman," says Dr. Cuyler, "for her advice and have often acted upon it accordingly, when the family have unwisely importuned me to do that which would be more harm than good. On some occasions when I have found the sick room crowded by well-meaning but needless intruders, I have taken the liberty to put them all forth, as our Master did from that chamber in which the daughter of Jairus was in the death slumber."

## 2. Be tender and sympathetic.

This does not mean that you are to speak in whining, mournful tones. Much less that you are to be unfaithful in dealing with their souls. It simply means that you will open your heart to their sorrows; that you will be touched with the sight of their sufferings; that the touch of your hand, the softness of your countenance, the tenderness of your words, the drift of your speech, and the matter of your petitions for them will all show that you suffer with them as members of the same body. Only thus can we be true

ministers of Him who Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses, and who is afflicted in all the afflictions of His people. Encourage the sick to lay their burdens on you, and do not give grudgingly the draft on your sympathies which they make.

3. Make all your exercises brief and direct.

Nothing could be more out of place than long desultory remarks and prayers at a sick bed. Earnest speech is always concise. It is cruel to require one who is fainting under sickness to follow you through the history of the race, from Adam down, or to travel all over the fields of theological controversy before reaching his own specific needs.

4. Consult the sick person as to any special desires he may have.

There may be some subject or which he is anxious to converse. Some people, even when ill, delight in singing and are greatly helped by it, and will be disappointed if you keep worship without singing a Psalm. In other cases singing would be hurtful. At times the heart is hungering for a familiar portion of the word. Give the opportunity to suggest it. The same is true as to the prayers. It is well to inquire before going to prayer what the desires and longings of the heart are. Give the sufferer an opportunity to direct the exercises. If special requests are made, be especially careful not to overlook them.

## LECTURE XX

### THE PASTOR'S DUTY TO CONFIRMED INVALIDS AND AT THE DEATH BED

DR. THEODORE CUYLER says: "A large portion of the time and attention which you bestow upon the sick will be demanded by chronic sufferers, who have been confined to their beds of weariness for many months or years. Whoever you may neglect, do not neglect them. Visit them as often as possible. Bring into their lives the sunshine of a cheerful countenance and a morsel of fresh manna from heaven that shall have the taste of honey." Some of these bed-ridden sufferers are prisoners of Jesus Christ, who can do you quite as much good as you can do them. What eloquent sermons they can preach to you on the beauty of submissive patience, and on the supporting power of the everlasting arm. Such interviews strengthen your own faith, soften your heart and infuse into it the spirit of Him who took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. McCheyne said that before preaching on the Sabbath he sometimes visited some parishioner who might be lying extremely low, for he "found it good to take a look over the verge."

#### I

##### *The Pastor in his Relation to Confirmed Invalids.*

1. The pastor may learn most profitable lessons from them.
  - a. The lesson of patient submission to the will of God.

Affliction is the school of Christ; and those who

long have been pupils in that school are qualified to be teachers to others. Even the minister of the gospel, fresh from his long course of study in college and seminary, may sit down by the bedside of the humblest of these afflicted children of God and learn lessons of Christian faith and experience never taught in any university. Instead of regarding it as a trial and a burden to have these sons and daughters of affliction among his parishioners he should think of it as a great opportunity.

- b. The lesson of the sustaining power of our holy religion under long continued trouble.

The minister is called to be a witness to this truth. It is an important part of the testimony he is to proclaim. He may never have tested it himself. He never will fully realize its truth until he is tried. But, next to his own personal experience, is the testimony of these living witnesses for God. The pastor who has these sorely tried ones as members of his flock, may gain from them many a powerful testimony to intensify his own conviction of the truth and to carry conviction into the hearts of others.

- c. The lesson of the transforming and beautifying power of the furnace.

The Divine Savior, who sits as a refiner until He sees His own glorious image reflected in the soul of His suffering child, is not the only witness to the wonderful transformation. The faithful pastor is also watching for the blessed fruits of trial with a depth of sympathy and an intensity of desire that are akin to that of the blessed Lord Himself. And he, too, is privileged to mark the progress of this divine work, and to work with God for its completion. And when he sees the lineaments of grace reflected in the face of the sufferer, he has a foretaste of that heaven which will be his when he enters into the joy of his Lord.

2. The pastor has a *duty* to confirmed invalids.
  - a. He should have regular times for visiting them.

(1) This secures them against neglect.

The pastor does not intend to neglect them. But they are hidden away out of sight, or at least separated from the activities of the church life. The time slips away, and before he is aware months will pass without the visit he owes these afflicted ones.

- (2) It affords them great pleasure to look forward to his coming.

I remember on one occasion starting out with Dr. A. M. Milligan for a day's canvassing for Geneva College. He said we must first go to the home of a certain helpless young man whom he visited regularly on this particular day of the week and month. I felt annoyed at this breaking in upon the pressing work of the day, but when I saw the eager, expectant face of the young man as we entered his room and he stretched out his thin, white hand to welcome his pastor, I felt thoroughly ashamed of myself. I soon learned that this poor sufferer counted the days from one visit of his beloved pastor to another and regarded these as the refreshing times in a very weary world.

- b. He should select good helpful reading for them.

A book which you yourself have read and marked will be peculiarly prized and will carry something of yourself with it. It will do you good to carry such persons in your mind, so that, when you find anything peculiarly adapted to their cases, you will secure it for their use.

- c. Arrange little meetings in their rooms.

Such work as this is often carried on by the Young Peoples' societies, and with the aid of the pastor will bring to the sick person a very sweet sense of church fellowship. To one who is shut in and cut off from

all social and public worship, such gatherings, *if prudently managed*, will mean a great deal.

d. He should suggest to them special subjects of prayer.

(1) Such persons often live in very intimate communion with God.

Their seclusion from the world enables them to carry on a commerce with the throne of grace, even beyond others.

(2) The pastor may receive help in difficult work through their intercessions.

Sometimes the busy pastor is conscious that he does not spend enough time in prayer. He goes about his work with a sense of weakness. But if he knows that in that sick room there is one who is enlisted in his behalf, and is his ally in the difficult task, it brings new courage.

(3) It gives the afflicted one a consciousness of working in the Lord's vineyard.

It is one of the sore trials of confirmed invalids, that they seem to be cut off from active service. If you can link their lives with yours, so that they pray while you work, it brings to them the joy of service.

(4) When their prayers are answered—then is their heaven begun on earth.

