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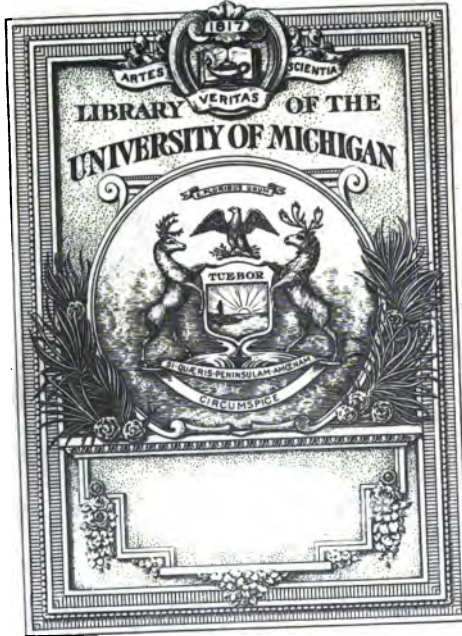
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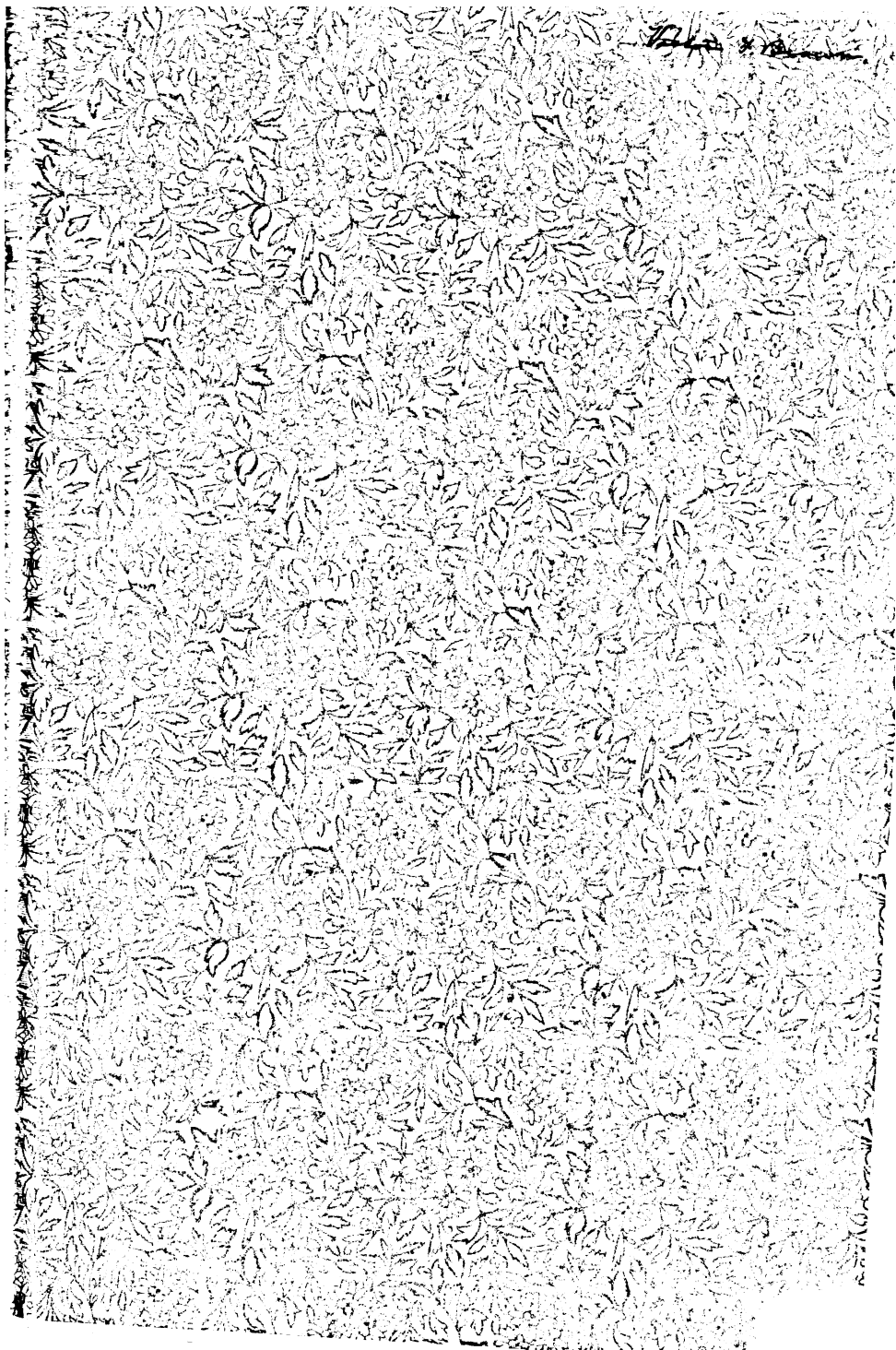
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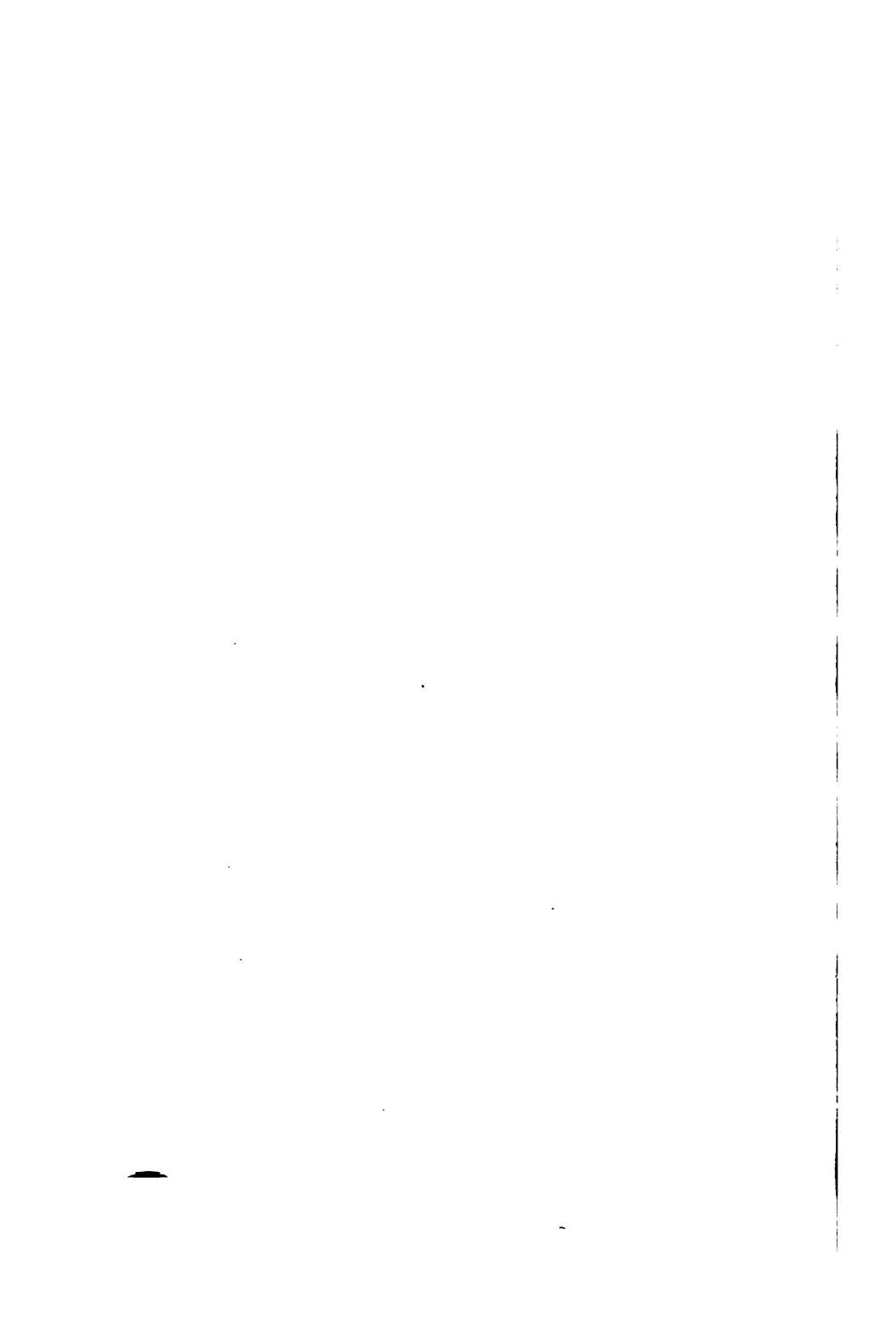


THE GIFT OF
Victor F. Brown





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THE PASTOR AMIDST HIS FLOCK.

New
Buckingham
REV. G. B. WILLCOX, D. D.

PROFESSOR IN CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

AUTHOR OF "THE PRODIGAL SON, A MONOGRAPH; WITH AN EX-
CURSUS ON CHRIST AS A PUBLIC TEACHER."



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PREFACE.

THE expanding sphere of modern life has broadened the sphere of pastoral theology. Among the forefathers, the pastor fought the battle with evil as David, whirling his sling, fought the battle of Israel with the Philistine—while the army stood looking on. The idea of organizing the forces of the church membership for intelligent and efficient work had hardly yet “arrived.” Few, if any, but the pastor were men of liberal culture. The higher education for woman was unknown. That youth and children could unite with the church and contribute to its efficiency, was hardly so much as surmised. The Sunday-school, though in vogue in previous generations, had become a “lost art.” The mid-week service was a lecture from the pastor. No missionary pioneer had yet ventured beyond seas into the outlying heathen gloom.

But, with the advancing springtide of modern Christian intelligence and enterprise, church work has flowered into a new exuberance and diversity. As armies no longer fight by chosen champions, but rely on their leaders for marshaling and direction, so the church comes forward to ask of its pastor the organization and administration, for which of old there was no call. It touches common life at an always increasing number of points of contact. The pastor stands at its head with his hand on magnetic and divergent lines. He must be, in some sense, a man of affairs. He must be Argus-eyed, ubiquitous, with keen insight into human nature, conciliatory, quick in the art of drawing, like the fruit-tree, the sweet elements from even a bitter soil, and unifying the energies of the church for the most decisive effect. Carrying into the moral world the grand discovery of the conservation and correlation of force, he must turn the heat of his sacred ardor into motion and electric inspiration in the souls of the brotherhood.

In so large, so diversified, so perplexing a work, the energies of youth must be piloted by the experience of those of riper years. It is sometimes urged that pastoral theology is of slight account—that, if the young pastor has naturally good sense, he will need little

counsel; that if he has not, counsel will be vain. A very serious mistake. As well say that a young midshipman, if he have good sense, can navigate his vessel without instruction.

Any experienced disciple looks back with pity on his first attempts at Christian work. He meant well—he is conscious of that. But he had learned little of human nature. He had had no teaching in the art of approaching men. He was crude in his notions of sacred truth. He had gained no organizing power. He used his opportunities as a child does edge-tools, doing often more mischief than good. He made rather confusion than order. He soured men whom he would have won. He drew laughter, at times, instead of tears. He groped blindly and floundered wildly, and blushed at his mistakes, and was half in despair. There is apprentice work, there is unskilled labor, in Christian enterprise, no less than in mechanics or navigation or trade. Any pastor of some years' standing, without conceding that in his youth he was below the average of youthful discretion, vividly remembers where a suggestion from some wise veteran in the work would have saved him a grievous misstep into a vale of humiliation.

Whether the present volume (which follows twenty-six years of pastoral life and eleven years of instruction in this department) will prove any better counselor than its predecessors in the same field, the public must judge. It is intended for theological students and pastors of the various Christian denominations. Some portions of it will be of more service to one, some to another. But it is hoped that nothing will be found obnoxious to any. The conversational form is adopted as a familiar and easy working dress in which to clothe the thought. May these suggestions, by assisting the younger ministry, serve, through them, the churches and their Great Head.

G. B. W.

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, August, 1890.

BOOK FIRST.

THE OUTSET IN THE WORK.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY.

A. I have called you together for some familiar conversations on the entire work of the pastor, aside from the composition and delivery of sermons. Great part of that work consists in awakening the activity of the church and congregation. Do you know, within a few years the importance of this has immensely increased?

B. Why, I had supposed it always important that they should cooperate with him.

A. Yes; but within a half-century the intelligence of the laity has been leveled up toward that of the pastor. In many cases they are above him. The minister is no longer, as once he was, almost the only college-bred man in the community. Sunday-school teachers, with the help of the best scholarship of the age, are studying the Bible as constantly as he. The intelligence of Christian women is flowering out and bearing fruit. The youth in the Sunday-school and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor; even the children, in their Mission-bands and otherwise, are all pouring a flood of contribution into the common work of the church. Relatively, far less than of old hangs on the pastor alone.

C. But is that not because far *more work* is done than in the time of the fathers? Is the pastor's personal labor really much heavier than at the beginning of the century?

A. That depends on circumstances. He can easily make it far heavier. But no matter. His work, whether greater or less, is certainly more *varied*. He can no longer sit mewed constantly in his study, pondering the relations of sin to the greatest good, or of foreordination to free will. He must be out among his people, with his eye, and often his hand, on every valve and lever of the church

machinery. His studies may make him, in Bacon's phrase, "a full man." But unless he becomes, in practical tact, "a ready man," his weight of lore will be on him as the pilgrim's burden in the Slough of Despond.

D. But if a pastor has something to say in the pulpit, and knows how to say it, can he not hold his people together and accomplish a good work?

A. There speaks the young theologian! But knowledge of human nature, skill in dealing with men, you will find quite as indispensable as power in the pulpit, to success in your work. Many a deeply-read lawyer waits long for a client. Many a learned doctor follows his patients to their burial—most sincere of all the mourners. And so with many a scholarly pastor. I knew a minister—a consummate scholar—at home in six languages. A poet he was, too, with his spirit finely strung and delicately pitched. Withal he had a fire of zeal in his bones to serve Christ and bless men. But he had never learned the art of conveying, socially, what he felt. His body and soul seemed to be a misfit. He was an involuntary masquerader. His zeal seemed frozen over. Strangers thought him cold and stiff and hard. For more than twenty years, in the prime of life, he figured in his denomination among the ministers "without charge." The good man has gone now to the land where the unintended disguise is dropped—where they see him, not as "in a mirror, darkly," but face to face.

I know another, still living, who, as to any fineness of finish or silvery eloquence, makes no show whatever. But he has studied human nature. He knows how to reach men between the joints of the harness of their prejudices. His heart, to quote Lowell's line,

"Open is as eglantine full blown."

{ So he is a master of those who, intellectually, are far his superiors. In his home missionary work on the frontier he draws on godless railway officials for lumber and stone and free freight, in building a church, and they enjoy honoring his drafts. He is to all around him as a magnet to bits of steel.

B. But if only there were any such respect for the pastor's office in our day as we read of among the fathers! I was astonished to see, lately, in Dr. Emmons' biography, how he ruled his people

like a prince, and what immense liberty he took of spending time among his books.

A. Yes; it is natural enough to mourn for that departed power. Dr. Emmons gave almost as large a share of each day to his study as a German professor. President Edwards, at Northampton, averaged thirteen hours of the twenty-four in his little sanctum. Dr. Hopkins, of Newport, R. I., said, "I have been able to study fourteen hours a day." Parishioners, instead of awaiting their pastor in their own homes, with a sweet simplicity thought it a privilege to call on him.

C. And is there any way of bringing back that parochial golden age?

A. None whatever. Any clerical Rip Van Winkle who should attempt it would be promptly reminded by his people that we are late in the nineteenth century.

But remember, for your relief, that your success will depend by no means solely on your power in the study and the pulpit. You hear of some one as holding a large congregation and building up a strong church. Going to hear him, you are disappointed. How does he succeed with such preaching as this? It is not with such preaching as this. It is, under God, by the attraction of the man as a whole. It is his winsome way with the children that takes the parents captive. It is his enthusiasm that charms the youth. It is his reverence for the aged, who so often are neglected. It is his skill in finding a work for every one, and steadily, but gently, holding every one to his work. It is his tireless vigilance, that allows no human violet, growing in the shade, to feel that his pastor overlooks him.

