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GENESIS A MIRACLE IN MORALS.

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Strachan says: "Criticism has had its innings, and the time has come for appreciation." So he proceeds to write nobly on the beauty of "Hebrew Ideals." As a matter of fact he was no less in the realm of the higher criticism while defending the Bible than others had been in trying to undermine it. According to Dr. W. W. Moore: "The higher criticism is concerned with the age and *character* of the biblical books . . . their historical and *theological* contents." Hence Mr. Strachan, planting his guns in a different part of the same field, simply employed them, as a constructive critic, against a destructive element operating in the same sphere of investigation. And we shall be playing the role of higher critic just as much in quickening faith in the book as others in trying to kill it. A class of thinkers and would-be world leaders say the Creator, in religion, as they believe He did in nature, started with the lower and grossly imperfect forms and has gradually evolved the highest. Just as men are thought to have come up from ancestors, who first were senseless bivalves and snapping turtles, then fish and reptiles, then the advanced orders of beasts and birds, lastly men with brains, moral natures and evolved immortality, they say God, through the power or principle of evolution, had men to invent and practice morals that now disgust and to adopt and worship ideals of God that we would

*THE ESSENTIALS OF A SUCCESSFUL LONG PASTORATE.

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The topic assigned to me is, "The Essentials of a Successful Long Pastorate." In the discussion of this topic I am unable to draw largely upon either experience or extended observation. What shall be said, therefore, will have the value only of personal opinion.

The first demand upon us is the defining of the main terms employed to designate the kind of pastorate under consideration. While the defining of terms is necessary to clear thinking and full understanding the task of defining with precision and conciseness is not always an easy one. I am reminded of the little boy, who, on being asked to define nicotine, said: "Nicotine is a poison of such deadly nature that a drop on the tip of the tail of a big yellow dog would kill a man." Whatever the defect of omission may be it is easy to see that this definition contains extraneous matter. Let it be understood that the pastorate now contemplated is that of the Presbyterian Church. Much that would apply with full force to such a pastorate might not apply at all, and certainly not with equal aptness and force to a pastorate of some other denominations. Further, this Presbyterian pastorate is now viewed exclusively from the side of the qualifications of the minister.

What constitutes a long pastorate? Manifestly the term long is relative. What would be a very short pastorate in the Presbyterian Church might be a very long one, extending even to the extreme limit, in another Church. And even in our own Church, in these times, a pastorate that would be designated as long would have been regarded short, or of moderate length half a century ago. Therefore, no definite limit applicable to all Presbyterian pastorates can be fixed. However, let us sup-

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pose for present purposes that fifteen or twenty years would be a long pastorate. With this adjustable limit, what are we to regard as success? Here again the definition must be flexible, for the local differences between different pastorates are so pronounced that a success in one might be deemed as ordinary work or even a failure in another. Success does not consist merely in the popularity of the minister in the congregation and the community in which he labors; in drawing large crowds to the church he serves; in the addition of large numbers to the membership of the church; in gathering into the membership a body of people, large or small, whose only bond of union with one another and whose only point of attachment to the church is merely that of the personality of the minister. All these are desirable, but they do not necessarily mean success. The successful pastorate is that pastorate that gathers in, unifies, utilizes and expresses in terms of efficiency a very large percentage of the force of the church, real and available, over which that pastorate is established. By the force of the church is meant the capabilities of the actual membership plus the possibilities of those non-church members, who, if reached and saved at all, we may reasonably suppose would be reached and saved through the instrumentality of that church. It is, therefore, the intelligence, the consecration, the means and the active service of the membership and also of those who ought to be added to its membership through the agency of that church. Expressed in terms of results the successful pastorate is that which secures the salvation of the lost, edifies, comforts and guides the saved into avenues of efficient service to Christ and to men for Christ's sake.

As to the elements of such a pastorate shall we consider those only that are absolutely essential, or with these others also that are highly desirable? I am unable to draw, with any degree of satisfaction to myself, a line of distinction between these two classes. Even to attempt to do so would require one to be more dogmatic than I am willing to permit myself to be. In my attempted enumeration, therefore, of these elements I must leave it to you to assign to each the character, merit and place which you may think it deserves.