When the pastor can carry to them the tidings that the work for which they have wrestled and prayed is accomplished, they can sing, "My cup runneth over."

e. In some cases he can preach occasional sermons in the sick room.

Of course this would only be done where sickness is permanent and where it renders it impossible for the patient to attend public ordinances, and yet the disease is such as to permit such services to be held.

(1) Such sermons should be very brief.

(2) Such sermons should be carefully prepared.

(3) Such sermons should be of choicest material.

f. The Lord's supper should not be privately administered to invalids.

(1) Our standards condemn the private administering of this ordinance.

The Confession of Faith says:—"The Lord Jesus hath in this ordinance appointed his ministers to declare his word of institution to the people, to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use; and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give of both to the communicants; *but to none who are not then present in the congregation.*"

Again, "*Private masses or receiving this sacrament by a priest or any other alone*, as likewise the denial of the cup to the people; worshiping the elements; the lifting up or carrying them about for adoration and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament, and to the institution of Christ." (Confession of Faith, Chap. xxix, Sec. 3:4.)

The testimony condemns as an error the view "That the private administration of the sacraments is as proper as the administration of them in the presence of the church." (Testimony Chap. xxv, Error 21.)

(2) If necessary, services can be held.

These declarations do not necessarily forbid the administering of the communion in a proper manner in a private house to one to whom for years it was impossible to administer it in the church. This is not the private administration of it by a minister alone, acting as a priest, but is accompanied with the preaching of the word and with the presence of elders and members of the church.

But such instances I am sure will be very rare. I

have never known of an instance. I only say that if such a necessity did arise, such is the claim of these afflicted ones, that we would not be justified in withholding from them this highest ordinance instituted by Christ for the strengthening of His people.

## II

### *The Pastor at the Death Bed.*

One of the most solemn experiences in the life of a minister is to stand by the death bed of the members of his flock and realize that his opportunities for seeking their salvation are about to close. Happy is the pastor who in that hour has no vain regrets over lost opportunities or over unfaithfulness in dealing with them in the days of health. The duties of the dying hour are imperative.

- I. The pastor must deal faithfully with the departing soul.

Dr. Wilcox says:—"Never employ the supposed nearness of death to lead any one to repentance. You are more likely in that way to make hypocrites or self-deceivers than genuine disciples. A man needs Christ whether he is to live or die, and without regard to either event."

While these words present one aspect of the truth it is equally true that no sincere minister can stand unmoved by the death-bed of an unsaved man, or permit him to pass away without an effort to rescue him. Everything else should yield to the work of trying to save that dying man or woman. Never, never, should we give up until the last breath is drawn, for we know not but that God even at the last may snatch the soul as a brand from the burning. His mercies are infinite and he can save even unto the uttermost.

2. It may be the pastor's duty to give notice of the approach of death.

It is a sad deception that is sometimes practiced on the dying, by which they are kept in expectation of recovery when every one else knows that death is at the door. It may not in all circumstances be the pastor's duty to express his fears and apprehensions, but, when the end is certain, common honesty requires that the person most deeply concerned should know the fact. It frequently falls to the pastor to make the disclosure.

- a. Approach the subject:

- (1) By reading scriptures referring to death.
- (2) By centering your prayers around that solemn event.
- (3) By following a line of remark as if in preparation for the dying hour.

- b. If necessary state the truth frankly and tenderly.

3. Always direct the mind of the dying to Christ.

"Let your words be few, calm, well chosen, and let every syllable you speak point towards Jesus. Whoever the sufferer may be, saint or sinner, his failing vision should be directed toward no man, save Jesus only." (*Cuylar.*) No better direction than this can be given.

4. It is proper to sing Psalms by the bedside of a dying Christian.

When it comes to the last moments it is probably seldom that it can be done. The friends are too deeply moved to control their voices. But the sacred songs are suited to the lips of a dying saint. Some of Bunyan's pilgrims "sang as they went over the river."

5. Even when the dying seem to be unconscious, it may be well to repeat promises.

It often occurs that the power to make any response by word or sign has gone and yet consciousness remains. I was privileged to witness the departure of

a young woman who in the early part of her sickness had greatly feared death, but had at length found comfort in the text, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." When the hour of dissolution came I was hastily summoned to her bedside. As I entered the room all seemed to be over. Her eyes were closed. She had ceased to speak. They said she was unconscious. All stood about her weeping, waiting for her breath to cease. Stooping near her pillow I repeated the familiar promise. As I spoke she slowly opened her eyes wide, beaming with a more than earthly light, and passed them from one to another of the friends around her bed—all her countenance changing—until we saw her face as it had been the face of an angel. And so she passed within the veil.

6. It is always proper, when the soul is departing, to engage in prayer and commend it to God.

There is usually a strong desire on the part of good people to have the presence of the pastor in descending the banks of the Jordan. And the faithful pastor has a longing to accompany the members of his flock to the very gate of heaven. When the silver cord is being loosed, and the golden bowl is broken, when the pitcher is broken at the fountain and the wheel at the cistern, it is his last service to commend the spirit to God who gave it.

## LECTURE XXI

### THE DUTY OF THE PASTOR TO THE BEREAVED

HAVING considered the pastor's duties to the sick and at the death bed, it remains to discuss his duties to the mourners. These duties will be presented under four general heads.

#### I

*The Duties of the Pastor to the Bereaved Family before the Funeral.*

1. He should go at once to the home that death has entered.

In many cases he will be present when death occurs. But if not, as soon as he learns that death has entered the home of one of his people, he should go at once. The reasons are obvious.

- a. In such times the people lean upon their pastor for counsel and support.

No one knows, except those who have passed through it, what a sense of dependence and desolation the breaking of the home circle brings.

The pastor, trusted implicitly and beloved, seems to stand next to God as a stay and support. You will be humbled under a sense of your own utter weakness when you realize how the people cling to you amid the tempest of their grief.

- b. At such times the bereaved are peculiarly sensitive to neglect.

One of their sorest trials is in seeing how utterly indifferent the careless, busy world is to an event that

is so fearful in its consequences to them. If the pastor seems to share in that indifference it cuts them to the heart. People will frequently seem to be even selfish and unreasonable in the demands they make upon you in their grief.

The sympathetic, tender shepherd will bear with them at such times uncomplainingly.

- c. Help and consolation given at such times will be remembered.