C. Will anything less than omniscience suffice for all that?

A. Yes. Very ordinary men have good success in it—some, of course, greater than others. It will take patience. You will have to shine and shine on many a dull clod of humanity till you reach and bring out, in bloom and fruitage, the seeds of good that lie hidden deep within.

Moreover, your pastoral work will reinforce your pulpit. Acids are used for sharpening steel. And an acid spirit puts a keen and cruel edge on a hearer's criticism of a pastor's words. If you expect to preach with such power as to compel malcontents to receive profit, you know little of human nature. They must first become no longer

malcontents. A man listening, with a smouldering grudge against the preacher, can see nothing in instruction but platitudes, nothing in eloquence but fustian, nothing in exhortation but rant. A man, on the other hand, whose heart the preacher has first won will be like the lover, to whom his mistress is always fair, to whom her words drop as pearls from her lips.

D. But will that prove true when he comes to rebuke them for their sins?

A. Yes; there, too, it will hold good. When you have gained, in your personal interviews, the love of your people, they will take from you a castigation for their faults that they would bear from no one else.

You will gather, too, in your pastoral work a great stock of information and suggestions for your pulpit. The troubles, doubts, temptations of your people will wonderfully enrich and enliven your sermons. The fathers of New England settled over each church two shepherds, a pastor and a teacher. The pastor visited and learned the spiritual needs of the flock. The teacher availed himself of this information in the pulpit.

B. There seem to be, in almost every congregation, two classes—the few cultivated and intelligent, and the many unlettered and superficial. How is the same pastor to interest and profit both?

A. These conversations will be, in general, my reply to that query. I will say here only that you must depend mainly on your pulpit to hold the cultured, and on your pastoral work to win the ignorant. Both must be steadily kept in view.

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

C. There are various ideas of the call to the ministry. How shall a man know that he has received such a call?

A. An important matter. But, first, what is *not* such a call? What are the motives to be shunned? An old minister, when a somewhat conceited youth, who had preached for him, asked, "Does it not seem to you that I have had a call from the Lord?" answered, "My dear brother, I fear it was some other noise!" A good social position, or leisure for study, or the urgent wish of Christian friends,—no one of such motives alone will justify a man for a moment in assuming this work. The stream will rise no higher than the fountain. If the spring-head of one's motive is no higher than such

as I have mentioned, he goes on no errand from God. He is on one of his own. I knew a young man, about forty years ago, who received for an invention that he had patented about \$5,000. He used the money in securing an education for the ministry. I thought him an example of zeal and consecration. But it came out afterward that he was aiming only at a minister's social position. He was the sole graduate of a theological seminary, that ever I knew, who found his way at last into a State's prison.

B. But what then *should* be one's motive?

A. We will see presently.

D. If a man looks to God for guidance in this matter, will he not get an inward intimation?

A. No and yes. If you mean one thing by your word "intimation," no. If you mean another, yes. To look for a preternatural impression, or inner light, or whatever you may call it, which is not gained through your reason and conscience, is fanaticism. Two ministers of whom I knew were riding by a house together. Said one of them, "It is impressed on my mind that I must stop and talk with the people here. I believe it is from the Lord. I must obey it." "All right," said his brother. "I will ride on slowly. If you do not overtake me soon, I will stop." The caller at the house was soon in pursuit of the carriage again. "Didn't you make rather a short call?" asked the other. "Well, the fact is," he answered rather ruefully, "they weren't at home!"

D. But are we not to look to the Lord for direction?

A. Certainly. If by direction you mean guidance from Him, while rationally and conscientiously studying the question, I answer yes. Of course you must look for that.

D. But is there not in a call to the ministry something mystical and supernatural?

A. No. The idea that there is comes from the notion of the clergy as a specially sacred and exalted body.

D. Is there nothing then in this profession more sacred than in any other?

A. In the true, deep sense, nothing whatever. From its constant occupation with distinctively religious duties there flows about it a certain air of sanctity. But, as our Lord viewed life, all things, all times and places, alike, are to be given to the service of God. He intimated this to the Samaritan woman, John 4: 21-24, and to the

Jews, in regard to the Sabbath, Matt. 12: 1-8. He aimed not to level down any place, occasion, or occupation of man, but to level all up to the highest plane of consecration. No more thorough self-surrender is required of a minister than of any other man. He is nowhere called to live nearer to God than a merchant or physician or farmer. "Power," said John Foster, "to its last particle, is duty." And it is no more duty to a man of one occupation than of another.

C. But does not Paul, Ephes. 4: 11, speak of God's having set some in the church as apostles, prophets, teachers?

A. Yes. But so any occupation is represented as one to which a man is called of God. The very word "calling" intimates that. So of magistrates, Rom. 13: 1, "The powers that be are ordained of God." The Lord says of Cyrus, King of Persia, Is. 45: 5, "I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me;" and, Is. 54:16, "I have created the waster to destroy." No language stronger in this direction is applied to ministers than to men of other occupations.

B. But is not a minister to make the work of *doing good* peculiarly his own?

A. By no means *peculiarly*. Every Christian is to live with that aim.

B. But does he not promote a higher kind of good—the sort that bears more directly on eternity?

A. Often he does. But you must remember that many a Christian merchant is sending into the ministry young men through whom, long after he shall have gone to his grave, he will preach and lead men to Christ.

The questions, therefore, which decide whether or not one has a call to the ministry all group themselves under this general inquiry: Has he the qualifications with which to do more good in this work than he could probably do in any other?

B. Would you say that he is called to the ministry just as a Christian lawyer or doctor is called to his profession?

A. Exactly so. The lawyer or doctor is as solemnly bound as he to raise carefully and prayerfully before God this question of the greatest good.

First, then, have you the *health* for this work? It will put your nervous system and your whole stock of physical stamina to some strain.

C. That is discouraging. I haven't much strength to begin with.

A. But remember the immense power of a strong will either to drive out disease, or, while enduring it, to accomplish much for Christ. 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, except as told by others, what health is. A pastor in Vermont preached for twenty years with but a single lung. A classmate of my own, twenty-five or thirty years ago, lay so low with consumption that two physicians both announced that he could hardly live a fortnight. In reply to them, the next morning, he said, "Notwithstanding your announcement, I intend to recover. It is now the first of March. About the first of July I expect to take my horse for a long excursion." On the ninth of July he did as he intended. In the following November he returned to his pulpit. And he is alive and at work to-day.

Dr. Stone
bro to
Richard Stone
3-3
of Cincinnati

B. But can a man expect sheer will-power commonly to work such wonders?

A. No. These are extreme cases. But they show what a vigorous will, with faith in God, has done. They admonish us to keep the soul as master and the body as servant. They caution you, till you are *sure* that poor health is an insurmountable obstacle, not to make it an excuse from the ministry.

But, passing from the body to the mind, have you the talents required for this work?

C. A man is apt to overrate or underrate his own talents.

A. Certainly. Therefore exercise your gifts. See what is your success. Consult judicious friends. Select such especially as are likely to be impartial.

D. But you do not state the kind of talents needed.

A. All kinds, I might really say, may be useful in the ministry. The chief requisite is not a power for deep and wide research. The day in which Dr. Isaac Barrow won fame as a mathematician and Dr. Robertson as a historian, while still in the ministry, has gone by. There are but twenty-four hours in a day. A pastor of our time, in full service, must content himself mainly with the results of the labors of scholars and scientists. The gold that they have mined and extracted for him he must take and reduce to current coin for his hearers. The chief talent required for the pastor's success is the power to move men. It is the ability first to persuade, to win, to

inspire them with lofty motives, and then to organize them, that they may, in turn, work on the souls of others who still remain strangers to Christ.

B. Will not this depend on one's *own* inspiration and elevation of motive?

A. Of course. And the moral and spiritual qualities are as much more valuable than the physical or intellectual as is the statue than the pedestal. None but whole-souled men are wanted in this work. In the darkest days of the Italian struggle for independence there went out from the head-quarters of Garibaldi a proclamation that rang like a bugle from the Alps to the Mediterranean: "In return for the love you may show your country I offer you hunger and thirst, cold, war, and death. Whoso accepts the terms, let him follow me!" Men of that spirit, fighting either for country or for Christ, will win battles. Cultivate a *relish* for Christian work, a very passion for the privilege of doing good in this sad world of ours.

But the chief spiritual qualification is an invincible faith in God. "We ministers," said the French preacher, Leon Pilatte, "are, in ourselves, but ciphers. Yet, if God stands beside us, He makes the ciphers mean millions!" There is no knowing what He may do through the feeblest instruments. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." This is not a work in which, as Napoleon declared—and afterward found reason to revise his opinion—"God is always on the side of the heaviest guns."

The rams' horns at Jericho were crooked and ungainly in shape, and anything, doubtless, but melodious in tone. A very commonplace effort their uproar must have seemed to the citizens—hardly worth one delivery, much less a monotonous repetition. But they brought down the walls notwithstanding. And the lesson of their harsh clangor echoes down the ages, that the weak things hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are. There is many a pastor with few of the graces of manner or speech, accounting himself but a ram's horn in the hand of the Lord, who has brought down more strongholds of sin, and proved to be more of a horn of salvation, than any silver trumpet that ever charmed men with its music.

It will cheer you to look back from old age on each community in which you may have labored with the consciousness that no one there remembers you without the respect due to a thoroughly good

man. If whereto we have already attained, we can walk by the same rule, we can mind the same thing, we have attained something that is a comfort to look back upon. A friend of mine, on a trip through Lake Ontario, saw the pilot steering with his face toward the stern of the boat. He asked the reason. "Oh," said the man, "when I am out of sight of land I steer by my wake. If that is straight, I know I am all right." A straight wake through life is a grand thing to make. But you must look to God for it. As habitually depend on Him as if He were to afford you supernatural light. While standing before men in full strength and courage of your manhood, be at His feet as a very babe. If much is accomplished in your ministry, it will be not by you, but by Christ in you. In a public hall, in the daytime, I saw once candles along the walls. "How poor a provision for light," I thought, "in a room as large as this!" But, going in again after sunset, I found the candles were gas-burners, each with a flame as broad as my hand. The far-off, unseen gasometer, with its immense supplies, was their fountain-head. Your light will be feeble if it come not from behind and above yourselves. But if Christ shine through you in your illumination, many a wanderer will find his way home to God.

And if you would enjoy the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, you must keep your inner life clear for the heavenly Guest from any taint of self-interest. "No, gentlemen," said the elder Agassiz, to golden offers from the Boston lecture-committee, "I have no time to waste in making money." Search yourself again and again. Make sure that no cupidity is at work within. So, though doubts may assail you, though your mind may tremulously vibrate, for a while, like the needle, it will gradually settle into one position, point in only one direction, and within you will remain the deep, sweet peace of him who stays himself on God.

CHAPTER II.

CANDIDATING AND SETTLEMENT.

A. The process of candidating is commonly regarded as one of the necessary evils of a pastor's life. In those denominations in which the local church selects a pastor for itself, the process is often a gauntlet for him, and a tedious, if not perilous, crisis for them. Indeed, in *any* church the pastor must win and keep the regard of those to whom he ministers.

C. Is there any remedy for the annoyances of the candidacy?

A. I think there is. I have often recommended a method which has worked smoothly and happily. The mistake of the supply-committee often is that they enter on their list of candidates whatever names are brought to their notice. Then, without looking carefully into the records of the men, they admit them on trial successively to the pulpit. One of two results is quite likely to follow. Either the church is split into factions, crying, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas," or they unite on a man whose record is afterward found to be shadowed. In either case there is trouble.

D. What, then, is the remedy?

A. It is this. Let the supply-committee be large enough to represent all the various tastes in the church and congregation. Let this committee first secure, for temporary service, a preacher whom no one would consider a candidate. Let them then concentrate their inquiries on the most promising man of whom they may have heard. They should first learn, through correspondence and otherwise, whether he is a thoroughly consecrated man, thoroughly evangelical and scriptural in doctrine, and of sound common sense; what success he has had, what are his social qualities for work outside the pulpit, how he interests children and youth, and whether any special fault is likely to impair his usefulness. Let them then either send a sub-committee to hear him, or request some pastor in their own neighborhood to invite him for a Sabbath into his pulpit. When they have, in this way, become unanimous in his favor, *not before*, let them pre-

sent him as their chosen candidate to their own congregation. Preaching thus, with the endorsement of the committee, and with no competitor, he will probably carry the church in his favor. Should he not, however, let the same process be gone through with another. I have never known this course to fail of a happy result.

B. But the churches are hardly likely to ask us theologues how to choose pastors.

A. No, not while you are theologues. I had in mind the counsel you should offer when you have gone up to higher standing and influence. Now as to your own wisest course.

First, do not go prospecting after the easiest, most attractive field. Friends will insist that you have a right to whatever your talents will command, that the law of supply and demand must control, that you will need, for books and otherwise, the largest income you can secure. But remember that the greediest fortune-seeker never lacked plausible excuses for money-making.

C. But is not a minister to expect a fair return for his services?

A. No. That is precisely what he cannot expect.

C. And pray, why not?

A. For this reason: religion always has been, is now, and for years to come, apparently, will be, a thing which the average man fails to rate at its full worth. He claims, perhaps, to appreciate it. But he shows by his unwillingness to *pay* liberally for it in that which he does value—money—just the reverse. Therefore a man whose temporal interests depend on religion must take the consequences. He must, in general, content himself with a much smaller compensation than in some other profession or trade, with the same abilities and effort, he might secure.

C. Some ministers have great salaries. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher had \$20,000.

A. Yes. And such men, rated by the same standard with men of other occupations, are as really underpaid as a pioneer home missionary. Mr. Beecher was regarded as the foremost pulpit orator in the United States. He was known around the world. But there are physicians and lawyers not a few, of far less prominence, with incomes of five times \$20,000. Settle it in your mind never to expect all that your services are worth.

D. Rather a lugubrious prospect!

A. Yes—if your object were to gather a fortune. You might

better begin with a buck and saw than with a Hebrew lexicon. But, throwing out of view the eternal rewards of a pastor's work, there is another view even of his temporal interest. If he trusts God and observes the Divine laws of diligence, frugality, and foresight, and having food and raiment is therewith content, he will fall into no abyss of want. You almost never find a clergyman, unless through fault of his own, in an almshouse. And ministers are not exposed to those fearful reverses in business which often drive men to despair and suicide. The simple question is, then, not, where can you earn most money, but, where can you do most good.

B. But suppose two fields are, as to their promise of usefulness, alike?

A. Then take the one that is most agreeable. There is no wrong in that.

But another question. No man, till he has considered the foreign field, has a right to remain at home. Some insist that the sole question should be, "Why should I *not* go abroad?" But that is as narrow as "Why should I not stay at home?" If the matter hinged only on the deficiency and the need of laborers, the foreign work would carry the day. But other inquiries must come in. Have you any tact in acquiring a foreign language? Or is it a labyrinth through which you can find no path? A veteran missionary said he was glad it took a young brother from America a year or more to learn the language. It saved them from a deal of rash and foolish speech. But, on the other hand, the novice may, with his imperfect Chinese or Tamil or Zulu, make ludicrous or provoking blunders enough to damage his influence for years. An American clergyman attempted to preach to the Parisians in French. He exhorted them to "take the water of life freely." Instead of calling it "*eau vivante*" (living water), as he should have done, he startled his audience with an invitation, which some of them probably little needed, to come take the "*eau de vie*" (brandy) freely.

Some have so little facility in acquiring a foreign tongue, and so much in the use of their own, that they give far greater 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 may have immense pulpit-power. It would be a waste of power to send such a man abroad. I have in mind, on the contrary, a missionary who has been extraordinarily useful in translating the

Bible, and in evangelistic work among the natives, who in a pulpit at home could hardly succeed at all. It would have been a waste of power for him to remain in America.