What, then, are the elements of a successful long pastorate?

In attempting to answer this question the divisions I shall make are suggested by convenience rather than dictated by logic.

I. Let us consider, first, the minister as a man. Let us assume that he is a real child of God and called of God into the ministry. His personal character will affect him and his work vitally at every essential point.

1. He should be, first of all, a man of sane, healthful piety, symmetrically developed, normal and well balanced. His faith in Christ as his own personal Saviour must be abiding, deep and unflinching. To this he should add thorough consecration. If he be half-hearted, self-seeking, shallow in his convictions and weak in his resolutions he will be formal and perfunctory in his work, and when the people discover, as they certainly will, that he has become so they will discredit his ministry and reject his message. Further, he must be a man of prayer. He must have power with God before he can prevail with men. Prayer is the means by which the power of God is brought into operation through men, and he who would have that power without which there can be no real success, must be a man of prayer.

2. Then he must be a manly man. If any office makes a more imperative demand than others for the red blood and dauntless courage of manly men that office is the holy ministry of the gospel. Of course we cannot approve of that somewhat facetious division of the human race into three classes composed of men, women and preachers. Yet we must admit that some preachers, while excluded from the second class, cannot be put into the front rank of the first. There are those who appear to think the minister is made by the cut of his ecclesiastical garments, by sanctimonious tones of voice, by soft sentimental gush, by sickly sympathy with certain things ethical, by compliance with forms of religion, by the discharge of a few social functions flavored with piety, and by avoiding every possible occasion that should call forth the indignant protest of a manly

man. Let us hope this type is exceptional and rare, and that its passing may not be long delayed. It may be that certain duties of the minister and some of the conditions of his work tend to make him effeminate. He cultivates in himself forbearance, gentleness, patience and self-restraint. In much of his work he comes possibly more into contact with women than with men. Usually the women are the first to respond to his appeals in behalf of the work of the church. They and not the men are found by him in pastoral work. It is, therefore, not surprising that in these circumstances there should be a tendency for the minister to develop in himself the gentler traits of character and to suppress those that are more rugged and masculine. I have seen recently the prophecy that the problem of the Church ten years hence will be the woman problem. For some time the question has been how to draw and to hold the men to the Church. The women have responded more readily and in larger numbers. But this observer and prophet thinks the tide has now turned, that men are more easily reached and that our task for the immediate future will be how to regain our lost influence over the women. Whether this be true or not, I am sure that the minister should be pre-eminently a manly man, a man among men, approachable but dignified, courageous but gentle, warm-hearted but not effeminate, sympathetic but strong, loving but with his face set like flint against all manner of iniquity and able to hit hard in the fight against sin in every form.

3. Again the successful minister must have a rich personal experience of the grace and hope that he commends to others. When the writer was in college the president of that institution, himself a minister, frequently reminded the candidates for the ministry that they would not be able to preach beyond their experience. Recently a young minister said he felt he should change his field of labor because nearly all the members of his present charge were not only church members, but were more mature than himself in their religious experience, and that for this reason he was unable to minister to them to their edification. I cannot accept the view that the minister in his

preaching is restricted to his own experience. He is to declare the whole counsel of God whatever his own experiences may be. I do concede, however, that his most effective preaching will be in the setting forth of those truths of which he has had personal experience. Hence success must be in large measure the result of rich personal experience of the grace, love and power of God in his own heart.

4. Further, the minister must be of blameless life. While all our help comes from God, it is also true that often it is the man behind the sermon that gives it its power. The minister may be elegant, eloquent, learned, magnetic in his personality, pleasing in his address, orthodox and even untiring in the performance of the outward duties of his office, but if his private life be not such as "becometh the gospel of Christ," that sad lack will nullify his ministry. On the contrary, if his life be blameless, though his gifts be meagre and his attainments few, he may, by the power of a consistent life, illustrate and give efficacy to the truths he proclaims. So much regarding the minister as a man.