While it may be difficult and trying to the minister to meet all that is expected of him at such times, he may have this assurance for his encouragement, that the kindness done in such circumstances will be enshrined and hallowed in the memory. There are some very painful exceptions to this experience but they are not common.

- d. In so doing we have the example of our Lord.

John 11:14-15. "Lazarus is dead: Nevertheless let us go unto him." One of the few occasions when He is recorded to have shed tears was when He stood with the weeping sisters at the grave of their brother. "Jesus wept." And this is in harmony with the prophecy concerning Him. Isa. 61:1-3. "He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted. . . . To comfort all that mourn. . . . To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

2. If possible he should arrange for the conducting of family worship in that home daily until the burial.

This is a very trying service for the bereaved family to carry through themselves. And yet it is very important and very helpful. The pastor may find it convenient to share the labor and privilege of it with his elders. He need not hesitate to propose it to the

family and inquire as to their preference, and to ask anyone to take such appointment.

## II

*The Duties of the Pastor in Connection with Funeral Arrangements.*

- I. The pastor should arrange to be present at funerals in the homes of his people, and of others when solicited.

However careless and neglectful persons may be as to church privileges, there are few who do not desire for themselves and their friends Christian burial. This involves the presence and official services of a Christian minister. The calls of this kind often seem to be very inopportune, when the need of preparations for the pulpit is most pressing, or when the minister desires to be absent, attending church courts. Sometimes it seems to be making too much of the burial of the dead, to sacrifice such high interests in order to attend a funeral. But when the death is within the families of his own flock, ordinarily it is the pastor's place to be there.

I have never known the church courts either Presbytery or Synod to refuse to excuse a pastor who desired to return home on account of a death in his congregation. I would not lay it down as a rule that in every case the pastor should absent himself from church courts on account of a funeral service. There may be other ways in which it can be provided for: or the importance of the business pending in a church court may be so imperative as to outweigh the claim of such an occasion. All I urge is that the pastor should regard the claims of the bereaved as very sacred indeed.

2. He should seek to adapt himself to the convenience of the friends, as to the time.

In very many cases the pastor is not consulted at all. The arrangements are all made and notice given him of the day and hour when his services are required. Frequently it is impossible to do otherwise. Really thoughtful people, however, will always seek the pastor's advice before fixing the time, if it is possible for them to reach him. And the really thoughtful pastor reciprocates this consideration, by helping them to decide on the best time for their own interest, and adapts himself to this. When public interests are concerned, he may suggest an earlier or later time as preferable. Use great delicacy especially in asking the bereaved family to hasten the burial of their beloved dead in order to accommodate yourself.

3. In cases of contagious diseases the pastor should encourage prompt burial.

In many localities the regulations of the Board of Health enforce prompt interment. But, not infrequently, friends insist on keeping the dead in the house to the peril of the living. Where the welfare of surviving members of the family, or the safety of the community is involved, the pastor may bring considerable influence to bear to persuade to an early interment. The after-reflection of the family usually will justify his course.

4. Resolutely oppose Sabbath funerals.

In good society the custom of burying on the Sabbath is less prevalent than it was a few years ago. But, there are neighborhoods where the custom still prevails.

- (1) The motives are such as the following.
  - a. To save taking time from week-day employments.
  - b. To secure a large assembly on the occasion.
  - c. To enable secret orders to make a display.

- (2) The means of breaking up the custom.
  - a. On entering his pastorate the pastor should make it known that he has conscientious scruples about officiating at funerals on the Sabbath.
  - b. Then refuse to violate his conscience.

It will not have a good effect to oppose them on conscientious grounds and then yield readily to the solicitations of wealthy and influential families, who refuse to recognize the claims of conscience.

- c. If possible secure the coöperation of all the pastors in the neighborhood to break down the custom of burying on the Sabbath.

In some towns and cities, pastors have entered into agreement to refuse to conduct or attend funerals unnecessarily arranged for the Sabbath. This has an excellent effect. If made universal and faithfully adhered to, it would deprive of Christian burial those who disregard the sacredness of the Lord's Day.

- (3) Where the interests of humanity require the dead to be buried on the Sabbath, it not only may, but it should be done.

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

5. Use your influence to prevent unnecessary display and expense at funerals.

The pastor may be consulted as to the style of casket and burial robe, as to the floral display and the number of carriages to be provided. He should proceed cautiously in giving such advice, so as not to wound the feelings or to seem to meddle with what does not concern him. But where a family is limited in resources, the wise pastor will use his influence to prevent a lavish and useless expenditure. When he is asked for advice he should not hesitate to give it. People often feel very helpless at such times and the common sense of a wise pastor is just what they need.

Dr. Wilcox was asked: "Is there any way of relieving the bereaved from the heavy expense of funerals?" He replied: "Certainly there ought to be. Often when the only bread-winner in the family is borne to his burial, while the hearts of the widow and children are bleeding, their purse must be bled at the demand of fashion for a heavy undertaker's bill. You can do something to remedy this. Advise the family to hold the interment privately, some hours after the funeral service, or the next day. They can then in the arrangements consult their own means and convenience."

6. In arranging funeral services do not compromise with secret orders.

Of course it is taken for granted that no member of our church will be buried with the honors of Masonry. But there may be families in connection with the church in which the husband, or a son, or other relative does not belong to the church, but is a member of the orders. On account of the family, you may be expected to be in charge of the funeral services. The officials of the orders are sometimes impertinent in forcing their services on the family. The case is a difficult one but we cannot afford to compromise ourselves in any way with these anti-Christian organizations. It might be too sweeping to lay down a hard and fast rule that, under no possible circumstances, should a pastor have anything whatever to do with a funeral service in which any of the secret orders had anything whatever to do, but this may be said most positively, that under no circumstances may a Covenanter pastor do that which will be construed as a complicity with or an endorsement of them.

7. In arranging funeral services do not compromise with unscriptural forms of worship.

You will sometimes be requested to announce a favorite hymn of the deceased, "Lead Kindly Light," or

“Nearer my God to Thee,” or to make a place in the service for such to be sung. Such a request, to disregard your conscience and your public profession, is a discourtesy to you and you are not in courtesy bound to grant it. You are bound before God to refuse. It is becoming customary among some Psalm-singing people to introduce a soloist or a quartette to sing Psalms while the assembly sit silent. Such services are without scripture warrant, and, where a Covenanter minister is in charge of the service, he must kindly, but firmly, oppose such unscriptural innovations in the worship of God. But when the services are held in the home, he should see that a place be reserved for the leaders, so that the people singing in the different rooms can be kept to the time and pitch.