Again, have you tact in reaching and winning the ignorant and degraded around you? Of that class, with exceptions of course, are most of the heathen. If you find it impossible to interest and impress such souls here, it is not probable that you could do it better abroad.

Have you aged, or otherwise dependent, parents or other relatives whom you ought not to leave? Questions like these must all be taken into account.

Except the exile from one's native land, the trials of a laborer among the heathen are probably less than those of a home missionary. He can depend on the regular payment of his salary, and he is independent in position. His income is from half round the globe; he has no favors to ask from his hearers. Relatively to them he is a man of wealth. But the home missionary must seek his support, in a large measure, from his people. He must remind them that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." By incessant vigilance and attention, in and out of the pulpit, he must draw them and hold them. And often anything but incessant will be the attention of the treasurer to him.

With the temporal trials and reliefs of the two great fields of service, therefore—more nearly equal than might at first appear—the test-question remains, Where, on the whole, with one's known abilities and qualities, can he probably do most good?

But even on the home field there are two spheres—the gathering of new churches and the care of those already established. Till you are sure that God has not called you to break new ground, you should hesitate to build on another man's foundations.

In the battle of Shiloh stood for a half-hour, as a mark for a blazing line of musketry, a young color-bearer, expecting 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 set foot only at his peril. There he is laboring most successfully as a missionary to-day. Men enough of that character would soon win the world to Christ.

B. How is one to found a new church?

A. First make sure that the Lord Jesus, not merely your own sect, calls for the church. Set your face against the crying grievance of three or four little congregations, struggling, perhaps wrangling, for existence, where there should be but one.

If your way is clear of doubt, gather about you a nucleus, however small, of good men and women on whom you can rely. In Christian communion and earnest prayer become *closely intimate* with them. If there are absolutely none such, you can, perhaps, more wisely choose some other point at which to commence your work.

C. But often, in the new settlements, one finds the *men* nearly all godless, and only a few good women on whom to depend.

A. Yes; and they are a dependence not to be despised. Rid yourself of the mistake, into which many a minister falls, of rating the strength and promise of your new church only by the number of brethren in it. This impression has come down from former generations in which women were supposed to amount to little. If you have a church composed of earnest, Christ-like women, thank God for them and take heart. In zeal, self-sacrifice, intelligence, and power with God you will find them as munitions of rocks around you.

Make much, especially in the outset, of your Sunday-school. The children in each godless family are the handles by which to take hold of the whole household. Through the children most effectively you may draw them. With the children, too, you may throw freshness and life and vivacity into your services. Have frequent sermons to the little ones. Many of the people, who may be only overgrown children, will gladly attend.

Gather, too, in the outset, as full a supply as possible of Bibles, or at least the Psalms, with Testaments and hymn-books. These are obtainable now at quite low rates. As you will see when we come to talk of Public Worship (Book IV, Chap. 4) they will all be needed.

C. Would you allow men to aid the church who do it from motives of self-interest?

A. Certainly. Why not? Does not God make the wrath of men to praise Him?

B. But does not the taint of their characters go with their money?

A. By no means. If you could accept no offering from any one till you could endorse every act of his life, you would do little through the year but investigate.

One thing you should make clearly understood. You propose to bring into the community far more value than you take out of it. Explain emphatically the effect of a church on all the material interests of citizens. It reduces the number of paupers and criminals, and so lightens the burden of taxation. It enhances the worth of real-estate, even. You are brought under no special obligation by any aid you receive in building up so profitable an institution.

As men are interested in that in which they have *invested* something, one who gives to the church may be possibly drawn to its worship and so to Christ.

C. But is not this putting our trust "in Egypt, for chariots and for horsemen," rather than in the Lord?

A. No. It is simply as men of common sense use whatever facilities lie in their path. Yet always remember that your main reliance must be, first, on God, and, secondly, on the godly in your church. Anything you receive from strangers to Christ must be merely incidental. The steamer accepts any favoring breeze and sets her sails. But she never depends at all on it. Her trust is in her engine. Let yours be in God. Fall back on Him incessantly. *Believe* that He will carry you and your church through your trials. Do not say with your lips, and deny with your heart, that you trust Him. And, even for the financial interests of the church, you will find the live Christian souls in it to be the main support.

B. If a large and conspicuous church were offered to any of us, would you advise him to take it?

A. In some cases. But, unless for exceptional reasons, I would not begin my ministry at the top of the ladder. With many keen eyes on you, every fault would stand out in bold relief. The seeming assumption of a young man's taking such a position might cool the sympathy you would otherwise receive. Remember our Lord's

directions, in Luke 14: 8-11, as to taking the best seat at a feast. It is well to spend a few years in a smaller parish. Then, on removing you may, while leaving your mistakes behind, take with you to a larger field, your experience and your accumulations of work. I knew a minister who secured early in life a higher position than he was able to hold. With mortification he had to step down and out and it seemed to blight his entire after life. He was never able again to stand where his talents and character really entitled him to be.

C. Should one seek for a pulpit, or passively wait till Providence opens the way to it?

A. Faith is not inaction. Faith and works belong together. But do not apply in person to a vacant church. Commonly it would prejudice your case. Some pastor or theological teacher can be found to introduce you.

B. Some ministers have such an abhorrence of candidating that they refuse to preach on trial. I knew one who sent answer to such an invitation that he had "no wares to peddle."

A. Yes; I know whom you mean. And the church, after inviting without first hearing him, in about a year was quite willing that he should move on with his "wares" to some other market. It is commonly a foolish assumption to refuse to allow a church which is to listen to you for years to hear you first for a Sunday or two. Their request to do so is altogether reasonable. The fathers of New England used to expect several months' probation. But a pastor, once installed, was supposed to be settled for life.

D. Would you ever candidate where a brother has offered himself before you?

A. Commonly, by no means. Ask the church first to reach a decision about him. Even if there be no ground for hope of his success, he and his friends will think there is. And, in any event, misunderstanding and jealousy are likely to result.

C. When one is professedly preaching to do good, it must be an awkward matter to preach for a position.

A. Well, there are, to a sensitive man, embarrassments about it. But there are alleviations. You are not mercenary in seeking a pulpit. You can honestly say, "I seek not yours, but you." Then, too, it is as much in the line of God's ordering that you should preach on trial as that you should afterward preach as a pastor. Therefore

thoroughly prepare for the service, commend yourself to God for his presence and grace, and then, as far as possible forgetting yourself, aim to benefit your hearers. The best of them will be looking for a man who hides himself behind his Master and throws his heart into his message. Remember that you may never speak to the same audience again—never see them again till all of earth is over.

D. Is it worth while, when preaching as a candidate, to go into the Sunday-school?

A. Yes. And that involves a larger question. You are in danger of supposing that a church will care only for your sermons. A great mistake. There is an increasing number of Sunday-school and Mission-school and Christian Endeavor workers who will be eager to learn what you are and can do outside the pulpit. Indifference or inefficiency there may defeat the effect of the best sermons. Not in the preaching only, but in the Sunday-school, the Young People's Meeting, the home where you are entertained, everywhere, you will be a candidate.

B. Shall we use on such occasions our best sermons?

A. 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 which, 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.

C. How long shall we consent to candidate?

A. Unless the people engage you for a long supply, two or three weeks ought to suffice. If they cannot agree on you in that time, they are not likely to do so at all. Let me add a caution. Take no encouragement from one or two compliments. Those who like you will be apt to speak—those who do not to keep silence. And say nothing about your hopes or fears as to success. If others refer to the prospect, hear them without much reply.

D. Is it right to carry two calls at once?

A. Not to coquet with the churches. I have in mind a minister who, after receiving a call, laid down the conditions on which it was fully understood that he would accept it. The church met his wishes. He then inquired about a dwelling-house and seemed to be preparing

for settlement. But there was unaccountable delay. And in time it came out that he had been carrying the call, in hope of another, more flattering one, elsewhere. This last he finally secured and accepted. The church he jilted is not over-anxious ever to see him again.

D. But suppose, after one has preached in a church which delays action, he is invited to candidate in another?

A. Then he has full right to do so. And if two simultaneous calls result, he must decide conscientiously which if either, to accept.

C. Does a candidate in any way commit himself to a church?

A. Not in the least. Not more than they, by hearing, commit themselves to him. But to allow a church to call you when you have no expectation of accepting, and only to make that church a stepping-stone to another, is dishonest.

Remember that commonly, after your marriage to a church, you are enjoying your honeymoon. Each of the happy parties sees the other idealized. You ought to be in all your service going on unto perfection. I hope you will. The people ought to cling to you more and more closely. I trust they may. But in all church-life, as elsewhere, there are thorns as well as roses. Put more faith in God than in any man. Hold a high standard. If friction commences, make sure that it is through no fault of yours.

B. Should we look sharply to the terms of settlement, or leave them all to the church?

A. By all means have a clear and full understanding. Let it be in writing. Important interests may come to depend on it. Contract, if possible, for monthly payments of the salary. You ought at least as often as that to pay your own bills. And if the pew-rents or subscriptions are payable monthly, it is commonly easier to collect them. If they run for a quarter, so large an amount of arrears becomes harder to meet.

D. What about a vacation?

A. You should stipulate for one. The time ranges, in different churches, from two or three weeks to two months.

B. Would you take the month of August?

A. Better retain the liberty of taking your vacation-Sundays when they will best suit your own convenience. You may need them at various times.

C. Should one accept a call that is not unanimous?

A. As the ladies say, "that depends." Ask several questions. How large is the minority? Are they persons of weight or influence? Are they obstinate or reasonable? Is their opposition based on reasons that you can probably remove? Seek candid answers to these questions. Seek them not only from your friends, but directly from the objectors themselves. But avoid implying that you submit to the objectors the decision of the matter. If you conclude to accept the call, give your first attention, after settlement, to the minority. As the foremost duty conciliate them. Many a pastor soon has a united church split in factions. Many a pastor who begins his work with a divided church soon has them harmoniously united.

CHAPTER III.

PLANS IN THE OUTSET OF A PASTORATE.

A. A GENERAL commencing a war with no plan of campaign, would be ridiculed. A pastor who without a plan takes charge of a church is no better. "Well begun is half done." And as you begin you will be quite apt to continue. For, commencing, you form habits. You *set* yourself, like plaster in a mold. These habits may cling to you for years. Make it, then, a point of conscience to work by a well-digested plan of operation.

B. Please state more explicitly what you mean.

A. I mean this: put down, in a memorandum-book, each one of the different departments of your work. Allow liberal space in the book to each. Let the departments be such as study, sermons, prayer-meetings, Sunday-school, pastoral visits, funerals, monthly concerts, etc. Then make your plans in each department. Record them distinctly. Often look over your book. Study both that and your people. See what improvements are possible. An accomplished commander will, in time, turn a mob of raw recruits into a disciplined and effective army. Something like that you do with your church.

D. But these fine plans so often fail!

A. Yes; but with them you will always accomplish somewhat more than without. And *let no failure discourage you*. When General Grant attacked Lee in the Wilderness, he was at first repulsed with great slaughter. In previous cases, after such reverses, as to Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, the Union general had retreated. That was General Lee's expectation now. He made his dispositions for a pursuit. But, the next morning, one of his aids reported an advance along the whole Union line. Upon which he is said to have answered in an undertone, "Then our cause is lost. At last the Federals have a general." A man who, in the unflinching spirit of Grant, goes into God's service in his church, will effect something. It has been said of the poet Coleridge that, though a most brilliant genius, he never did himself justice. He was always beginning,

10,000
90,000
4000
60 days
40 minutes

always dropping, some new work. After a plan is once formed, and until it is the manifest will of God that you desist, work it with your might. When the failure of it is evident, lay out another course.

Let us inquire, first, as to plans for yourself; secondly, as to those for work by the church.

Personally you need, most of all, a power from on high. Throw yourself, then, upon God. You are to do a work for Him—ask Him to work through you in doing it. Our Lord promised to give the Holy Spirit to them who seek Him. Take Him at his word. Expect His persuasion to attend your message. Without His power your work will be drudgery. With it, it will be an “organization of victory.” In the *details and minutiae* of your life look for help from above. Be never content with general petitions for a superintending care. For instance, many a pastor will tell you, “At church time this morning I felt as cold as ice, as dead as a stone. The sound of the bell made me tremble. ‘How am I, in this mood,’ I asked myself, ‘to pray in the pulpit?’ But I threw myself on God. I asked his Spirit to breathe through me. With that prayer I went into the pulpit. And I cannot tell you what a change it wrought in me. I had a freshness and mellowness of heart, a closeness of communion with God, a liberty of utterance in prayer—it was all a sweet surprise. It brought the tears.”

B. If a pastor must be as busy as you have intimated, is there no danger of his neglecting secret prayer?

A. Yes, very great. When matters crowd you in the morning, you will be apt to think, “Well, this sermon or call or church business is, as really as prayer, in the line of God’s service. I’ll try to pray as I go along.” It is well to pray as you go along—but also before you start. You need constant contact with the Master. I have seen a grapevine torn from its trellis and flung to the ground by a storm through which an ivy stoutly clung to the wall. The vine put out tendrils only at intervals of some inches. The ivy, with its thousand little filaments, almost grew to its support. In your adhesion to the Lord Jesus live an ivy-life. Every prayer is a filament. Let them be numberless.

C. I have seen some prayerful men who seemed to make themselves perfect recluses.

A. Yes; there is on that side a possible danger. God wants no monks in his service. Be no mere “parson.” Be a well-rounded,

large-hearted, many-sided Christian man. Otherwise the world will look askance at you and rush by. Many a stiff, narrow, *poky* young man is older at thirty than others at sixty. In your sympathy with anything good be robust and whole-souled. Whether it be "religious" good or not, rejoice in and promote whatever will advance or enlighten or refine the community at large. The lot of some of you will be cast among those who will care little for even the material, much less for the spiritual, progress and prosperity of the town. If a church building is required, you will have to write the subscription paper and carry it about. If the children are suffering in want of a new school-house, you must step to the front as their champion. If a village improvement society for parks and tree-planting is wanted, you must project it. Or if it be a public library, nothing will be done till you lead the way. With any object in view that costs money without paying dividends, it will be always up-grade, and you must be the engine. The rest will, in the main, furnish only the brakes. Dr. Horace Bushnell interested himself so much in the improvement of the streets and parks of Hartford, Conn., in which city his church was located, that one of the finest of the parks bears his name. Another pastor, in an Illinois city, induced the authorities to protect the squirrels in one of the public squares, and to-day the little creatures, chasing one another up and down the trees, are the charm of the place. Christianity, rightly apprehended, is universal goodness. It saves any happiness that can be secured for men as a miner saves any particle of gold.

B. But is there no danger of a minister's becoming, in this way, secularized?

A. Yes. As I have said before, there is danger everywhere. Nothing good is easily gotten without danger. You must not allow such outside work to intrude on your proper service in your own parish. You must do no such work in a mere worldly public spirit. For Christ's sake you must do it—because He rejoices in any good, however small or secular. I have already reminded you in another conversation (Book I., Chap. 1.) how little Jesus made of this distinction between sacred and secular. Do your work *for Him*, and the gathering of a public library will become as true a Christian service as any sermon you can preach.

C. Have you plans to suggest as to sermon writing?

A. That belongs, of course, specially to homiletics. I am con-

cerned with your work outside the pulpit. But one or two things I have to say. Do not attempt to write two sermons a week.

B. But we shall have two to *preach*.

A. Resolve that, at whatever cost at first, you will extemporize once each Sabbath.

B. That would be an inquisitorial rack for me !

A. But a rack that will soften as you lie on it. Practice will make it, if not perfect, at least tolerable. I could spend the hour in giving you testimony from various preachers as to that.