II. In the second place, let us consider the minister as a preacher. This presents him, as I suppose, in the most important part of his work. Preaching is preeminently the divinely appointed means of extending and establishing the kingdom. To this every other part of his work should be subordinate and contributory. If he fail here it is difficult to imagine how by efficiency in other departments he could make up for this loss. In considering him as a preacher I wish to make room for some estimate of the importance of good physical health, and I may as well state that here. Though it is not absolutely essential, it is highly desirable, and he should esteem it a religious duty to make and to keep himself physically fit for vigorous work of mind and body.

2. With the mention of this I go on to insist that he should have a good average mind. He should be endowed by nature with an intellect capable of acquiring the necessary equipment for the effective discharge of the duties of an office, one, and perhaps the chief, function of which is to teach others. This native

ability should be cultivated, developed and enriched by the most thoughtful application and care. Therefore, he should be an incessant student. It may be conceded that in modern time the pulpit, as a means of disseminating information, has been restricted as to its scope and deprived of some of its power. This restriction is due in large measure to the fact that information is now more widely diffused by other means, such as the secular press, magazines, religious papers, tracts and books, than formerly. But the demand upon the minister, though he is less than formerly a bureau of general information, has not been diminished, but rather increased. The advance in means of obtaining knowledge makes it all the more imperative that the minister reinforce his supply of intellectual power in order that he may maintain his leadership in things spiritual. While his study should lead him into familiarity with the outstanding facts of history and range over the whole field of current literature, I wish to emphasize the truth that he must be, first of all, a student of the sacred Scriptures. It is his prime duty to declare the whole counsel of God. He must preach the word. That word is an inexhaustable mine of truth, the depths of which no human mind can fathom, whose contents no human mind can fully comprehend. Yet it is his mission to make that word known to men. Therefore, he should be constant, earnest, patient and persistent in his efforts, as far as human endeavor can go, to master that word. Next to the inspired word he should be a student of systematic theology. Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va., has just put into its curriculum a special course leading up to the degree of doctor of divinity, the purpose of which, as announced, is to offer inducements to ministers to continue the prosecution of their theological studies after leaving the seminary. If the minister studies the word to any real purpose he should seek to reduce the results of his study to system, for, otherwise, he will be unable to use his knowledge to the best advantage. The effort thus to systematize his knowledge of the word of God is the study of systematic theology in whatever form he may find the facts about God, sin and salvation. Further, as a

student he should seek facility for and apply himself diligently to the specific art of sermonizing. It is by means of the sermon chiefly that he is to make his knowledge effective upon others. The Saturday night sermon is apt to leave the people on Sunday in calm and undisturbed repose. The sermon over the preparation of which the minister sleeps is one during the delivery of which the congregation will sleep.

3. Another mark of the preacher closely connected with, but differing from this is that he should be a doctrinal preacher. I do not mean by this that he shall convert his pulpit into a chair for the purpose of teaching in a technical way the great truths of systematic theology, though I do think that systematic theology, to a limited extent, with its technical terms eliminated, could be injected into an occasional sermon much to the improvement of the sermon and to the edification of the people. Of course preaching must be practical, but doctrine must precede practice. The truth must be known before it can be applied to conduct. The little rose water sermon flavored with religion may tickle the fancy, but it will not produce conviction. The sermon that is composed of a few clippings from the secular press upon current topics and that has four little heads each followed by three little tales may pass as a pleasant song, but it does not develop character. The hortatory sermon, the most pronounced feature of which as someone has said, is "O my dear brethren, we now pass on to the next point," may sound pious, but it does not compel conduct. I cannot see how an intelligent minister, sincerely accepting a given system of doctrine as setting forth the truths contained in the Scriptures, can preach for a long period of time to the same congregation acceptably and effectively, and not have the prominent marks of that system stamped upon his preaching. Neither do I believe it possible for a congregation that is not at least so far indoctrinated as to know the distinctive truths of its system and to apply its principles to the conduct of its members can produce in the practical life such results as would mark that pastorate successful. So long as a given denomination survives and deserves to survive, its growth, in-