There are very many things to be considered in arranging for funeral services and it is the duty of the pastor to consult freely with the bereaved family and assist them in this sad and difficult work. Frequently they are so grief-stricken as to be incapable of planning wisely the last rites for their beloved dead.

### III

#### *Duties of the Pastor to the Bereaved in Connection with the Funeral.*

1. If convenient, he should speak to them privately before beginning the public services.

The family may have requests to make as to the services, or as to announcements to be made concerning the leave-taking or the burial; or expressions of thanks to friends and neighbors for assistance and comfort in their time of trial. Usage differs in different communities. It is well to have a clear understanding as to what is desired.

2. It is sometimes necessary for the pastor to come to the relief of grief-stricken ones who cannot consent to see the casket closed.

A very painful scene is frequently witnessed when a widow clings to the dead form of her husband, or a mother to the body of her child. The funeral director is helpless. It may become necessary for the pastor to speak to her tenderly and lead her away.

3. If a lone woman is left without near relatives, the pastor should support her in leaving the house and at the grave.

It frequently occurs that a widow is left with little children and has no near friend to lead her out to the carriage. The pastor should offer her his arm and take the place of the near kinsman unless some other provision has been made.

4. Ordinarily, the pastor should accompany the friends to the cemetery.

Sometimes this involves much inconvenience and labor and exposure, but the service is due unless you know that higher interests will suffer. Even when the body is taken some distance by railroad, it is well for the pastor to accompany the mourners if possible to the place of interment. It greatly comforts and supports the bereaved, and is a fitting tribute of respect to the departed.

#### IV

##### *The Pastor's Duty to the Bereaved after the Funeral.*

1. Visit the family soon and frequently.

The sorest trial often comes in the days following the event. The excitement is over. The busy world goes on as if nothing had happened. The friends and neighbors, to whose presence and ministry they have been accustomed during the days of sickness and

burial, scatter away, and the feeling of loneliness and desolation becomes almost unbearable. The pastor must come in promptly and frequently to supply the need.

2. In such visits do not hesitate to refer to the bereavement and talk about the departed.

There is a disposition to avoid all reference to what has occurred and to discourse of other things, so as to divert the minds of the mourning from the cause of their grief. Where the sorrow is deep and sincere this is a mistaken policy. Your visit will do far more to relieve the pain, if it affords the opportunity for the eyes to weep afresh, and for your tears to mingle with theirs. Only thus can you improve the Providence of God and bring out the good it is intended to effect. A labored silence as to the departed has the semblance of neglect.

3. Make reference to the family in the prayers of the following Sabbath.

It is not necessary to pray at length so as to become painful, but show that their sorrows weigh upon your spirit and that you bear them before the throne of grace.

4. In the case of prominent members, officers, or aged persons, a sermon may be preached with reference to the event.

It is not well to make this a fixed rule, because it may at times impose an unnecessary burden upon the minister. When a full sermon is not preached a paragraph may be introduced bearing on the providence and improving it.

5. Use discretion in preparing obituary notices.

The pastor may create trouble for himself by going to an extreme in writing notices of the departed. Friends are apt to compare what is said of one with what is said of another. Obituary notices should be brief and confined to the statement of a few facts.

Usually a simple announcement of the death is sufficient.

6. Seek to enlist the bereaved in Christian work.

Speaking of this Dr. Cuyler says:—"Two things are chiefly to be aimed at in the treatment of desponding or bereaved Christians. The first is to get them out of themselves; and the other is to get them into active service for the Master. A sorely bereaved lady once said to me, 'If I could not keep my mind occupied in Christian labor for the poor and elsewhere I should go crazy with grief.' Hopeful occupation is both a tonic to faith and a sedative to sorrow. If troubles drive us to toils for our Master, then the useful toils will in turn drive away many of the troubles."

After all has been said you will have many things to learn by experience, and in no part of your pastoral care will you have greater need to lean upon the promised help of God. Pray that God may make you a son of consolation while you are standing between the living and the dead, and may the dear Lord give you grace to speak a word in season to him that is weary and to lift many a sobbing heart, many a suffering soul, up into the sweet sunshine that streams forth from the throne of glory. "For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

May I not appropriately close with the words of the Apostle, "Blessed be God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

LECTURE XXII  
FUNERAL SERVICES

I

*The Pastor Should Make Careful Preparation for Funeral Services.*

1. Because blundering on such occasions is peculiarly painful.

Blundering is always hurtful to ministerial standing, but there are times when it especially grates upon the feelings, as in the administration of the sacraments, in marriage ceremonies, and at funerals. We cannot trust to the spur of the moment for such solemn duties. Merely superficial, commonplace remarks do more harm than good.

2. Your ministerial influence in the community will be affected by it.

On such occasions you meet those who never hear you speak in your pulpit. Besides, you are brought into comparison with ministers of other churches and your standing as a minister depends much on the ability, appropriateness and effectiveness with which you conduct such services. I am not appealing here to a low motive of self-glorification. Our church is small, unpopular and even despised among the denominations: it is important, for the sake of the cause she represents, that her ministers command respect whenever they appear in public exercises.

3. You are responsible for the use of a special opportunity.

This is the most important consideration. How we

stand before the community may affect our usefulness and enjoyment. How we stand before God will determine our destiny.

## II

### *General Suggestions as to the Funeral Service.*

1. Seek to acquaint yourself with the family and with any peculiar circumstances attending the deceased.

It is assumed that you will be fully informed as to the families in your own charge, but you may frequently be called to conduct funerals where you are an entire stranger. It is proper and necessary to ascertain who belong to the family and anything of which notice should be taken, either in the prayers or in the remarks on the occasion.

2. Select carefully the passages of scripture to be read.

There are books prepared for use on such occasions, with selections arranged. But I believe you will do better with your own Bible. Usually it is best to select short passages of scripture, rather than simply to read a chapter. The Bible is a wonderfully resourceful book for furnishing appropriate selections for every possible case. It is well worth while to give care and thought to the scripture reading. Note therefore the following suggestions:

- a. The scripture reading is a very important part of the service.
  - b. Its value is greatly enhanced by the peculiar appropriateness of some particular selection.
  - c. The passages should be studied so as to be read effectively.
3. Begin at the appointed time.

This is a general rule for all services, but it is par-

ticularly important at funerals. It is a most painful thing when the people have assembled and the friends are under the strain inseparable from such things, to have to await the arrival of the minister.