D. How then would you begin?

A. Make sure that you have for your first attempt a *rich abundance of material*. Let it be quite as much as you can possibly use. An eminent American extempore preacher told me once what the neglect of this precaution, in his first effort, cost him. He had prepared, as he supposed, heads of discourse enough to occupy a full half-hour. But he had not thoroughly thought out the sub-divisions. On them therefore, he had little to say. The result was that he fared like the Prodigal: there arose a mighty famine, and he began to be in want. In twenty minutes he was starved out, and sat down in a cold perspiration. His home-critic begged him never to try that experiment again. Though he thanked her for her counsel, he had too much nerve to surrender so. He prepared more abundant material, digested it more thoroughly, and succeeded, to the delight and profit of his hearers.

D. Did he have with him a full draft of notes?

A. At first he did. It gave him confidence. But after a Sabbath or two he left it in the pulpit chair behind him. And not long after that he gained the courage to leave it at home. Fix the resolution deep and strong, as a bed-plate on which to work, that you will conquer your repugnance to extempore speech.

B. In writing a sermon how many hours should one take?

A. Different minds work differently. When some one asked Dr. Samuel Johnson whether one should wait for inspiration, he answered, "No, sir; he should sit down doggedly." But sitting down doggedly will not always bring ideas. No absolute rule for all is possible. But as an average, after a plan is drawn out, twelve hours ought to suffice for writing a sermon. Remember that there is a great deal of "extempore writing." If you are to rattle over your

paper as fast as your pen can be driven, you might as well not write at all.

B. Indeed, may I ask what are the reasons for writing?

A. "Reading," says Bacon, "maketh a full man, conference a ready man, writing an exact man." One object in this last, then, is to cultivate a terse and accurate style. The constant danger in extempore speech is looseness, diffuseness, repetition. To avoid that, write once each week. In that way you will discover and correct the faults of your extempore work. And write, not essays, but sermons. Let them be live addresses to living hearers. Many an effective platform speaker, taking a written sermon, puts his audience asleep. The moment he takes up his pen he seems to despair of any energy or force. There is a more excellent way. Dr. Chalmers always read his sermons. And with his sermons he always thrilled his hearers. But he wrote at white heat, and then read like a war-horse in a charge. But the heavy written style of many a preacher, pronounced with such energy, would remind you of a galvanized corpse. I knew a pastor who often boasted that he could "write a sermon Saturday night after tea, and make nothing of it." As you may suppose, he *did* "make nothing of it." One of the ablest preachers in New England, in my youth, used to say that if a man were below average in ability, he could write a sermon in a day or two. If he were really a powerful preacher, he would take a week or more. If he were a genius, he would need a fortnight.

D. But will it not cramp us to know that we have but twelve hours?

A. Certainly not. That term, divided among three forenoons, will rouse you to work, while you are at it, with your might. With an indefinite time, you would be in danger of drowsily trifling over your task.

C. How can we get the full information we need in regard to a new parish?

A. That is one of the foremost things to be gotten. Talk with your deacons, unitedly and separately. But inquire, too, of those of less prominence in the church—those who see things in a special light of their own. Yet remember the old proverb, that "man has two ears and one mouth, that he may hear much and say little." There will be chaff in the talk of such persons. Learn to winnow out the wheat.

What sort of men are your church-officers? Is any one of them a Diotrophes, "loving the preëminence"? What have you for a Sunday-school superintendent? There may be too little of him—there may be too much. How is it with the sisters of the church? Are they all angels in disguise? Is the disguise on any of them so thick that you would never see through it? I remember a deacon's wife who was, for efficiency, a platoon of Dorcases all in one. Sidney Smith said Daniel Webster was a steam engine in trousers. She was one in petticoats, and without a balance-wheel. Always, on every question, she was in a minority of one. She stimulated the life of the sisterhood by keeping them in a perpetual broil. By way of rebuking the fashions she dressed like a lunatic. And when at last she shook off the dust of her feet against us, and seceded, in holy wrath, to another church, we all drew long breaths of relief and devoutly thanked the Lord. But you will find others who, like angels indeed, with folded wings, go hither and thither on errands of love. Gather them around you. Make them understand how fully your hope, under God, is in them.

D. Are not retired ministers in a church thorns in the side of a young pastor?

A. By no means are all of them such. I have known many who, with their wise counsel, their disinterested love and tender sympathy, were inestimable blessings. But there are exceptions. To the discredit of our profession, they are far too numerous.

D. How do you account for them?

A. Well, they are often disappointed men. They have passed the "dead line." Or, for some other reason, much earlier than is agreeable they are shelved for the rest of their lives. And, being, like the rest of us, but partially sanctified, they find it hard, without some twinge of envy, to sit in the shadow and see the young pastor out in the sunshine, the observed of all observers. They criticize and complain.

D. And what is the remedy?

A. It is largely in the old adage that "misery loves company." Talk with such a brother, in your young ardor and enthusiasm, of the signs of success in your work, of the growth, the promise, and your bright hopes, and you are unconsciously goading him with the contrast of his own neglected lot. But tell him (of course without complaining of any special person) of your trials and discouragement.

ments, and how heavy-hearted, in hours of depression, you are, and with your fellow-feeling you win him at once.

So make yourself familiar with both your church and the community around it. Every item of information may prove of more value than at first you suspect. I read lately of a railway president who *walked* over the whole four hundred miles of his road. Rod by rod, and yard by yard, he examined the road-bed, with the rails, rolling-stock, culverts, bridges, stations. So he made thorough work of his inspection. Learn from him a lesson.

B. But we shall forget so great a mass of details of the parish.

A. True—much of it may escape you. But be liberal in your use of memorandum-books. And keep, too, a full and accurate register of admissions to the church, dismissions, deaths, marriages, funerals, baptisms. If you do not yourself become the church-clerk, you should keep this record as carefully as if you were such.

D. How is a pastor to know what is said of him among the people?

A. Much of it—mere idle gossip—he has no need to know. Live above any regard for it. But there is much also of which, on both his own and the people's account, he should be informed. There may be sorrows in some household of which he has known nothing. There may be from some other source a rising disaffection, which, if he were aware of it, he could allay. For such reasons I have found it well to select some one in the church as a reporter and counselor, to represent the people to the pastor. He should be very cautiously chosen. Before making your selection study your leading men for some months. Find one who, while no gossip, is likely to know what is going on in the parish. He should be a well-poised, discreet, and amiable man. Such a confidential adviser may give you a deal of help and comfort.

The charities of the church will, in the outset, demand your attention. How have they been conducted? What reconstruction do they need? It will be well, also, to acquaint yourself with the financial affairs of the society. But be cautious about unduly interfering with them. Of your plans for your own personal work make no public announcement. You can easily lay out, in an hour, schemes that you cannot fulfill in years. Do not therefore, by large promises, expose yourself to mortification. Carry your plans to the Master—

not to your people. Whatever measures you wish *them* to carry out, unfold, of course, and commend.

D. Is there any danger of becoming selfishly absorbed in one's own church?

A. Very great danger. It is a snare into which many a pastor falls. I have one such in mind. His church was large and wealthy. He was urged to aid feeble churches of his own faith and order in the same city. He always answered, "Wait till we are well on our feet—till we have gathered some power." But, like a fortune-seeker, who when exhorted to give in charity offers a similar apology, his church never was on its feet—never had gathered power. At a council called to the ecclesiastical funeral of a feeble little sister church which this pastor's great one had refused to aid, one minister galvanized the risibles of us all with the remark that "the —— church had occasion, like Hannah, to pray the Lord for offspring."

C. But is it not doing the Lord's work to build up your own church?

A. Yes. And just there is the subtle temptation. Remember that it is not only the Lord's work. It is *your personal, professional success*. It increases your reputation. It secures, perhaps enlarges, your salary. It gratifies your pride. It brings congratulations. To send out some of your best families to build up a branch church, to plant a layer that, in time, may strike roots for itself and be cut from the parent vine, is not so agreeable. I have known in pastors some most deplorable exhibitions of selfishness as to this. One I remember who refused to speak civilly in the street to some members of his church who, with the best motives, at much cost to themselves, had gone into a struggling Christian enterprise. The same spirit leads a pastor still farther in the same direction. Instead of aiding a feeble church, he preys on it. He recalls any of his own people, living near it and naturally belonging to it, who may have begun to attend it. Beware of that meanness. The frown of the Master is on it.

B. Is it possible to satisfy every one in a large church?

A. Hardly. Perhaps not in a small church. "Never be so unreasonable," said a wise old New England pastor, "as to expect all men to be reasonable." Among your plans in the outset let one be that of frankness toward your people. Take them somewhat into your confidence. Explain to them, from the pulpit, the difficulties

of the position. Show them, for instance, how gladly you would be oftener in their homes than is possible. Make known to the less intelligent of them the amount of labor required for a sermon. Tell them how much, for their own benefit, you need to be in your study. Ask them to acquaint you with any point at which you can be specially useful in the parish. Inquire into the possibility of districting the neighborhood, that you may send out visitors to gather the irreligious into the congregation. "Count every family Methodist," said Bishop Simpson, "that is not in some other connection." So do you count every such family as belonging to your flock. Then let it remain with him who first secures it. With many church-rakes in this way at work, the gleanings are likely to be thorough. Gather neglected children into the Sunday-school. Organize the sisters of the church to provide the needy with clothing. Lay your plans, too, for the prayer-meeting and the children's service. Of these I shall speak hereafter. Commence collecting, in the scrap-book which of course you will keep always at hand, incidents, anecdotes, illustrations of every sort, for the children.

Early begin to find, if possible, something for every one in the church to do. Do this for the profit both of the church and of the persons themselves. One may contribute to the success of a social gathering. Another may be librarian in the Sunday-school. A third may secure flowers for the pulpit. So they will be kept in closer affiliation with the church, more under its influence, and in the way of advancing farther to a thoroughly Christian life. Into all these plans carry a well-digested system and orderly methods.

Find something for every one to do.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PASTOR IDENTIFYING HIMSELF WITH THE PEOPLE.

A. By this I mean becoming, while you remain among them, thoroughly one of the people.

First, What is the right *spirit* with which to attain this?

Secondly, What are the right *methods*?

As to the spirit, suppress all selfish discontent. I once knew a pastor who seemed to me more intent on shearing than on feeding the flock. He spoke of his people with a whine in his tone. They were as ungenerous a body as ever he knew. He was tired and worn, and they ought to give him an extra vacation. They ought to increase his salary. There was no end to their neglected obligations. Now no one can be saturated with this sourness without allowing more or less of it to leak into his looks and tones. As he will discover to his cost, also, it is contagious among the people.

But many a pastor speaks of his church as a bridegroom during the honeymoon speaks of the bride. He admires every excellence. He ignores every fault. There never was a people equal to his.

D. But we cannot recognize a church as being what it is not.

A. No; but there are various sorts of church members, good, bad, and indifferent. And you will do well to determine on which class your thought shall be chiefly set.

A second fault; never think of your pulpit simply as a stepping-stone to another. A young pastor is in danger of saying within himself, "This is too small a field for a man like me. I must keep my eye, in my preaching, on that larger one which is my manifest destiny." So he speaks, in his pulpit, to an imaginary audience. His real people come to feel that nothing he says is addressed to them. He is like a man who, in conversation, never looks you in the eye. A like fault follows a too exclusively studious habit. You carry an abstracted air. You become absent-minded. Your people say, "He keeps us at arm's length. We cannot get acquainted with him."

B. But when a man finds he is not in his niche, can he help wishing he were?

A. It is no plan of Providence to get every man into his niche. In some future state of being He may do that. Peter speaks of the "restitution of all things" as likely some time or other to arrive. Meanwhile this is a world not of perfect reward or satisfaction. It is a world of discipline. The Master's aim is not to put us into such harness that He may get the utmost work out of us. That utmost work He could easily have secured without creating us at all. His aim is to develop in us Christian character. Friction with our environment is part of our discipline. And a man exactly "in his niche" would feel no friction. You can do much, by the right spirit and methods, to *make your own niche* and be thoroughly happy in it. Bear in mind, then, that the place where, in the ordering of Providence, you are, *may be your last place* on earth. So occupy it that, should it prove to be such, you may not mourn having wasted in repining the time you passed while in it.

C. But it is hard to get no return for one's love.

A. "It is the way the Master went:
Should not the servant tread it still?"

Keep in mind that grand sentiment of Paul, as given in King James' version (2 Cor. 12:15), "I will most gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." I am sorry that the Revisers, with better manuscripts, felt obliged to reconstruct it. But, none the less, it is the sentiment which breathes through the whole life of the great apostle. You will have many a dull clod of humanity under your pastoral care. You will have to shine and shine upon him and bedew him with much sympathy and nurture. But take comfort. There are seeds of good in him, and in time you will bring them out in bloom and fruitage.

If you and your people are to fall into close fellow-feeling, you must go to them, not they to you. The scope of thought of most of them is lower and narrower than your own. They cannot range with you the broad and lofty themes to which, in your studies, you are introduced. You must accommodate yourself to them, but let there be in that no trace of condescension. Remember that, before God, in his infinite intelligence, the difference between their grade of thought and yours is as nothing. Conscientiously, earnestly, in your acquaint-

ance with each of them, "put yourself in his place." Learn the art of feeling a real interest, for his sake, in what most interests him. He may, too, have in his spiritual ripeness a higher value and beauty than you imagine. An old harp, worn and stained, may charm you with finer tones than any new and gilded one. And there are souls in rough encasement whose devotion is, to the Master's ear, finer and sweeter than that of any of "our best society." A council of ministers and laymen, early in this century, sat for a whole fortnight patiently investigating the claim of a humble brother who felt himself aggrieved by the action of a church among the Berkshire hills, in Massachusetts. They felt the value and dignity of a soul for which Christ died. Cherish in your course with the lowliest of your flock the same spirit.

C. But you promised to tell us of the right *methods* of identifying ourselves with the people.

A. Yes. Well, for one thing, negatively, do *not* intimate, publicly or privately, that you are among them to stay. Hopes and expectations of that sort are better repeated to the Lord than to men. But, nevertheless, when you are once well settled, occasionally—I do not say often—refer to yourself as pastor. Remind the church that both the Lord, as you believe, and they have solemnly set you in charge of the flock.

Preach, also, on such duties and sins as are somewhat peculiar to your people. Let your sermons be, in some measure, such as none but the pastor could with propriety preach. Rev. H. W. Beecher once told me that, among the sermons he took East with him from Indianapolis, were about two hundred, not one of which he found himself able to use in his Brooklyn pulpit. They carried the flavor of Indianapolis. They abounded in the experiences, temptations, and special obligations of his people in Indianapolis. That was, of course, a proof of their excellence.

Show yourself aware of any recent and important event in the neighborhood. When, after some startling affair that is on the lips of all, the people meet at the church, let it not be to discover that you either know nothing of it or have no interest in it.

D. But suppose it is a political excitement?

A. Then lead them in the prayer that God will hide them in his pavilion from the strife of tongues. The events that you cannot turn to *some* spiritual account are rare indeed.

It will go far to identify you with the people if you take both your subjects and your illustrations, as largely as possible, from what is peculiar to their daily occupations. I knew once a college-preacher who went regularly through a whole system of divinity. It lasted four years. As to anything in it specially pertinent to students, it might as well have been preached to a church-conference or to Congress. I have known another who addressed his audience *as students*. He counseled and warned them as to the mistakes and sins and perils of students. He took his instances and applications from student-life. He often referred to the buildings and streets with which his young hearers were familiar. I need not say which of the two preachers had the more power with his audience.

C. But, outside the pulpit, what is to be done toward this identification with the people?

A. Maintain and show a warm interest in anything that in any way concerns the church. Possibly the grounds around the building may have been neglected. If so, give attention to them. As I was admiring the smooth verdure of a church-lawn, lately, the pastor's wife told me that she and her husband had spent hour after hour in digging out from it the dockweed and plantains. A good thing to do.

And develop among the people themselves the church-spirit—the love they ought to show toward the institution as the body of Christ. Some of them, speaking to you in regard to it, will call it “your church.” Teach them to say “our church.” Names are things. They recoil, like heavy guns. They have, on those who use them, a strong reflex effect.

B. Would you attempt to enter much into the family-life of the people?

A. If you take with you good sense and the hope of usefulness, most certainly. As I have already advised, learn, when making your first round of calls after settlement, the names of all the members of the family. Include the youngest children, the babes, the absent. Then keep trace of them all. Inquire after each. Address by their Christian names the boys and girls.