fluence and virility will depend largely upon its fidelity to its system of doctrine. Hence the preacher must give heed to the doctrine. However, while emphasizing the importance of loyalty to one's system I now have in mind more particularly the great essential truths of the word of God, such as the doctrine of sin, of man's need, ill-desert and helplessness; the supernatural in religion; the necessity of repentance, of the new birth; salvation by grace alone; Jesus Christ the God-man; his miraculous birth; spotless character, atoning death, resurrection, ascension and intercession; the authenticity and inerrancy of the inspired word of God. But a man cannot preach these truths consistently unless he stands firmly and squarely upon his system of doctrine and regulates all his thinking by the distinctive principles of that system.

4. Again I wish to say of the preacher that he should have an abiding confidence in the power of the gospel of Christ to save the lost, to sustain the weak, to comfort the sorrowing, to do all that for which Christ came into the world, and for which the minister labors. He must not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He must know that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and he must expect that in the faithful preaching of it he will see the power of God manifesting itself in conviction, conversion and edification. If he lack this confidence he will either be perfunctory in proclaiming this gospel and may turn away from it to kindle fires on strange altars, and to preach another gospel which is not another. With these suggestions touching the minister as a preacher, and without saying anything about the importance of a good voice carefully cultivated and controlled, of graceful and forceful delivery, of the magnetic power of personality, of the importance of polish, I wish

III. In the third place, to consider the minister as a man of ecclesiastical affairs. I have no word that would express precisely the thought I now have in mind. Perhaps the term bishop would come nearer doing it than any other at my command. But even that would have to be stretched a little. We, as Presbyterians, believe that, according to the Scriptures, as

the minister "has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop." I am now thinking of the minister in that broad and not clearly defined sphere of activity in which he applies himself to the multiplied and varied duties of the modern pastorate. In this is included, of course, the more specific work designated as pastoral. While much of the so-called pastoral work of our day is merely social and all of it, except in cases of sickness and sorrow, is done under disadvantages, it is a very important part of the minister's duties. It can be neglected or omitted only at the peril of the pastorate and the serious detriment of the congregation. If conditions ever be such that it cannot be done, or can be only imperfectly done, those conditions will act inevitably against the success of that pastorate. On the other hand, if this work can be faithfully and effectively done it will contribute more perhaps than any other line of endeavor to success. But the field of activity is now much broader than this. The notion has gained widespread popularity that the minister is a sort of manager of some kind of an ecclesiastical plant, and that, as such, his business relates him to every other enterprise and institution in the community. He has moved bag and baggage out of the old-fashioned study and we now find him established in an up-to-date office. Instead of the quiet study, communion with books, deep sustained meditation and fellowship with God, he is in the din and bustle of the streets and his language is that of the market. Even the session regards him not only as the spiritual leader of the flock, but also and especially as the manager of its affairs, and the average session is disposed to act only as his advisory board. We hear much about hardheaded ruling elders, and now and then they do say that some minister cannot get along with the session. My observation leads me to believe that if the minister have ordinary sense and judgment the session will let him have his own way and will content itself with recording its permission of his wishes and its approval of his plans. What then should be his qualifications for this over-lordship?

1. For one thing he should have the art of forming acquaint-

tance, of recognizing and calling people by name when he meets them on the street, and of indulging in a good handshake. Absalom seems to have had some admirable qualifications for this sort of work, had they only been sustained by other necessary traits of character. In this respect the minister might learn much from the modern politician.

2. Further, he should have good judgment. Without this he is in danger of being swept away from his real work by passing fads and by the pressing demands that are made upon him for service in behalf of interests not related to his work, but which seek his co-operation in order to further their own ends.