4. Begin with singing where this can be done.

There are circumstances in which, for the want of leadership or of a sufficient number who can sing the Psalms, it is unwise to attempt it. But do not be too easily discouraged about this. The effect upon the services, of the singing of an appropriate Psalm, is very marked. The audience will frequently be deeply touched, and the hearts prepared to receive the seed of the divine word.

5. Avoid tedious and general prayers.

It should not be necessary to note this, but experience shows that it is. It is a great gift to be able to pray appropriately at funerals. One may inflict a deep wound on tender hearts by thoughtless petitions. If the life of the departed leaves a painful uncertainty as to the state after death, it is not necessary that the prayers should indicate or even suggest the opinion of the one praying, as to that concrete case. As to making petitions definite and particular there are sins of omission and sins of commission in this regard. One may err in the effort to be particular as well as in being too general. Dr. Wilcox was asked,—“Would you endeavor in the prayer to specify all the relations?” He replied,—“No, it is one of the most grotesque of all performances, trying to make the Lord understand, in what is supposed to be the regulation style of speech in prayer, that you mean some cousin or niece. Specify only those of the same family with the deceased, husband, or wife or children. Group all other relatives together in one petition.”

You will perceive that prayers need to be carefully meditated beforehand.

6. If ministers of other churches are present assign them parts in the service.

The position of our church as to interchange of pulpits is not violated by inviting ministers of other denominations to make remarks on such public occasions.

- a. Do not feel compelled to make places for all the ministers who may chance to be present.

Funeral services are sometimes prolonged to an unreasonable and hurtful extent in order that five or six ministers may participate. This should be avoided.

- b. Use great care to call on those who are entitled to participate.

Where selection has to be made it must be made judiciously.

- c. Never permit your personal preferences or alienations to manifest themselves at such times.

There is a temptation to avenge real or imaginary slights inflicted upon ourselves by passing by, unnoticed, the authors of such slights. Rise above such temptation.

- d. Pay much deference to the wishes of the bereaved family in assigning parts to outside ministers.

I do not say you should always be governed by them absolutely. They may have personal feelings that should not be gratified. You have your own responsibility as being in charge of the service.

7. Do not interfere with the undertaker's business.

Formerly the pastor assumed entire management of the assembly. It is customary now to depend on the funeral director or some one else selected by the family to order the exercises, as to viewing the remains and ordering the funeral procession. This is a great relief to the minister and should be encouraged. In the cities these matters are very skillfully conducted by experienced and capable men.

## III

*The Funeral Address.*

The Directory for Worship says: "When any person departeth this life let the dead body upon the day of burial be decently attended from the home to the place appointed for public burial and there immediately interred without any ceremony. Howbeit we judge it very convenient that the Christian friends which accompany the dead body to the place appointed for public burial do apply themselves to meditation and conferences suitable to the occasion; and that the minister, as upon other occasions, so at this time, if he be present, may put them in remembrance of their duty." From this we gather that the funeral address should have the following characteristics:—

## 1. It should be brief.

There is no propriety in an elaborate sermon or address. Unless the services are held in the church the opportunities for speaking and hearing are not likely to be favorable. Nor is the state of mind such as is likely to result in lasting impression. We would naturally suppose that people would be very impressible, but such is not the testimony of experience.

Dr. Wilcox, in reply to the question, "May we not hope that those present are already mellowed by the death itself?" replied, "I wish I could say yes. But you may meet disappointment there. The truth is people go to a funeral somewhat as they go to a tragedy in a theater. They expect to be moved to tears. That is part of the performance. But, as at the tragedy, this feeling is hardly more than a surface ripple. If the death itself has not spiritually aroused them, it is hardly probable that your homily will do it. You are like a man expanding the lesson and deeping the impression of a crash of thunder. Dr. Lyman

Beecher used to say that of all the funeral sermons he had ever preached he could hardly remember one that had won a soul."

Under these circumstances there is nothing gained by prolonging the address. If carriages are waiting outside, horses and drivers exposed to cold and storm, it is a weighty reason for being brief.

2. The address should be timely.

No two funerals are precisely alike in all their circumstances. Much of the profit depends upon a happy adaptation of the services to the occasion. I have often been aided in selecting a subject by noting the particular passage of scripture that came to my mind on hearing of the death. The reason is that something in the life or character of the departed suggests the theme. The freedom and facility with which anyone can speak depends largely on the manifest appropriateness of the subject.

3. Use great caution in speaking of the dead.

Some ministers make it an inflexible rule, from which they never depart, not to refer to the dead in any way. This is a good principle carried to an unwarranted extreme.

a. The address should not be a eulogy on the dead because—

- (1) The good do not need it.
- (2) The bad do not deserve it.
- (3) The dead cannot be profited by it.
- (4) The living may be injured by it.
- (5) It provokes criticism and gossip of the deceased.

This seems a strange incongruity but it is a fact, that, when the minister goes an unwarranted distance in praising the virtues of the departed, the hearers turn their thoughts to recalling his vices. They would be willing to forget them if nothing were said, but they resent the false view.

(6) It may bring contempt on your ministry.

The effect of such eulogies on unworthy characters is to lead people to question the sincerity and the faithfulness of ministers of the gospel. The minister appears as a man-pleaser and not as a servant of Jesus Christ. While I say this, I do not mean that there shall be no recognition of the faithful services of the consistent Christian.

b. Never go beyond what will be universally recognized as true.

This is a safe rule, because it limits the remarks to what the pastor knows of the public life of the departed; or at least to that which nothing in his public life would contradict.

c. Remarks about the dead should not be made a prominent feature of your funeral addresses.

d. Always keep the way open to omit such remarks without exciting comment.

I have been thus full and explicit on this point because it is so difficult for the pastor to pursue a safe and satisfactory course. The pastor who starts out with eulogizing the dead, will soon meet with cases where such eulogy will be expected and where he cannot conscientiously give it.

4. In the case of profligates and suicides it will be best just to read passages of scripture.

There is not much to be gained by the attempt to deliver a funeral address on such occasions. If there are near relatives of the deceased present, you can scarcely utter a word that will not increase their anguish. It will usually be found better to let God's own word speak, and human speech be dumb.