With a good minister, whose heart is in his work, young people like to be on familiar, confidential terms.

You will do well to learn, and enter in your register, the birthdays of all the younger children. Then send to each, as one after

another of these anniversaries comes around, a pastor's greeting, with some little token of remembrance. It may be a card or leaflet or small book. One pastor whom I know gathers in the church the children who have completed their twelfth year, and presents each one with a Bible in which he inscribes, with some word of counsel, the names of giver and receiver. He makes it a most interesting occasion.

Long the ch. as home.

Into the prayer-meeting, of course, you will take a family-feeling. There, of all places, the church should be thoroughly at home. Let the humblest, most diffident brother or sister be made to feel the warm, all-embracing atmosphere of a common love.

In your labor with individuals, to draw them to Christ, see each of them always *alone*. It is a grievance to any one to ask him to throw open to a group of listeners his inmost life. Commonly he will decline. If he does, you will talk, not with, but only at, him. You will preach to him only the general counsel that never comes home to us.

Just secrets

D. If he is beset with sceptical doubts, would you have him bring them out?

A. By all means. If there is no thorough diagnosis, how shall the physician prescribe? Before the most radical false doctrine show no holy horror. It is often thoughtful, earnest minds that are most beset with doubts. Many a man is free from such queries because he lives, not above, but below them. He has taken his religion traditionally. He has not intellectual activity enough to be troubled with objections. With dishonest, uncandid doubt, with vain speculations, thrown up as outworks to keep off your urgency from the citadel of the heart, I would waste no time. You would find it as did the Romans at the siege of Jerusalem. Break down the outer wall, and a second and a third would appear built up within.

B. Would you continue to press the truth, personally, on one who refuses submission to Christ?

A. I knew a New England pastor who made it a constant practice to select one after another of the adult men of his congregation to be led to Christ. First making him the subject of earnest prayer, he would kindly approach him in a personal conversation. Perhaps by that interview he would seem to have made no impression. But in a day or two he would repeat the attempt. With no show of offensive persistence, he would fix in the man the conviction that nothing

"Blessed are they that have not seen yet have believed"

else than his entrance on the Christian life was to be thought of. It was the hand of iron under the velvet glove. With great strength of will he would firmly but gently lead him along till the man gave up, finally and forever, his opposition. Then he would take another and another through the same process. Not every pastor can do this. But more or less success in that direction you ought to expect and accomplish.

D. I find some waiting for a mighty revival—groundswell—that will lift them and float them, almost in their own despite, into the kingdom of Christ.

A. Yes; it is so with thousands. And it is due not solely to worldliness and indifference. They have read and heard much of Christian experience. They suppose that for this mystical process wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost they must resignedly wait. You should show them that, though repentance may not be *easy*—it is never easy for a proud man to humble himself as sinful and lost—it is as *simple* as the payment, in money, of an honest debt. It is simply submitting to Christ as one's Master and Saviour. It is beginning to live, instead of a life of self-seeking, one of benevolence and service to men. There are in many congregations persons who, though they have already passed through this change, are so blinded by false notions of "experience" as not to know it. In explaining the naturalness and reasonableness of conversion you have a most important part of your work to do.

D. But, unless one has a deep sense of his guilt, will he ever ask forgiveness?

A. Men are led by various paths to the one common Redeemer. There will be in every one more or less of the sense of sin and ruin. But the *chief*, the *foremost* sentiment, at first, may not always be that. With one, it is the personal love and self-sacrifice of Christ in his behalf that wins him. With another, it is the noble life of a Christian mother. With a third, it is the sense of peril and of the need of a refuge. There is in many a believer, long after conversion, a far deeper sense of sin than he had in the outset. It was when President Edwards was far on toward heaven that he longed, as he said, to heap infinite upon infinite, to express his full sense of his guilt. The near view of our Lord's perfections shames us by the contrast with our own faults and follies. "But now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." A

friend of mine was, fifty years ago, a young man with a high sense of personal rectitude. He fell one day into this strain of reflection: "I make it a point of conscience to pay, to the last penny, every debt. But here I have been embezzling the property that God has in me. I am not my own. I belong to Him. In that direction, as well as toward men, it is time to be honest." This course of thought led him calmly, without any very harrowing sense of guilt, to Christ. And he has been through the half-century since an earnest follower of the Master. Do not insist that all inquirers shall be run in one mold of experience.

Do not expect full justice!

Compel your people to love you - Take it for granted that your people love you -

Do not announce you are to stay long.

Show yourself what is going on -

Take all events for illustrations - - Events with which people are familiar -

BOOK SECOND.

THE PASTOR PERSONALLY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CARE OF HEALTH.

A. There is occasionally a man, like Robert Hall or F. W. Robertson, who, with fine genius and an iron will, forces a sickly frame through an immense amount of work. But, commonly, a pastor without health will accomplish little. You may possibly, in your zeal for the soul, neglect the body. You *ought*, of course, to keep the latter down in its true place as a servant. Paul with emphasis teaches that (1 Cor. 9 : 27), "I bruise my body, and make it a slave." But if it is a servant, let us, for the better service, keep it in good condition. If it is our animal part, remember that "a merciful man is merciful to his beast." It betrays the awful greatness and energy of the soul that so easily and so often it overtaxes the flesh. Many a Christian worker, fired with his great aspirations, is in his slender frame like a too-powerful engine in a little steamer, at every stroke of the piston making her timbers quiver and creak. Of the future spiritual body we are told that "it is raised in *power*." With no diseases, infirmities, wants of its own, obedient as are the movements of a man's eye to his will, it is, doubtless, homogeneous with the soul. Of even its existence, as separate from the spirit, we may probably be hardly aware. But this vehicle of flesh in which we move at present makes us decidedly conscious of its needs and rights. And if you would have a robust and vigorous intellect, give it a sound and agile frame in which to work. Let it be a frame well laced and braced with sinews, with brain clear of all morbid humors, with internal organs all regular as a clock. A sedentary life makes heavy drafts on the nervous system. You need an ample magazine of health on which to draw.

I shall have nothing to say of medicine. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes is reported to have said that if all the medicine on earth were emptied into the sea, no one would suffer but the fishes. Be that as it may, I offer you only some hints, drawn partly from physicians and partly from my own experience, for avoiding the need of the apothecaries' wares.

First, then, if you would keep your health, be *cheerful*. Dr. Abernethy used to insist that "stuff and fret" were "the two great killing powers." Men overload the stomach, and then by worry reduce the vigor of digestion.

C. But how are we always to keep cheerful?

A. Some sorrows and depressions are, for the time, irresistible. One bows to them as a reed to the storm. But let it be only to rise again. Be elastic. Be self-recuperative. It is your *duty*, as well as privilege, to be happy. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice." An inspired apostle, with authority from God, enjoins it. Stout Christian faith and buoyant hope are the best safeguards against disease. The source of most of the religious melancholy that enfeebles Christian hands and disgusts the young with religion as a gospel of gloom, is hypochondria, bred from dyspepsia. The love of play is as natural and normal as the love of work. Martin Luther, in leisure moments, delighted in his violin. Bayle turned at times from his laborious studies to watch the tricks of mountebanks. Spinoza was found convulsed with laughter over a fight between two spiders. Dr. Samuel Clark stole intervals from his hours of meditation for leaping over chairs. Dr. Paley was so fond of angling that he had his portrait taken with a rod and line in hand. Most good and great men have been enabled, by recreation, to live the longer and accomplish the more. Allow yourself to fall into no permanent mood in which you cannot enjoy a piece of innocent wit. It will limber you, and start the blood more vigorously, and help digestion. The president of an Eastern theological seminary, years ago, is said to have once called the senior class together in his room; then, after remarking that they looked careworn, and that a little merriment would help their health and spirits, he suddenly added, "Let us begin!" As he broke into a rollicking fit of laughter, they were soon swept contagiously into it by its very absurdity. And he kept them all laughing convulsively for several minutes.

The sense of humor is as evidently implanted in us by the Creator

as the sense of right and wrong. There are said to be muscles in the human face that are used only in laughter. Who put them there, and why? And who can watch a creature of the ape or monkey tribe without the irresistible conviction that the final aim of its existence was to furnish amusement? Instead of any irreverence in this thought, it is a most touching indication of the condescending love of the Infinite Father.

It is a common saying that no company are as merry as one of clergymen. Who *should* be cheerful if not they who, living to serve God and bless men, may believe that the smile of heaven is on them?

C. But will not this hilarity prejudice men against religion?

A. Never any reasonable man. Just the reverse. I was told, a while since, of a young man who happened to look in on a group of ministers dining together. They were, he said, the merriest party he had ever seen. He had heard that religion depressed men and would fill the world with gloom. Not long after he arose in a mid-week meeting to announce that he had chosen Christ and desired to lead a Christian life. When asked what had first awakened him, he answered, "The happiness of those ministers at the table. I wanted a religion that brings such joy into the world. It was that which set me thinking."

Carry up into ripe years the fresh, buoyant life of your boyhood. Grow old as slowly as possible. When you come to have children, play with them, and play heartily.

Do not presume on your health and strength. There is a limit to what you can endure. Many a young man, by abusing his eyes or stomach or nerves, goes on industriously laying up misery for himself in later years. It is a store that is sure to keep, and one of which he is sure to get the whole benefit.

But, on the other hand, be no fastidious dieter, always studying your symptoms and making yourself an annoyance to others. Never, when entertained, in any way incommode your hostess. Much less refuse, except in extreme cases, a field of labor as too cold, or warm, or damp, or dry. Where men have gone, and found themselves able to live, for your Master's sake go likewise. Then, while carefully observing the laws of health, trust God to keep you in sound condition for work.

Considering now, in succession, some of the chief organs of the

thoroughly maintained

body, let me counsel you, first, to keep the stomach in order. Vary your staple food somewhat with the seasons. In summer, fish and vegetables and fruit are better. In winter, meat is more requisite. Avoid all messes that float in grease. Take little pastry. Eat slowly. Take nothing between meals. Of any liquid, at the table drink moderately.

Physicians say that nineteen persons in twenty eat too much. Probably, more men die from diseases caused by over-eating than from strong drink. The reason for fasting is, that abstinence will clarify the brain and leave the nerves in better condition and the mind more active for devotion. Over-eating is due largely to our habits at the table. Beginning a meal with an ample supply on the plate, then afterward taking a little more from one dish and again from another, we almost or quite double the amount. The advice of Dr. Dio Lewis is to confine ourselves rigidly to the first supply.

Secondly, keep the skin in wholesome condition. By sensible and insensible perspiration an immense amount of matter is discharged through the pores. Closing them, by thoroughly varnishing or painting the body, would be as inevitably fatal as a bullet in the brain. Frequent bathing, in water not so cold as to chill the system over-much, you should count one of the necessities of life.

Thirdly, take care of the throat. Do not, by bending over the pulpit while speaking, cramp the throat. Whether you use a manuscript or not, stand erect. If you have difficulty in reading your notes, follow the example of Paul (Gal. 6:11, Revision), "See with how *large letters* I have written unto you, with mine own hand." And do not with any false elocution ruin the throat. I have known of a preacher who lost his voice. But at the same time, perhaps fortunately, he lost the use of his eyes. This forced him both to preach extempore and to commit to memory the Scripture-lesson. Speaking in this untrammelled way, and returning to more natural tones, he recovered his voice and preached, without sight, for years.

Fourthly, as to the care of the eyes. (a) Beware of much study at night. Do by artificial light only your reading, letter-writing, and other easy work. (b) Do not severely tax the eyes after a full meal. (c) Let your shade be not on the forehead, but on the lamp. Putting it over and removing it from the eyes exposes them to sudden and severe changes of light. (d) Avoid, if possible, a sleeping-room with an eastern exposure. If you must take such a room,

heavily shade your windows. Admit the sun, as you do your other friends, only after you are up and dressed. (e) Often wash the eyes in cold water. But do not, by opening them *in* the water, as is sometimes done, expose them to a shock. These suggestions are from one of the most eminent oculists of Boston.

Fifthly, the teeth are injured, as is the stomach, by contact with very hot or very cold drinks. Also, if you would save yourself both expense and torture, keep them thoroughly cleansed. A stiff brush and an effective dentifrice are all-important.

Among more general precautions, look well to your exercise. It is not hard study that breaks down the health of students. Doubtless the pale, poetic youth, with intellectual brow and eye "in a fine phrenzy rolling," enjoys the compliment that his great soul has overtasked his feeble frame. But it is all nonsense. The simple trouble is that he has been too lazy or too heedless to take proper exercise. He has studied when he ought to have been caring for his health. Even in the act of study there may be some exercise. Provide both a standing and a sitting desk, and alternate between the two.

But this, of course, is by no means enough. A sedentary life is somewhat unnatural. While taxing the brain it tempts one to neglect due culture of the other organs. A farmer's or blacksmith's exercise will take care of itself. It will, so to speak, grow wild. But yours must be carefully cultivated. English ladies owe their vigorous health largely to their long walks. Years ago, when the Queen put up the trousseau of her eldest daughter, afterward Empress of Germany, one item was "sixteen pairs of stout walking shoes."

Let your exercise be regular. Take it twice a day. Assign it as nearly as possible to the same hours of the day. That it may be sufficient without absorbing too much time, let it be vigorous. But avoid overstraining and permanently injuring the body. Do not take your exercise soon after a full meal. Let it be agreeable, enjoyable. On some days your calls (unless with a wasteful liberality you bestow on a horse, while you loll in a carriage, the exercise you need yourself) will serve in this direction. But walking brings into play mainly the lower limbs. You need some strain on every muscle of the body. For ten years I have found a health-lift invaluable. There are various other kinds of less expensive apparatus.

But, again, see to your ventilation. It is hard for ministers, or any others, to interest men in *unseen things*—and among such things

is pure air. From the atmosphere of a close room we consume the oxygen, and replace it with the poisonous carbonic acid gas, at the rate of nearly a gallon a minute. Knowing the size of your room therefore, you can calculate how soon you exhaust the wholesome air. For a study, a large apartment is desirable. Otherwise it is hard to ventilate without a draft too strong and too near you. Be careful of the air in your sleeping-room. By opening the window slightly at both top and bottom you avoid too strong a current. You will find the drafts are, at the two openings, in opposite directions. For heating a house, a furnace which draws through its air-flue from out of doors is better than a stove. The latter heats only the confined atmosphere of the room.

From every seven days take one for rest. Saturday is to be preferred. You are then left in vigorous condition for the Sabbath. You are less exposed, also, to any "blue Monday." If you cannot take the day before Sunday, take the one after it.

C. Is it necessary to idle away either day?

A. No. You can do your light reading and letter-writing. But make a liberal allowance of time to be spent in the open air.

D. What of Monday ministers' meetings?

A. Some complain of being exhausted by the brain-work. But it is so much of a change from the routine of parish labor that I have always found the meeting a recreation. Each one must judge for himself.

Be jealous for your sunshine. Do not take for a study a dingy room. Let in light. Florence Nightingale declared that, in her great hospital at Scutari, the patients on the sunny side recovered twice as rapidly as those on the other.

And, finally, remember that the *earth* is a great invigorator. Physicians advise to dig over the virgin soil. If you have a garden, cultivate it, at least partially, with your own hands.

CHAPTER II.

PASTOR'S LIBRARY.

A. First comes the question, Where shall your study be located? If the church contains a light, cheerful room for that purpose, and is not far from your home, I would take that room as my *sanctum*. But to avoid a dingy, dismal study I would make almost any sacrifice. You need cheerful surroundings. Your room should be well ventilated, neat, orderly, and quiet. You should become strongly attached to it. Have, if possible, pictures and maps on the walls. Make it a cherished *home* for the mind. Let your books become loved friends, to which you turn with deep delight. Have at hand some sort of gymnastic apparatus, convenient and always ready for use. It is well, also, to collect your best sermons and plans in some one place. Let it be known where, in case of fire, they may be found. You can make cheap and portable book-shelves of long, narrow boxes set on their sides one above another. They may be stained dark, with cornice at top and red leather strips covering the edges.