3. Again, he should have the power of adaptation. Principles are eternal and never change, but the methods of applying them are subject to frequent changes, and must be changed to meet the shifting conditions of life. Even the local congregation is in a state of constant fluctuation. The older members are passing away; new ones are appearing upon the scene; the children are maturing and in order to minister to their needs the minister must renew his youth, remain ever fresh and versatile, and be able to be made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.

4. Then he should possess some talent for organization. Without this one of two evils is apt to occur. Either a large percentage of his available force will remain latent, he will be trying to do work that he should put others to doing, and consequently the congregation, instead of being developed into an independent working body, will find itself helplessly dependent upon the minister. Or on the other hand, he will go to the extreme of attempting too elaborate organization. Mistaking machinery for power and noise for efficiency he may substitute that which looks well on paper and serves splendidly for advertising, for real workable, practical, effective schemes.

5. And to these traits he must add patience. Both in the making of his plans and in operating them he will need a large supply of this grace. Some parts of his machinery will break down, others prove worthless; some of his trusted workers will

fail him when they are most sorely needed, and many of the fruits of his labor will be slow in maturing. If he be not patient, in the feverish haste for results, he will be tempted to tinker with his machinery and thus waste time, to revise his plans before they have been sufficiently tested, and to exchange his old machinery for new before it has been tried out. The consequences apt to follow are that he will become discouraged, will discredit his own plans, will discount his own power of leadership, will destroy the confidence of the people in his trustworthiness, will impair his own usefulness and may make for himself the unenviable reputation of being a visionary dreamer or an incurable fadist.

6. From this enumeration I am unwilling to omit the control of his tongue. Of course when things go wrong the minister, like other people, might say some things that should not be said. He is a wise man who knows when and how to keep silent. But I am thinking now not so much of hasty speech under provocation, as of discretion under all ordinary circumstances, as the minister mingles freely with his flock. He must talk, but he should first think. He should exercise wisdom in the selection of the topics of ordinary conversation and should weigh his words. He needs, and let us suppose he deserves, the love, esteem and confidence of the congregation. Unless he possess these his pastorate cannot be successful. If he is to gain and to hold these he must be wise, thoughtful and discreet. To him are confided many secrets. Things too sacred for the common ear are poured freely into his. The sick, many of whom are keenly sensitive about their maladies, will admit him into the inner circle of their anxiety. The sorrowing who shrink from intimate conversation about their troubles with close friends will open to him the way to express his sympathy and to pour upon their wounds the oil of consolation. In doing so they may not exact of him any promise of secrecy. But they will expect him to respect their confidence. On their spiritual troubles they are even more sensitive and reticent. But they wish to trust their minister, and they will if he will let them. Shame on the man who by reason of his office secures

through these open doors easy entrance into the innermost lives of his people, and then betrays these sacred confidences. He may betray then by thoughtless conversation, by allowing himself to stoop to the level of an ecclesiastical gossip, and by repeating them in the pulpit for the purpose of illustration. But he who does so will find that the people withdraw their confidence from him, lose their respect for him and shut him out from the very avenues along which, if he were discreet and trustworthy, he might render them the largest service.

7. I close this long list by adding that the minister should be a man of deep, broad and abiding sympathy. His work is official. But woe be to him if it be not more than that. Many people are bound to him by official rather than personal ties, and they will regard his work as official only until he, by his personal interest and loving, tender sympathy convinces them that he enters heartily and sincerely into their lives. His official position merely gives him the opportunity to show himself their friend and helper. They stand ready to give him the chance to make good. Are they tempted? Let him show by his life that he knows how to feel for them, though he may not be tempted in the same way. Are they in sorrow? Let him share with them their griefs. Are they broken-hearted and disconsolate because of their sins? Let him be to them a son of consolation and show forth the mind of him who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The church is a big family, of which the minister is the spiritual head, and the members of which are his spiritual children. He should have a heart big enough to receive all of them. If any are left out it is likely that they will discover it, and they will bewail the fact that they have not come into their own. The minister's calling is holy; his opportunity is inspiring; his responsibility is tremendous; his success may be glorious. Well may we ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?"