5. Deal faithfully with the living.

It is an easy thing to speak when the circumstances warrant us in tendering the full consolations of the gospel to the bereaved. But when the deceased has

lived an irreligious life and died unrepentant, or when the mourners are irreligious or non-professors, the faithful minister is often sorely tried. Settle it in your minds that the message is God's and that you are only the messenger and that the responsibility of delivering the message can never be so great as the responsibility of withholding it or falsifying it. Always be kind and tender in manner, "speaking the truth in love."

6. Christ and His salvation should be set forth in every funeral address.

Whatever else is said or omitted, find a time and place in the course of your remarks to bring Christ to view as the only Redeemer from Sin and the Conqueror of Death. Without this, there is neither salvation nor consolation. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57.) "I am He that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive forever more, Amen, and have the keys of Hell and of Death." (Rev. 1:18.)

7. In closing your remarks address a few words of sympathy and comfort directly to the bereaved.

It is in very poor taste to lacerate the feelings of the sorrowing relatives, merely for effect. But a few sympathetic words addressed immediately to them may be helpful. Christ's words to Martha and Mary concerning their brother furnish the highest model for this form of address.

#### IV

##### *Services Connected with the Burial.*

1. Formal services at the grave are condemned by the Directory for Worship.  
The Directory for Worship says: "And because the

custom of kneeling down and praying by or toward the dead corpse, and other such usages, in the place where it lies before it be carried to the burial are superstitions; and for that praying and reading and singing both in going to and at the grave, have been grossly abused, are no way beneficial to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtful to the living: *therefore let all such things be laid aside.*"

Evidently this regulation is aimed at the abuses of the Catholic Church. But there are good and substantial reasons for avoiding all ritualism in connection with lowering the body into the grave.

2. It is not objectionable to recite one or two passages of scripture after the body has been lowered and to invoke the benediction on the living.

I do not assure you that no one will find fault with even this; some may not favor it. It is only recently that our ministers have been falling into this custom. In former times, when friends remained until the grave was filled, and dropped away one by one, there was no call for anything to be spoken. But the present and more reasonable custom of all retiring from the grave as soon as the body is laid to rest, seems to require an orderly dismissal of the assembly.

1 Thess. 4:13-14, 1 Cor. 15:54-57, are appropriate passages.\*

\* The passage Genesis xlix, 29-33, was read by Rev. J. S. Thompson at the author's grave, in the old Miller's Run churchyard: "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers."

## LECTURE XXIII

### THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

Two institutions given to man in the state of innocence have survived the fall. These are Marriage and the Holy Sabbath. Both are memorials of the Paradise Lost; and both are scriptural types of the Paradise Regained. We look forward to the rest that remaineth to the people of God and to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

I have just spoken of the relation of the pastor to the bereaved and sorrowing in the funeral service, and now I turn to speak of his duties in connection with the wedding feast. You will often find in your pastoral experience that the house of mourning and the house of feasting stand near together and that it is not a far call from the marriage to the funeral.

The doctrine of scripture as to the ordinance of marriage is contained in our Church Standards:—*Confession of Faith*, Chapter xxiv; *Testimony*, Chapter xxviii. Instructions how to proceed in the solemnization of marriage will be found under this head in the *Directory for Worship*, pp. 494-495.

The purpose of this lecture is to direct your attention to the duties of the pastor in connection with this ceremony.

#### I

*The Pastor Should Instruct his People as to the Ordinance of Marriage.*

1. That it is a divine institution and not a human invention.

Our Testimony declares that "Marriage is an ordinance of God, instituted in the law of nature and recognized in Divine Revelation." There is great need for instruction on this point at the present time. The loose teachings on this subject are making havoc both of morals and religion. The family is a primal institution and is fundamental to both church and state. The ministers must bear up the pillars by scriptural instruction as to the sacredness of marriage as an ordinance of God, or the social fabric will tumble into ruins. "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" nullifies the wicked and adulterous divorce system under which we are now living. The ministry must speak out.

2. That Christians should marry in the Lord—  
1 Cor. 7:39, 2 Cor. 6:14.

The Confession of Faith says:—"It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with judgment to give their consent, yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as confess the true Reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists or other idolaters; neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies." (Confession of Faith, Chap. xxiv, Sec. 3.)

The Apostle's argument in 1 Corinthians, seventh chapter, that the unbelief of husband or wife does not justify the believing party in *breaking* the marriage bond, must not be construed as giving scripture warrant for *contracting* such unequal marriages.

The subject is a delicate one for discussion in the pulpit and should be handled with great discretion. There may be those among your hearers to whom it will be very painful.

Do not preach special sermons on such subjects as "Courtship," "How to Choose a Wife," because no

amount of tact can save such discourses from associations that are out of harmony with the sacredness of the pulpit and the Sabbath. An indirect method will be more effectual and much must be left to personal and private intercourse with your people.

3. That the mutual duties of husband and wife are clearly defined in scripture. Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Eph. 5:22-23, Col. 3:18-19.

God never created anything without giving to it the law of its being. The family is of God; and the blessedness of the family relation depends upon obedience to the divine law. Should a wife render obedience to her husband? The law of God must answer the question. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church. (Eph. 5:22-23.) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ so let wives be unto their own husbands in everything."

What duty, then, does the scripture lay upon the husband that is at all commensurate with the submission required of the wife? Simply this: "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church." (Eph. 5:25-39.) If the husband gives to his wife the full measure of self-sacrificing love which the word of God demands of him for her, it will be an easy thing for the wife to give to her husband that reverence for him which is required of her. The obligations are mutual and neither party has the right to claim what is due *from* the other, while withholding what is due *to* the other.

4. The pastor should encourage marriage but should not be a match-maker.

Under ordinary circumstances, he should encourage it by his own example. We have no sympathy with the Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy. "A bishop should be the husband of one wife" does not mean that he is required to have at least one, but it certainly does imply that he may have one.

Some ministers pride themselves on the facility with which they are able to bring about matches among their people. But the business is dangerous and capable of doing great mischief. It is not included in that shepherdizing of the flock to which the Holy Ghost calls the pastor, and for that reason it should be scrupulously avoided.

## II

### *Who May Perform the Marriage Ceremony?*

- I. Either an ecclesiastical or a civil officer is authorized to perform it.

The Directory for Worship says:—"Although marriage be no sacrament nor peculiar to the church of God but common to mankind and of public interest in every commonwealth: yet, because such as marry are to marry in the Lord; and have special need of instruction, direction and exhortation from the word of God at their entering into such new condition, and of the blessing of God upon them therein; we judge it expedient that marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister of the word, that he may accordingly counsel them and pray for a blessing upon them." (Directory, p. 494.)