B. Is it wise to attempt to accumulate many books?

A. Not for the ordinary pastor. A few hundred volumes, carefully selected and thoroughly studied, are better than the great mass of literary lumber that many a clerical book-buyer gets together. Do not buy accidentally—as one volume after another happens to interest you. Do not invest in expensive bindings. They are only the casket. The contents are the jewel. Do not buy books (except standard reference works) which you can as well borrow from some library or individual. Do not buy *sets* of volumes, only one or two single ones in which you are likely to use.

D. You object to costly bindings. But it is they that last.

A. Yes; and dictionaries, lexicons, cyclopedias, commentaries, concordances, and other reference-books must be substantially and durably bound. But books which are not in constant use may as well be in good (not flimsy) cloth bindings. You can then, with a given sum of money, get a larger number of volumes.

Never purchase a book "just to see what it is." Before investing

in it you ought to *know*. If possible, by buying a number of volumes at a time, get them at more than the common discount. Rarely subscribe for a work issued in numbers. This is a device (on the plea that you pay by small installments) for charging a great price. By the time the series is completed and bound you will probably regret your bargain. At first, and till you are supplied with reference-books, confine your purchases mainly to them.

Induce your people to begin the collection of a pastor's library. Explain the value of this to themselves—how it will enrich the sermons of each successive pastor. Persuade them to devote to it one annual collection.

C. How shall we know what are the best books to buy?

A. By inquiry—especially of well-educated and experienced ministers. I give you a list of a few works, such as I have found especially useful. Some of them may be out of print :

Bush on the Pentateuch and on Joshua and Judges.

The "Speaker's Commentary" on the whole Bible.

The "Handy Commentary" on the Old Testament.

Barnes on Job, Isaiah, and Daniel.

Prof. G. H. Gilbert on Job.

Alexander on the Psalms.

Cowles on the Minor Prophets.

→ Westcott's Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.

The Handy Commentary on the New Testament.

Alford on the New Testament. Much of the best matter in Meyer will be found in Alford.

Owen on the Four Gospels.

Morrison on Mark.

Hodge on Romans and Corinthians.

Edwards on First Corinthians.

Godet on Luke, John, and Romans.

Conybeare and Howson on the Life and Epistles of Paul.

— Trench on the Parables and Miracles.

Trench on the Greek Synonyms of the New Testament.

Hackett on the Acts.

In German : De Wette's Handbuch.

De Wette's Translation of the whole Bible.

Von Gerlach on the Old and New Testaments.

On Biblical Theology : Schmidt. Van Oosterzee. Weiss. Hill.

The Englishman's Greek Concordance.
 Edersheim's Life of Jesus the Messiah.
 Coleman's Ancient Christianity Exemplified.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Shedd's History of Christian Doctrine.
 Dexter's Congregationalism.
 Bacon's Genesis of the New England Churches.
 Butler's Analogy.
 Horace Bushnell's Nature and the Supernatural, Sermons for the
 New Life, and Christian Nurture. ~~Life and Letters of John Foster.~~
 Life of Dr. Chalmers. ~~Life of Dr. Chalmers.~~
 Sermons of Rev. H. W. Beecher. Dr. Cheney's sermons
 Sermons of Rev. T. D. Talmage.
 Goodrich's British Eloquence.

D. What in regard to cyclopedias?

A. The Schaff-Herzog, Smith's, Kitto's larger edition, and McClintock and Strong's are all excellent. Smith and Kitto confine themselves much more closely than McClintock and Strong to *Biblical* literature. Of general cyclopedias, the Britannica, New American, and International are all of great value. The first of these I would not, till well provided with commentaries, attempt to purchase.

I have given you, of course, only a most meager outline—a start toward a library. It would be easy to extend the list. But if you do full justice even to the books I have mentioned, your Biblical scholarship will win the respect of any church.

CHAPTER III.

HABITS OF STUDY.

A. I INCLUDE under habits of study all ways of replenishing your minds with material for your public services. 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 store of exegesis and theology and history. But these are your years of plenty. After them will come those years of famine when, as a young theologian once said to me, "The Sundays come around with *awful* regularity!" The lean kine will swallow the fat. You will have occasion for every thought, every scrap of sacred learning, every illustration you may have gathered. An old pastor whom I knew sighed as he said, "I have preached all around the circle. I can think of nothing to take next." But he had spent, in running about among his people, a great share of the time he ought to have given to his study. Be true to your duty to your Bible and your library, and you will find that after a score of years you have more themes on hand than at first.

D. Is there no danger of being diverted from the Bible by other books?

A. There is danger everywhere. The Scriptures must be kept foremost. But "he who knows nothing but his Bible does not know his Bible." The immense amount of modern scholarship, travel and archæological research, pours on the Book a flood of light. What learning you can gather in the Seminary will soon be exhausted. You learn here, chiefly, the *use of tools*. You are taught what are the sources of new light and how to turn them to account.

B. Why is it that ministers are thought to be worn out at "the dead line of fifty"?

A. It is, in part, their own fault. "A dead line for dead men! None at all for live ones." Ministers who are prematurely shelved, most of them, draw from exhausted cisterns. After a two or three

years' pastorate the pump wheezes dolefully. The water of life comes trickling drop by drop. The thirsty flock are left with parched and fevered tongues. And, unfortunately for the minister, this is a flock in which the sheep have votes.

To keep off that dismal experience look well to your supplies. A Glasgow pastor, who has been fifty years in one pulpit, was asked, a while since, how he held his people so steadily. "I read," he answered, "every new book bearing on my work that comes out. I make full notes, and, in my pulpit, put to service what I have learned." You must be intellectually as well as spiritually always on the alert. Hard work is the price of success and the condition of reward. "If I have any genius," said Sir Isaac Newton, "it is a genius for hard work."

C. But with all the Bible-helps now in the hands of the people it is harder to teach them anything that they do not already know.

A. Very true. For that reason you must work the harder. I have already shown you how different was the position, the advantage, of the pastor early in the century. In a room with a single window, the window is quite conspicuous. Put in three or four more, and the first one draws no special notice. The preacher, among the fathers, was almost the only window to let in light upon the congregation. But now every one is studying. Said a prominent pastor of a young parishioner who had given much labor to the International Sunday-school lessons, "He knows more of the Bible now, as he is entering college, than I knew when I left the theological seminary." The tide of intelligence is rising. Be not like the young Scotch martyr chained to the stake at low water. Let no indolence hold you down till you are drowned and thrown out beyond the shore line of "fifty"—professionally dead.

D. But this incessant study wears one out.

A. If it is kept up without variety, very true. The mind dries and shrivels under monotony. You cannot be always working the same fibers of your brain. A horse on a rolling prairie will go up and down hill with less strain than on a dead level. The muscles for pulling and for holding back relieve one another. Have a fixed number of hours for study. Have several lines of study and of reading, simultaneously, on hand. For your own relief, turn from one to another.

Study and read, first, for fresh knowledge. Hebrew was pursued,

when I was in the Seminary, only in the junior year. We got hardly more than a start in it. Even that was partly supplanted by the theology and homiletics of the following years. But now-a-days Hebrew is studied through the whole course in the Seminary. There is much less excuse for afterwards losing it.

C. But how, when the Sundays come around with that "awful regularity"?

A. Then be awfully regular with at least Luther's rule, "*Nulla dies sine versu.*" Do enough, each day, on the original tongues of Scripture to keep yourself fresh in them. Never, without examining a text in the Hebrew or Greek, attempt to preach on it.

Make much, too, of sacred topography. With such helps as Thomson's "The Land and the Book" and Robinson's "Biblical Researches in Palestine," and others that may be published as the explorations go on, put yourself at home in the Holy Land. Make with colored crayons, on a large piece of sheeting, a map of the outlines of the country. Put in only a few details of the towns, seas, and mountains. Then, with this object-lesson, give your people a few lectures on the whole region. You will be astonished to see how ignorant of it they are. Some will have learned much from the International Lessons; but most will hardly know whether the Lake of Galilee is north or south of the Dead Sea.

D. Can we do much with any of the sciences in general?

A. Ordinarily, unless you have a special genius in some such direction, not much. The sacrifice of your aspirations along those lines is one of the privations involved in your work. The main facts and principles of law, as in Blackstone and Kent's Commentaries, of medicine too, as in Carpenter's Physiology, you ought to acquire. With the elements of physical science, also, especially in view of evolution and its attitude toward Christianity, you should be informed. Until the savants have come to some general agreement among themselves, as they did long ago on the Copernican astronomy, they have no right to expect us to adopt their theories. Above all that is true touching the various theories of evolution; for cumulative evidence, which is the sort they are compelled to use, is unlike the mathematical demonstrations which established the modern astronomy. It is liable to be modified by fresh discoveries. You have heard of the old minister's reply to the question what he thought of evolution. He didn't know, he said, what was the latest theory; he

hadn't seen his morning newspaper! But, as you go on from year to year, you should read enough on such subjects to refer to them intelligently when you do it at all.

C. How much should we attempt in general literature?

A. Well, it was estimated, forty years ago, that there were at least 70,000 volumes in the English language that were well worth reading. Now a man, with continuous work for a life-time, could hardly make his way through a hundredth part of these. What, then, is the folly of wasting time on the trash which, as a classmate of mine once said, "is continually flowing from vacuity to oblivion"! You can afford to be fastidious. Or, rather, you cannot afford to be anything else. Shakespeare of course, you must not neglect. Dr. Samuel Johnson recommends to read a play, first, for mere enjoyment of the plot. Then, afterward, take it up for patient, careful study. Hudson's or Rolphe's notes will, in this study, throw light on the text.

D. Would you do much with fiction?

A. With only the choicest sort. Of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, and a few other such writers, read enough to feel that you have some intelligent acquaintance with them. But fiction is a dangerous spring from which to drink. Be careful lest you plunge in all over and be drowned.

C. American fiction?

A. Yes, a little, Irving, Hawthorne, Mrs. Stowe, Howells, Cable, perhaps.

D. Poetry?

A. A few of the great standard poems. Homer, Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Byron in "Childe Harold," Coleridge, Keats, and our own Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell, of course you will not overlook.

But you should keep some books always on hand for inspiration. In the quiet routine of a pastor's life, with perhaps few cultured minds around you, with no great Christian enterprise into which to throw yourselves aglow with ardor, the danger of mental, if not spiritual torpor is sometimes serious. Said one of my old theologic instructors, "You will be often told that you must preach according to the state of things. But often, you will find, there is no state of things." You will need to put yourselves into electric touch not only with the Master, but with some of those great souls of old

who moved their generation. An actual life, in which grand ideals have been wrought into fact, has a power beyond all the ideals that were ever concocted. It is by such lives that the Bible teaches. The story of many a Christian hero is to the soul in a tedious hour like the blast of a bugle, or a voice from heaven sounding in the air. Read biographies like those of Chalmers, Wilberforce, Buxton, Howard, F. W. Robertson, Dr. Thomas Arnold, F. D. Maurice, Livingstone, Dr. Lyman Beecher, Pres. Finney, and Dr. Horace Bushnell. They will rouse you as whole libraries of homilies on the grandeur of your work will not. Great efforts of the human intellect, too, have in them a mighty uplift. Prof. Goodrich's "British Eloquence" you should read and re-read.

D. Is there as much attention given by our preachers to illustration as there should be?

A. By no means. We have, from American authors, two volumes on homiletics, each of six hundred pages or more, and in neither of them is there more than a page or two on the whole subject of illustration. How different was it with the Great Teacher! "Without a parable spake He not unto them." On all things around Him he levied tributes of symbols and object lessons with which to explain and enforce the truth. The shepherd and sheep, the vine and branches, the fig-tree, the seed buried in the earth, the sower, the plow and plowman, the nets of the fishermen, the servant feeding cattle, the bargain with the laborers, the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, the unmerciful servant, the great supper, the lost piece of money, the unjust judge, the unprincipled steward—all nature, and the social, domestic, and commercial life of men—He made to glow with new meanings and convey new lessons. In this way, too, each one of these things became vocal and eloquent. The barren fig-tree, for instance, which grew "by the wayside"—how solemn a monitor to the passers-by, long after the Master had ascended from Bethany, it stood with its weird skeleton! No guide-board ever pointed more directly along a road than the fig-tree toward a fruitful life.

Now in all this you should imitate the Master. You have noticed that some sorts of seeds are furnished each with a little hook at the end. By this, as the seed is blown about by the wind, it catches at a point where it may germinate and grow. Furnish your seeds of truth with illustrative hooks. You will be astonished to see how long, with such helps, they will hold in the memory. Take your

illustrations largely, as did the Master, from objects and transactions around you. Study the employments of your people. Converse with them in their business. Let the question, "What will this illustrate?" be ever in mind. So using the object lesson, you put into it a tongue, that, when your people return to it on Monday, will speak to them of the truth you have taught.

B. Would you confine yourself to these homely analogies?

A. Not at all. All things on land and sea, all history, science, art, literature, life, swarm with illustrations of the truths you will preach.

D. What of the numerous books of illustrations?

A. For most of them I cannot say much. They are filled mainly with the old stock stories, copied from one such book to another, and worn as dull as Washington's little hatchet. If you are to use one of these collections, first run your eye through it. Cull out the few really fresh and striking things. You will find them wheat grains amidst much chaff. Many of your best illustrations you will find in books that were written for no such purpose. I know an eminent preacher who has read, for this purpose, much natural history. The habits of animals, birds, even fishes, in building nests, taking prey, evading enemies, are full of suggestion. Again, you have heard of the man who, after reading through his dictionary, said it was an interesting book, but a little incoherent. Nevertheless, I advise you to read through, pencil in hand, the "Dictionary of Names of Noted Fictitious Persons, Places, etc.," at the close of "Webster's Unabridged." You will find many a beautiful myth and legend there that will admirably serve for illustration.

The English essayist John Foster maintained, for a series of years, what might be called a thought-journal. In it he entered such suggestions, comparisons, speculations, and queries as he was likely to be able to turn to account in his writings. You will find in his *Life and Correspondence* scores of extracts from that journal. You would do well to follow his example. You may be gathering every day, in the street, in stores, in traveling, an ever-increasing stock of fresh material.

B. Is it plagiarism to cull the illustrations from printed sermons?

A. Not unless you copy, with them, the points they are made to illustrate, and throw the whole bodily into a sermon of your own. To take the fact or narrative or anecdote for your own collection, to

be used for some other purpose than that of the author, perhaps when you shall have quite forgotten whence you obtained it, may be done with good conscience.

Keep, also, a text-note-book. Occasionally a clause or passage of Scripture will strike you in some new light and with fresh force. Note it, with such thoughts as occur with it, in your book.

Read with pencil in hand any volume in which you have, by ownership, the right to mark a striking passage and make marginal comments.

D. What are the best time and method of study?

A. For the time, let it be the forenoon, between breakfast and dinner.

D. Why not before breakfast?

A. Because it would, by drawing the blood from the stomach to the brain, reduce your appetite for that meal.

D. How many hours in a day would you study?

A. As many as your parochial work will allow. The hours at best will be few enough. You have heard of the German professor who got, he said, 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. Keep a book, with a mark in it, always on hand. At any odd interval of a few minutes take it up and save the time.

B. Would you keep a diary?

A. Not such as you will find in old Christian biographies, with all the writer's inner life brought out, by a kind of vivisection of the soul, and laid down at full length. But a diary of your Sundays, of the sermons you have preached, and where, with other such matter, you will find almost a necessity.