The Testimony says:—"Though the validity of marriage depends upon the mutual vow of the parties, independently of official administration, yet, in order to prevent rash and inconsiderate connections, and that

the parties may be duly impressed with the solemnity of the ordinance and with the importance of its duties, the celebration of it should be exclusively committed unto duly qualified ecclesiastical or civil officers." (Testimony, Chapter xxviii, Sec. 5.)

2. It is required in some of the States that a minister obtain a license from court to solemnize marriages.

This requirement is not to be resisted as Erastianism, because marriage is a civil contract as well as a religious vow, and the enforcement of its obligations comes within the sphere of the civil authority. Such regulations of the Commonwealth having for their purpose to guard the institution against the intrusion of irresponsible parties, should be respected. The pastor, on settling in his pastoral charge, should take pains to legally qualify himself for solemnization of marriage. (Testimony, Chapter xxviii, 6.)

3. It is not advisable for a Licentiate to perform the marriage ceremony.

The Directory for Worship says:—"We judge it expedient that marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister of the word. The Licentiate is an authorized preacher, but he is not a minister."

The Testimony says:—"The celebration of it should be exclusively committed unto duly qualified ecclesiastical or civil officers. The Licentiate is not an ecclesiastical officer."

I would question the propriety of a Licentiate officiating in the marriage ceremony even where the laws of the commonwealth permitted it.

### III

#### *Under What Circumstances Should a Minister Refuse to Solemnize a Marriage?*

1. When one or both parties are minors, and their

parents, for good reasons, withhold their consent.

In heathen lands parents contract marriages for their children without the consent of the parties. In Christian lands we have the opposite extreme. Children contract marriages irrespective of the wishes of their parents, and frequently in disregard or defiance of their authority. The conscientious pastor will not become a party to the flagrant breach of the fifth commandment.

The Directory for Worship, speaking of the publication of the banns as then practiced, says:—"Before the publication of such, their purpose (if the parties be under age), the consent of the parents, or others under whose power they are (in case the parents be dead) is to be made known to the church officers of that congregation, to be recorded."

In States where a court license is required, the laws require the consent of parents before issuing the license. We should not be less scrupulous in regard to parental authority.

2. When the parties are within the degrees of affinity or consanguinity forbidden by the scriptures or the church.

The Testimony says:—"Marriage ought not to be contracted within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity prohibited by the word of God; nor can any law of man, or consent of parties, legitimate such incestuous connections."

It also condemns as an error—"That a man may marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own, or that a woman may marry any of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than she may of her own." (Testimony, Chapter xxviii, Sec. 4, and Errors 4 and 5.) Leviticus, Chap. xviii, 1 Cor. 5:1, Confession of Faith, Chap. xxiv, Sec. 4.

3. When one or both parties have been divorced

on unscriptural grounds, or have been the guilty party in a scriptural divorce.

The action of Synod on this subject is definite and mandatory. It is as follows:

- (1) "That the divorce laws of the United States, in so far as they authorize divorce from the bond of marriage for causes not allowed by the Christian religion, are in impious defiance of the authority of Jesus Christ whose will is supreme law for nations and governments.
- (2) "That the ministers of religion who solemnize marriage between parties, either, or both of whom have been divorced from other parties on insufficient grounds, lend the sanction of their office to an adulterous marriage, and bring grievous guilt upon themselves and upon the church.
- (3) "That ministers of this church are enjoined not to solemnize marriage between parties who are strangers to them until they have ascertained that they are morally free to enter into the marriage relation." (Minutes of Synod, 1890, p. 276.)

This action holds our ministers to a strict responsibility as to the eligibility of the parties as judged by the law of God. The Protestant Episcopal Church is very rigid on this point.

It should be noted, however, that the prohibition refers only to the guilty party. The Testimony says:—"After the divorce has been regularly obtained from the ecclesiastical or civil authority, it is lawful for the innocent party to marry another, as if the offending party were dead." (Testimony, Chapter xxviii, Sec. 7; Confession of Faith, Chapter xxiv, Sec. 5.)

4. When one or both parties are of infamous character.

It is admitted both in the Confession and in the

Testimony that marriage is "common to all sorts of people." The Confession says, however, "Neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked by marrying such as are notoriously wicked in their life." By this I mean not simply the irreligious, but those who are notorious profligates, such as the drunkard and the libertine, who are incapable of keeping the marriage vow. Such characters should not be yoked at all, either equally or unequally. They are not fit to constitute the family of God's moral ordinance. The minister of the gospel should not lend the sanction of his holy office to such an unholy alliance.

5. When the parties have not complied with the law requiring license.

Some persons resent the license law as an infringement upon their rights and liberties. This is a mistaken view. Such laws are in the interest of good order in society, and they are a real protection to the conscientious minister by putting obstacles in the path of those who would enter wedlock in an irregular way. The minister should not be a party to any attempt to evade such laws, under any pretext.

#### IV

#### *General Rules in Regard to Performing Marriage Ceremonies.*

1. Do not selfishly seek to intrude on the field of a brother minister.

Ministers generally covet the honor of performing marriage ceremonies. Under ordinary circumstances the pastor of the bride expects to be asked to officiate. It is not courteous to seek to supplant him in his right. If a pastor is asked to perform a ceremony which he knows rightfully belongs to a brother minister, let him do as he would be done by.

2. Do not be weakly jealous about your right to perform all marriage ceremonies among your people.

Where there are close family ties between the bride and the minister whom she desires to invite, do not be over-sensitive and imagine that you have been slighted and snubbed.

3. Do not seek a reputation for marrying runaway couples.

Strange to say, the desire to have a long list of marriages to record and to publish in the papers, is sufficient to raise up a class of ministers who seek to monopolize the trade in runaway matches. It is a discreditable class. The functions of the ministerial office are too sacred to be degraded to such purposes.

4. Do not violate your conscience by performing doubtful marriages.

## V

### *Special Rules for Wedding Occasions.*

1. Dress carefully and tastefully.

This is a matter of self-respect and of respect to the occasion, and is due to those who have honored you with an invitation to officiate. The parties and all the guests appear in their best attire. Any carelessness or slovenliness of dress on the part of the minister is noticeable and justly offensive. There is no call for extravagant outlay in fitting yourself up for the occasion—but there should be special attention to the person and the apparel.

2. Attend promptly—not a moment late.

It not unfrequently happens that there is delay. The parties may not be ready. Important guests may not have arrived. With these annoyances the pastor

must bear patiently, but for himself he should be on time.

3. Avoid prolixity in the prayers and in the ceremony.

There are two extremes. In the effort to comply with the desire so often expressed, to have a short service, you may go so far as to detract from the dignity and solemnity of the occasion. This is wrong. Nothing should be left to the spur of the moment. The prayers should be carefully meditated, the words fitly chosen, and all irrelevant petitions eliminated. This is the only security against tediousness and blundering.

4. Maintain dignity, both in conversation and deportment, both before and after the ceremony.

A good deal of freedom is often taken on such occasions, and the tendency is to frivolity and foolish jesting. It seems necessary, too, to relieve the strain of decorum by a rush to the other extreme. It is the place of the minister to steady the procession, and to set bounds to a hilarity that might carry the guests beyond propriety.

5. Put the parties at their ease by explaining the form before the ceremony.

It is proper to ask a private interview with the parties for this purpose. A few words are all that is necessary, unless the parties themselves have arranged for an elaborate affair. In this case the minister may discover that he is not master of ceremonies but is expected to perform the part assigned to him. He may allow considerable freedom in the general arrangements, but when it comes to the ceremony itself he should be permitted to determine the form of procedure.

6. Ask to see the marriage license, if such is locally required.

When the laws of the commonwealth forbid the

minister from performing the ceremony without license, under heavy penalties, he is warranted in making sure that the law has been complied with. It is no impertinence to ask the intended groom to produce the license.

## VI

### *The Marriage Ceremony.*

1. It is proper to begin with a brief prayer or invocation.

This is not essential to the service, but, in view of the divine institution of marriage and the sacredness and solemnity of the vows to be taken, it is eminently becoming to invoke the presence and blessing of God upon the occasion. When it is desired to have several ministers participate, one may be asked to perform this service.

2. Give a charge to the parties and to the witnesses present in some such terms as follows:

“I hold in my hand a license issued under the laws of this commonwealth authorizing the rite of marriage to be solemnized between John Doe and Mary Roe, who are now present before us. If either of the parties named, or any other person present, knows any reason why they should not be united in marriage, I charge him now to reveal the same or ever after to remain silent.”

3. Give a brief address on the institution of the family, the nature of marriage vows and the mutual duties of husband and wife.

4. Impose or take the marriage vows.

a. Address the parties thus:—

“If you desire to enter the marriage relation and are willing to assume its obligations as set forth in the Word of God, join your right hands and give as—

sent to the marriage covenant." (Parties join hands.)

b. Address the man thus:—

"Do you the man (or address the man by name) take this woman (or use the woman's name) whose hand you hold in yours, to be your lawfully wedded wife; and do you promise, before God and in the presence of these witnesses, that you will live with her after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony, and that you will love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and that, forsaking all others, you will keep you unto her alone until God shall separate you by death?" (The man answers.)

c. Address the woman thus:—

"Do you, the woman (or address her by name) take this man (or use his name) whose hand clasps yours, to be your lawfully wedded husband; and do you promise, before God and in the presence of these witnesses, that you will live with him after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony; that you will love him and comfort him, honor and obey him, and that you will keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, will keep you unto him alone until God shall separate you by death?" (The woman answers.)

d. If a ring is used, immediately after the vows have been taken address the man thus:—

"What pledge do you give of these your marriage vows?" The groom presents a ring, which the minister receives and then returns to the groom with instruction to place it "on the hand of your bride" while the minister says:—"In token of your plighted faith and marriage vows, you, the man (or use his name) do bestow and you, the woman (or use her name) do receive this marriage ring. Let it be to both of you a symbol of the value, the constancy, and the purity of your wedded love, and a seal of those

vows which you have made to one another before God."

I do not recommend the use of the ring unless at the urgent desire of the parties.

5. Follow with a brief and appropriate prayer.

6. Pronounce the relation constituted as follows:

"By virtue of authority vested in me as a minister of the gospel, and in accordance with the laws of God and of this commonwealth, I pronounce you husband and wife. 'What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.'"

7. Close by invoking the benediction:

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee;

The Lord cause His face to shine upon thee,

And be gracious unto thee;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee,

And give thee peace."

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen."

## VII

### *Keeping the Record.*

1. A marriage certificate should always be *immediately* filled out, properly witnessed and delivered to the parties.

It is well to consult them as to who shall sign the certificate as witnesses.

2. Where the law requires a registry, the return should be promptly made.

The marriage license usually has a blank form accompanying it, which the person performing the ceremony is required to return to the court issuing the license. The utmost care should be taken to comply with this provision.

3. Keep a careful record for your own use, with the names of the parties and the dates and place of all marriages.

I cannot urge upon you too strongly the importance of promptness and fidelity in keeping this record. You are liable to be called upon to certify to the facts in cases involving very important issues. You must be absolutely sure of the facts; you must have them in such form as to convince any court of the trustworthiness of your record.

4. Send a notice of the marriage either to the local or to the church papers, or to both.
5. Do not become a party to the concealment of a marriage.

Persons who are wedded have no right to pass themselves in society as unmarried. The motive for concealment is generally either very foolish or sinful. The minister has no right to consent to it.

6. Let the bridegroom determine the amount of the marriage fee.

It is not customary to accept a fee from a brother minister. Marriage fees should go to the pastor's wife for pin money.

This brings us to the last detail of the service of the Pastor at the wedding feast. The service is one of the most sacred as it is one of the most beautiful that he will be called on to perform. It is the occasion of joy and of hope, and it is in such a spirit that the pastor will enter into it, inspiring all present with a feeling of mirth on every side, touched with holy adoration; for the pastor will not be unmindful that he serves the master's bride, the Church.

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Our studies in Pastoral Theology for this session have covered a wide field and varied duties. May I not appropriately close with the words of inspiration:

“Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, forever and ever—Amen.”

END OF FIRST SERIES

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## THE SECOND SERIES

“Pastor and People,” will be divided into two parts: The Pastor in Relation to the Activities of the Congregation, and The Pastor in Relation to the Church Courts. The first part will treat such subjects as the Prayer-meeting, the Sabbath School and the various congregational organizations for work. Part two will comprise a hand-book for the Eldership, the Diaconate, and the congregational body; and will contain a compendium for use in the Exercise of Discipline.

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