As to study and all the other occupations of your life, *fall into no involuntary habits.*

B. But suppose they should be good ones?

A. No matter if they should. You have no right to *drift* into anything. God made you to steer—to govern yourself, as a man does a span of blood-horses, with a tight rein. He who believes in the Bible, for instance, without study, and solely because he has been brought up in that habit, may be at the mercy of any cross-current or side-wind of doctrine that strikes him. This law of habit is one of

the most admirable with which we are endowed by the Creator. A young lady, learning a piece of instrumental music, laboriously feels her way through it, studying the score, as she goes, from note to note. Then again and again she repeats it. In time she can throw her fingers as freely over the key-board as if she were sprinkling the tones from their tips. What, now, has she been doing? *Voluntarily* acquiring an *involuntary* power—availing herself of that beautiful law of habit by which the difficult becomes so easy. Put this power, then, in all things, into service. Never be content with avoiding bad habits. With careful study lay the wisest possible plans. Then adhere to the routine of them till they become a second nature. And often review your habits. Call yourself sternly to account. See if you can at any point throw off a poor or form a good routine. Do you know, Mr. B., why it strengthens a thread to wax it?

B. I never thought to inquire.

A. The wax binds down to the main strands those minute filaments that stood out independently. It makes them contribute their united strength to the thread. So do with your lesser habits and your odd moments. Levy contributions on them. Make them strengthen the main work of your life. "Gather up the *fragments*, that nothing be lost."

Dr. Bacon's Genesis of New
England Church.

CHAPTER IV.

BUSINESS AFFAIRS.

A. **MINISTERS** are in danger of neglect or carelessness in these matters. They are sometimes so engrossed in spiritual and intellectual work as to overlook such interests. Occasionally, rarely, a clergyman, hard pressed with privations, while giving his life for the public benefit, is in danger of feeling that "the world owes him a living," and so of growing indifferent to his obligations. Remember that in a minister carelessness as to pecuniary matters is hardly less damaging than fraud. One I knew who fell so hopelessly into arrears that, after vain struggles to extricate himself, his conscience seemed seared with a numb despair. His reputation was sullied. The closing years of his life (which ended in partial derangement) were utterly miserable. Another allowed so immense a provision dealer's bill to accumulate that a newcomer in the parish, hearing of it, proposed that his friends should liquidate it. "No," was the answer, "we are tired of paying his debts. When he is *dead* we will settle them."

Should you become involved, remember that it would be dishonest to purchase anything not absolutely necessary. You would be using other men's money.

C. Then what right should we have to buy even necessaries?

A. Because that would be the straight and only path to the payment of the debts. If you do not live you can never pay. But occasionally you find a minister who, while heavily in arrears financially, considers a well-worn coat or an hour or two of manual labor beneath him. Nothing of that sort is or can be so dishonorable as debt. Cultivate a respect for honest labor. That is a genuine American idea. Abraham Lincoln, who was, far more than Washington, the typical American, never lost an opportunity to show his regard for such work. When an Englishman was once with him at the White House, Mr. Lincoln, having no servant just then at hand, was polishing his own boots. "Why, Mr. President," said his guest,

“in England a gentleman never blacks his own boots!” “Doesn’t he?” said the great democrat, too kind to be severe. “Whose boots does he black?”

Keep yourself in such condition financially that you can, without embarrassment, or fear of the reply, “Physician, heal thyself!” preach on integrity in business.

Be independent also. Respect yourself. You may find a pastor occasionally, not often, who hints at gifts and curries favors.

D. Would you accept reduced fares to ministers on the railroads?

A. Yes. That belongs to another category. I have known a railway official, when a minister spoke in a deprecatory way of such accommodation, to answer promptly, “You are quite mistaken, sir, it is business. We think it pays.” Intelligent railroad men understand what sort of population ministers and churches draw around them—the thrifty sort, who pay fares and send freight. The officers of our roads often out of pure self-interest, donate lots for country churches along their lines.

C. And what of the ministers’ discount at the stores?

A. I should not ask for it. But if it is offered you, I should not think it necessary to refuse. Tradesmen think it good policy to draw ministers to their establishments.

Should you be compelled to go temporarily in debt, it might be well to distribute the obligation among several shopkeepers. The arrears at each establishment might not then be large enough to cause apprehension.

Never avoid meeting a creditor. Tell him frankly your reason for delay, and pay any installment possible. If you hire a house, be punctual with the rent. Never wait to be asked for it. A landlord appreciates a prompt tenant. He is likely to be liberal toward him as to improvements needed.

At whatever sacrifice, live rather within than beyond your means. There lies the line between comfort and incipient misery. “Cannot afford,” means, “Do not choose—would rather spend for something else.” A British peer or peeress is never afraid to say “I cannot afford.”

Saving is done by *inflexibly* putting aside a little at a time.

Live on what happens to be cheapest at the season. If you watch the market, you will find that various kinds of provisions rise

and fall in price according to their abundance. And when cheapest they are apt, because abundant, to be best in quality.

Get winter clothing in the spring—fuel in June or July.

Obtain your religious papers by contributing rather from your brains than from your pocket. Pack your best thoughts into the fewest and most pungent words. Editors are jealous of words.

As a rule, do not, if you can avoid it, build or buy a house.

B. But suppose one is in a growing town, where the house will rise in value.

A. If it does, he cannot sell or move out; he must have a home. The rent of any other house he might wish to hire would also have risen. I have known a minister, in such a case, to be compelled to remain in his home till it had fallen in value again. Besides, if you have means, it is not always wise to parade the fact before your people. Buy personal property and keep your business affairs to yourself. In case of your death a house is a troublesome care for a widow. It can rarely be forced to a sale without sacrifice.

D. Would you invest in life insurance?

A. Certainly. For a man with a family, who has nothing else to leave them, life insurance is a duty. But select some one of the old, strong companies, with many millions of accumulations. Avoid the new enterprises that are constantly starting and exploding. They offer wonderfully low rates. They are very tempting. But, in a thing of this sort, security is of immeasurably more importance than cheapness. To get low rates, insure while young. And do not put *all* your savings into life insurance. Ministers live longer than the average of men at large. You have reason to hope for many years. Another contingency than death—a collapse from ill health or old age—is to be borne in mind.

Keep a careful record of any payments of debts for which you take no receipts. And at the end of each month learn exactly where you stand financially.

BOOK THIRD.

THE PULPIT.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATION FOR THE PULPIT.

A. YOUR first question in preparing a sermon is, What is your object? Many a preacher thinks of little beyond the demand of the hour and acquitting himself with credit. He looks on the sermon as an end. Like a painting or statue, it is a work of art that he is to elaborate. As a consequence, he produces, probably, a fine essay. It is interesting. It may be instructive. But there is no fire in it. There is no moral grip on a soul in its sin. It is less a channel though which the preacher reaches men than a dead wall between him and them. But a true sermon is only a means to something beyond itself. Men speak of "a model sermon." We might as well talk of a model word. What is the *use* of the word? What is it to accomplish? Not till we know that can we tell how good it is. As your eyes are not to be riveted on the manuscript lying before you, but to look beyond that to the pews, so is it to be with your whole desire and aim.

In order to this, have *individuals* often in view. Let your pastoral calls be constantly playing into your pulpit. A botanist or mineralogist is always on the outlook for new specimens. If you meet an inquirer or scoffer or soul in trouble or doubt, carry home full notes of the case. You have probably struck the apex of a substratum of the same sort of experience that runs through other souls of your congregation.

C. But is it right to expose individuals in the pulpit?

A. Of course not. A minister must carry no personalities into his discourses. They would inflame more souls than they would melt. But you need not, for that reason, drift into generalities. The person whose case you use as an example may be an invalid,

or non-church-goer, who will not hear you. Or you may secure his permission to refer, of course without betraying his confidence, to certain views or feelings as belonging to a member of the congregation. If you can announce that you have in mind an actual case, the attention of all is arrested. Any one stopping in the street and looking up intently and curiously at some particular window, can gather a little company around him, all looking in that direction. So may the attention of minds be concentrated.

In collecting materials for the pulpit, be on the watch for any occurrence in the community that may be turned to Christian uses. Let your ministry keep well abreast of the times. So was it with our Lord. The Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices (Luke 13: 1), the tower that had fallen in Siloam (Luke 13: 4), the tribute to Cæsar (Matt. 22: 20), the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as the many events connected with his parables and miracles, all were made to shine in some new light and teach new lessons.

In your reading or conversation, when some text or line of thought arrests you, make a note of it. Strike while the iron is hot. Gather and preserve the thoughts that, in such illuminated moments, flash from the mind.

Be incessantly collecting illustrations. It is said of the great English character-painter of the last century, Hogarth, that when he met a peculiar face of a man enraged or sad or in an ecstasy, or however moved, he sketched it on the spot, on his thumb-nail, for use in his studio. Take a lesson from him. All things in nature and in human life teem with illustrations of sacred truth. Commence early and keep busy with your note-books and scrap-books.

C. Shall we ever be able to write two sermons a week ?

A. Shut all idea of that out of your plans. Unless you have the fatal facility which a young preacher ought not to desire, you will, at first, find writing a slow process. I should get to begin with, if you have it not already, a plain, legible chirography. This you need, as well for correspondence as for sermon-writing. It is a grievous wrong to one's friends to write such hieroglyphics as require, perhaps, twenty minutes to decipher a letter. We have no right in any such way to embezzle their time.

Next, you should compose your earlier sermons, say for a year, with such care as to make a *habit* of a clear and vigorous style. One

minister whom I knew never, in the outset, pretended to write a sermon in so little time as a week.

D. Pray, how then did he get on?

A. By exchanges, by extemporizing, by occasional help, in any way possible. When he *did* write a sermon, it was "beaten oil." But by this constant care he learned, in time, to write as rapidly as accurately and vigorously. He became one of the most prominent and useful pastors in his whole region. When Dr. Francis Wayland undertook to awaken the American Baptist churches to the missionary work he wrote his famous sermon, "On the Moral Dignity of the Missionary Enterprise," it is said, some thirty times. With this deliverance, so thoroughly studied, he went through the country. And with it he roused the churches of his own communion as with the blast of a trumpet. You will so often be forced by circumstances to write hastily, that, when you can, you should put work into every sentence.

It is well to think out a few plans with which, when unexpectedly called upon, you can meet the emergency. There is a common impression that, if a minister who has had any experience do but open his mouth, words will flow as freely as water from a faucet.

C. Should we memorize sermons?

A. If you can do it both easily and well, yes. It gives you the combined advantages of written and extempore speech. Still another course, pursued by some, is to prepare the main and subordinate heads of a sermon, indicate by catch words your illustrations, and, with this aid, extemporize.

D. How as to the use of old sermons?

A. It is a great mistake to suppose that able and earnest men do not use them. David Hume, who, sceptic as he was, admired Whitefield's eloquence, declared that he was never at his best with a sermon till he had repeated it fifty times. But Whitefield never used an old sermon as a makeshift. He threw his soul into it. He made the words at the moment freshly his own. Deliver a sermon in that fashion, and your familiarity with it will only add to its power. It is said that Edwin Booth, when rendering Hamlet for perhaps the thousandth time, invariably prepares himself on it anew.

But be careful, when using an old sermon on exchange in another pulpit than your own, to review it. A minister whose church was within sight of Charlestown, Massachusetts, State-prison

exchanged with a brother in Andover. He had too easily taken for granted that his sermon would answer without revision. It was not long before he found himself pointing toward the Theological Seminary and warning the young men before him that, among the dread possibilities of the future, some one of them might "find his way into yonder penal institution."

But the aphorism that a sermon worth one delivery is worth two, is, with exceptions, as true as it is trite. And if the discourse is forcibly and effectively repeated after two or three years, it will be profitably heard. Dr. Horace Bushnell once told me that a member of his family, on returning from church, advised him to burn the sermon. Instead, he quietly put it aside. After some two years, on a bright spring day, when he knew the audience would be large and he felt in an unusually buoyant mood, he repeated the condemned discourse. And as he left the church his critic (who failed to recognize the sermon) advised him to "mark the manuscript for exchange. It was better than the average."

Some hearers have a habit of marking in their Bibles a text discoursed upon. If the sermon were repeated, they would recognize it. But they are few in number. And, in general, a pastor is liable to be rather too much than too little apprehensive in regard to the matter.

I Something to say -
 II Say it
 III Stop.

CHAPTER II.

MANNER IN THE PULPIT.

A. I INCLUDE here the entire impression the preacher makes by the carriage of his person in the pulpit. Men who have passed middle life notice a great change, even since their boyhood, in the structure of the pulpit. It used to be high and small in size. Two flights of stairs led up to it. The breast-work secluded so much of the person of the occupant that he appeared shut into a box. An irreverent classmate of mine once said that he felt, in one of those old structures, like an owl looking out from a knot-hole in a tree. There, in solemn majesty, the dominie sounded out his message over the heads of his auditors.

Of course, while so effectually hidden, the preacher, if inclined to much freedom of movement, would have found it impossible. And another obstacle was in the way. The pastor's salary was small. Even so, it was paid largely in kind—in potatoes, corn, wood for fuel, and other necessaries. Of course the good man saw from one year's end to another very little money. But paper, which was imported from abroad, and could be purchased only with money, was costly. Consequently sermons were written on sheets not larger than one's open hand and of coarse, poor quality. The hand-writing was so small that specimens of it which I have can be deciphered only with a magnifying glass. The manuscript, often held close to the preacher's eyes, was read without a movement of the body. It was a delivery like this, by Rev. Jonathan Edwards, at Enfield, Massachusetts, of his sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" which roused the congregation to the wildest excitement. They are said to have seized the pillars of the gallery to keep from dropping into the bottomless pit that seemed opening beneath them. No discourse pronounced in that style would hold for five minutes the attention of a modern audience.

All this is revolutionized. And the revolution symbolizes the change in the relation of pastor to people. The pulpit has de-

scended from its lofty elevation to almost the level of the pews. It is thrown open, moreover. Nothing remains to conceal the preacher's person. For the effect of his discourse he can no longer rely on reverence for his office. He is thrown into comparison, too, with lecturers and other public speakers. To hold his audience he must know something of oratory and the most effective control of both his body and mind.

First, as to the right spirit with which to enter the pulpit. Do not carry with you a crushing sense of responsibility. A pastor is sometimes so overburdened as to break down his elasticity and depress his hearers. Throw on God your weight of care. Be cheerful. Be buoyant. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

B. But is there no danger of too trivial a mood?

A. There may be. That extreme also you must avoid. I knew a minister who, going up on the wrong side of an old-fashioned pulpit, where there was no door, vaulted over into his seat. You would hardly expect a sermon, after that feat, to be very profoundly impressive. You must show yourself conscious that you have serious work on hand.

Again, avoid drudging through the service as if it were a matter of course. Keep your heart fresh and wide-awake. To drift into a languid apathy, a numb resignation to the weekly routine, is fatal to all efficiency. Take yourself vigorously in hand. Send up a prayer for new life. Go to your work as if you had never seen it before. Enter your pulpit rather as a man who has something to say, in the service of God, for the welfare of men, than as one who is obliged to say something.

Be not solemn, but earnest. And carry always your presence of mind. Some preachers, if anything unusual occurs, are thrown off their balance. An experienced pastor may be ready for any emergency. A young one needs to be on his guard.

C. But the people are as apt to be startled as the minister.

A. Yes; and he may do much to compose them. Mr. Moody, in a great congregation in London, seeing a young mother about to retire with a babe that was crying, assured her it was no interruption to the service and induced her to remain.

While speaking with life and force, be deliberate. Never confound energy with violence. Never let yours be a

("Pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Beat with fist instead of a stick."

D. But is not vehemence *natural* to some men?

A. Of course. Dr. Chalmers would make the chandeliers, in the old Tron church in Edinburgh, tremble and ring. But there was no fanatic extravagance. He never lost self-control. Be always natural. Put on nothing for effect.

Never scold in the pulpit. While *grief* may move your hearers, anger will only irritate them. Preach future retribution not as a "dogmatic slogan," with explosive tones, but tearfully, as yourself deserving the same condemnation.

It is well occasionally, in giving out notices, to take your people, in brief familiar talks, into your confidence. If for special reasons you have been compelled to slight any part of your work, tell them why. If you have trials in the work which do not involve too much complaint of the people, tell them. It will draw your flock into close sympathy with you and with your aims in their behalf.

Do not adopt the fashion, which is coming into vogue, of printing and distributing the announcements. It is an improvement backward.

B. But pastors complain that they cannot make sign-boards of their pulpits.

A. Yes, and there has been too much disposition to that. But it will not follow that we must run to the other extreme.

D. Would you not put the routine-notices on printed slips for distribution? One could then announce from the pulpit any extraordinary ones.

A. No. The regular announcements, which have to do with your own church, are precisely those which I would not commit to dumb types. If you wish your people to appreciate and attend the mid-week meeting, announce it with the living voice and a living soul behind that. Put emphasis on it. Press the invitation to it. Announcements, like those of the morning news, which every one wishes to read, may well enough be committed to types. But most of those made from our pulpits are such as need to be specially and earnestly commended. If notices which do not belong in the pulpit are thrust upon you, have the independence to reject them.

B. Would you announce any entertainment for which an admittance-fee is charged?

A. If it is for a Christian or charitable purpose, yes. If it is for any one's personal profit, no.

Treat the "service of song in the house of the Lord" as the serious act of worship that it is. Ministers desecrate it and, by their example, lead their people to desecrate it. They busy themselves, while the singing goes on, with the arrangement of their notices, or looking over their sermons, or, still worse, it may be, by whispering to some other clergymen in the pulpit. Unless under strict necessity, do, in time of singing, nothing of that sort which you would not do while listening to prayer. Many of our hymns *are* prayers. Take your book and sing with the people. If you cannot sing, join, in heart at least, with those who can.

As to the control of your person in the pulpit, fall into no conventional, faulty habits. Have some discerning critic to correct you. Remember that in the modern pulpit you are thoroughly exposed to the view of the assembly. Some ministers have a fashion of twisting one leg around the other, or of looking habitually toward a certain point in the house, or of pinching the pulpit-cushion. Do not lazily lounge on the desk. Though to you the place may be quite familiar, to the people it has a certain sacredness, of which you should not lose sight.

Whether using a manuscript or not, look nearly or quite every one in the audience in the face. Turn from side to side for that purpose. Do not, whenever you raise your eyes to the congregation, look straight along the center of the house.

In prayer speak loud enough to be heard by any who are not deaf. There is much complaint of preachers as to this.

C. But a loud voice in prayer seems unnatural.

A. Well, you are speaking for the people. They are presumed to be praying through your lips. And, without hearing you, they can never do that.

Announce your text, in general, not only distinctly but repeatedly. The people are settling themselves into their seats to hear. They often lose the text altogether. A wise hearer said to me, when a young man, "You start off so suddenly with your sermon that you snap the coupling instead of starting the train."

In exchanging read no announcements without making sure that

"Dear Sir,
I am all yours!"

they are *new*. An old New England preacher read a request for prayers from a man who had lost his wife. It was a year old or more. And while he was praying for the widower, the widower was present and listening, with a new wife by his side!

In the whole service hide yourself behind the Master and the subject you have to present.

arriving at security, divine
 revelation is the result.

BOOK FOURTH.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION OF STRANGERS TO THE CHURCH.

A. THERE are strangers who will need no care of either yourself or your people. They are ripe and stable souls. They live to serve God and bless men. The church is to them what a magnet is to steel. In moving into a new community, they waste no time in running about to see where they will receive most social attention. I have one such in mind. A deacon of a New England church moved with his family to a Western town. As he was unpacking his household goods one evening, just after his arrival, the church bell rang for the mid-week meeting. Promptly he laid his hammer down on the packing box, attended the meeting, and reported himself, at its close, to the pastor, as a brother from the East "ready for orders." He soon won the esteem and affection of all. Before long he was elected a deacon, and at his death was universally lamented. But advents of such strangers are rare, almost, as angels' visits. The average new-comer is apt, in his isolation and loneliness, at first, to fall into a querulous mood. Though he has been a stranger in various towns before, he never knew one so unsocial and inhospitable as this. He probably made the same complaint of every place in which he has lived. It may be well to point him to some one who has moved in still later than himself. Ask him how many calls he has made, how much cordiality he has expended, on *him*.

This transition from an old home to a new one is, even for a Christian, not to say for a stranger to Christ, a perilous occasion in life. At such a crisis tens of thousands have commenced a disastrous lapse into worldliness. Rev. H. W. Beecher, when examined for installation at Brooklyn, was asked if he believed in the perseverance of

the saints. He was brought up, he replied, 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. Dr. Horace Bushnell, in his famous sermon "Barbarism the First Danger," set forth with startling power the danger of tearing oneself away from old associations and restraints—the drift of colonization toward degeneracy. For the stranger's protection and spiritual growth, no less than for the increase of your own flock, you need to throw the arms of the church around him.

D. But how shall we know that there *are* strangers who have come to remain?

A. Keep on the alert to discover them in the congregation on Sunday. Occasionally ask your people to inform you of any such. In that way multiply your own eyes and ears. Remind your people that the *first impression* a stranger receives, of their cordiality or coldness, is all-important.

B. Ought a pastor, without knowing something previously of the stranger, to call on him?

A. Not as a rule. First learn through others what you can. If he proves to be a professed Christian, and of your own 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 that belong to another shepherd. If he is of another communion, you have, unless he should voluntarily unite with your flock, no concern with him.

C. But is it certain that other pastors will be as scrupulous as this?

A. We must be if they will not. If before doing right toward sister churches we wait to see whether they will reciprocate, there will be slow progress toward interdenominational comity.

But if the new brother be of your own connection, exert yourself to win him. Have an attractive pew to which the usher may lead him. If he has a family, let your ladies make his wife feel at home among them. Invite his children into your Sunday-school. See if there is not some sort of service you can render him as a stranger.

Remember that it is impossible for *you alone* to convince a newcomer that your church is social and cordial. He will count *your* calls as professional. He will take them as matters of course. One

call from some of your people may go farther with him than half a dozen from you.

But carefully select the right person to visit the stranger. An ignorant, coarse-grained, but zealous disciple, calling on a refined and sensitive new-comer, may do more harm than good. "Get those to work," says Mr. Moody, "who are leaders in society."

Learn what sort of Christian work, if any, the newly-arrived has been accustomed to do and would be willing to resume. Induce him to apply for his credentials and unite with your church. If he is little used to letter-writing, and delays it, as I have known such persons to do, get his permission to write for him.

By the habit of procrastination of this duty tens of thousands are dragged back into worldliness. The excuse often is that they are undecided as to the time they shall remain among you. They are not yet established in business. When their future is assured they will transfer church relations. Explain to them how poor an excuse this is. Show them that, should they stay for but a month or two, it is the simplest of matters to apply for a letter. Urge them to do it, and, if they leave you, to take a letter again. I have known church members to pass twelve or fourteen years in moving from town to town, leaving their church relation behind them. This is ruinous to any spiritual life. On the other hand, I remember a good man who at one communion brought to my church a letter, and before another wished a dismissal and recommendation. I was glad to hold up for imitation so excellent an example.

When new members are voted into your church, *tell your people something about them* and where they live. Exhort those who will be their nearest neighbors to call on them. In a large church this is especially important.

C. But you have not told how to deal with new-comers who are not Christians.

A. You can call, without much scruple about interdenominational comity, on them. And to them will apply much of what has been said in regard to professed believers. Select genial, warm-hearted men for ushers. The chilling look of too many a man chosen for this service reminds one of the cry on a steamer, "Get out your wraps! We are nearing an iceberg!"

Welcome the poor stranger as warmly as the rich one. Bring him to feel that there is no circle of friendship so close, with so much

fellow-feeling, as he will find in your church. For the disposition of men to join Masonic and other fraternities the churches, by their neglect, are partly responsible.

D. Suppose the society rents its pews, and the stranger is too poor to hire one?

A. Then find out what pews are vacant. Get the consent of the trustees to put the new-comer, till there is an opportunity to let, into one of them. Favor him in every way as to this matter.

See, as soon as you can get into his confidence, if he has any special troubles, and sympathize with them. If you will study him as an angler does the nature and habits of a trout, and the best way of baiting and trolling, you can commonly succeed as a fisher of men.

Give much thought to this whole matter of gathering in the churchless. *Go among them*, converse with them freely on the reasons that disincline them to attend worship. A Methodist minister, who found a boy wheeling a heavy barrow, took it himself, wheeling and inviting the boy, as they walked, to his Sunday-school. So he made sure of him. Dr. Rainsford, rector of St. George's Church, one of the wealthiest in New York, has free seats and says to the outside world, "Whosoever will, let him come!" His people consent, and velvet and home-spun sit side by side to listen to the same gospel. The church, which before this measure was sparsely attended, is now crowded, on floor and in galleries, to its full capacity.

CHAPTER II.

SETTING THE CHURCH AT WORK.

A. IN this matter, as in other features of church life, there has been within the century an immense change. The minister among the fathers, being superior in education to most of his flock, was accounted, as to church work, their proxy. He was less like Gen. Grant, directing the army, than like David, with sling and stone, fighting the battle for them. The mid-week meeting was occupied with a lecture from the pastor. Sunday-school there was none. With no women's colleges or higher seminaries, the sisters were not thought capable of giving instruction. Societies of Christian Endeavor and juvenile mission-bands are among later inventions and discoveries. There were no young Christians in any considerable numbers. When a young man joined the church of Dr. Lyman Beecher, at Litchfield, Connecticut, early in the century, so strange an event astonished all the western section of that State.

It may be well to remind your people how great is the change in all this—how wide is the spread of education, and how heavy the responsibility of all has become.

There is some danger that you young theologues may yourselves underrate the importance of setting your people at work. You may feel strong and able, whether your people bestir themselves or not, to carry things along. You have little idea of the folly of that. Did you ever put a bright reflector behind a gas-burner? Did you notice how it doubled the light? Your people are the reflector behind you. Lives from them that harmonize with words from you will double the power of the words. It is a good rule, "Do nothing yourself, in church-work, that you can get some one else to do well."

Let us see, first, what is the right sentiment, the proper spirit; secondly, what are the right methods to be inculcated.

As to the spirit, I would occasionally show that the church is no hospital for self-indulgence. It is rather, or ought to be, a hive. Every member ought to be as busy as a bee in a swarm. The anti-

quoted idea of the pastor as a proxy comes, now and then, to the surface. A Massachusetts pastor, who asked a member of his church, in the mid-week meeting, to pray, was promptly answered, "Pray? No, sir! We pay you to pray!"

Show your people that the culture of the *individual Christian* is one chief object for which the church exists. The Grecian and Roman theory of the State—that each citizen lived for the service of the State, that he was simply a brick in the wall—has filtered into the modern notions of the church. It is so pleasant to settle into a well-cushioned pew, hear fine music and an eloquent sermon, and go home, with the feeling that one's Sunday duty is done, to a sumptuous dinner! Teach emphatically that one is more profited by acting than by hearing—that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Throw the responsibility for the success of your church, in good measure, on your people. Yet show that this is by no means to relieve yourself. Explain the greatness of the work to be done, that it outreaches, by a wide margin, the whole church, and that it would be impossible for both you and them fully to accomplish it.

Another point they need to understand. There is a notion that a minister, having been trained for this sort of work, has the professional skill with which, far better than a layman, to succeed in it. The fact is that in much of it your people have a greater advantage than you. A moneyed man, when funds are to be raised, can, with his generous example reënforsing his words, carry greater power than any one else. A young lady can influence those of her own sex and age, a boy can lead an associate, and so on. In a meek but earnest way, without a thought of being "a lord over God's heritage," induce them to allow you to levy on their services. Make it clear that you cannot fight the battle alone.

As to your own spirit, while leading in everything, never dictate. Say nothing of any rights or prerogatives of your own. What you cannot secure without contending for it is commonly not worth having. Depend, for your leadership, on the wisdom of your measures. Intensity and energy, combined with gentleness—*suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*—is the true spirit for this work.

As to methods, first, study your people. See what are the talents that need to be drawn out, what is each one's special forte. Gen. Grant was remarkable for his keen insight in assigning the right man to the right place.

The "Committee Plan" sometimes works successfully. The pastor draws up a schedule of committees. The subjects are such as these: On aiding poor children in the Sunday-school. On winning children into the Sunday-school. On visiting strangers. On social gatherings. On seating strangers in the church. On flowers for the pulpit and decorations for the lecture-room. On reading to the aged and the sick. On neighborhood prayer-meetings. In different churches the subjects, of course, would vary. The schedule, as printed, has, after the name of each committee, blanks for the signatures of volunteers. In a small church one committee could take two or three functions. Copies are distributed in the pews, and the pastor, after explaining the plan and purpose, invites the people to take them home for consideration.

They decide on which committee each one will work, sign accordingly, and bring the blanks to the church for collection. You will have to follow up the matter and secure additional subscriptions. Do not let this plan interfere with any *existing* organizations that are doing good work.

In a small church there would not be workers enough for such a plan. And I never knew it to succeed for a very long period. But if it fails, *allow no thought of discouragement*. Promptly selecting the best helpers you have, do with them, without a committee plan, the most work possible.

If there is any outlying district of irreligious people, organize among them a series of meetings. Partly on account of the mere novelty of the thing, partly because there is in most souls a hungering for some sort of sacred truth, they will probably respond to your invitation. I know of a neighborhood near a small Western city in which there was not a church-going family. A pastor from the city went to work, in this way, so efficiently among them that, in a year or two, there was no *non-church-going* family there.

Of course you will acquaint yourselves with the Ladies' Benevolent Society, or sewing-circle, or whatever they may call it. A half-hour's reading in some interesting book, while the sewing goes on, adds much to the attractiveness and value of such a circle.

Learn how it is, too, with the branch in your church of the Woman's Board of Missions, home or foreign or both. In all the churches the complaint has lately arisen that, as the ladies press forward in Christian work and liberality, their husbands, fathers, and

brothers lag behind. Give close attention to this complaint. If it exists in your own flocks, vigorously set yourselves toward a remedy.

Foster the maternal meeting. A perpetual drawback on the usefulness of this meeting is that, while the young mothers, who most need it, think themselves too busy to attend, the aged ones, whose children have grown and left them, are regularly present. If necessary, preach on the value of such a conference of mothers. Show the great variety of interesting questions to be discussed: *e. g.* How shall we lead young children to Christ? How far should persuasion take the place of sheer authority? How shall Sunday be made profitable to children? What is the best periodical literature for them? How far should the great laws of physiology be disclosed to them? Should the older brothers and sisters be allowed authority over them? How may mothers help the Sunday-school teachers? How train the children into habits of self-sacrifice and beneficence? How may their amusements, on the kindergarten plan, be made instructive? Such questions may be indefinitely multiplied. The meeting should be largely one of earnest prayer for the conversion of the children represented in it.

Give much study to the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Some thoughtful minds are apprehensive that a guild of this sort within the church draws off the sense of responsibility from those who decline to join the guild. I do not say that this is so. But I would confer with such experienced pastors as have seen the working of the society. If you are satisfied that it should be encouraged, promptly and efficiently promote it among your young people.

If there are invalids in the church, possibly a work may be found for them. It *may* be a delight, and spiritually profitable, for them to know that they are not *shelved* as useless. I have known some of them to do knitting for poor children, others to gather such children for instruction. A very interesting invalids' newspaper is "The Open Window," published as the organ of "The Shut-in Society," New York.

An invalids' room in your church is, if you can compass it, an admirable expedient. In every considerable parish there are persons in feeble health who are able to attend church. They would gladly do so. It would be, to some of them, a rich spiritual feast. For others it would at least break the monotony of their lives, and

might lead them to the Great Healer of souls. But they cannot bear the constraint for the whole time of service. They are nervous. They need to cough and to change position. They dread to disturb others. So they refrain altogether from what would be so rich a privilege. Now for such persons I saw, some years ago, at a Presbyterian church in Harlem, New York City, a room especially provided. It was built on to the edifice at one of the angles made by the projecting apsis with the rear wall. Of course it was close to the pulpit. It had a private entrance and a window facing the pulpit. The outlook of this window was at right angles with the aisles. As the annex containing the room was outside the wall of the church, no sounds from the room could disturb the congregation. Here the invalid was provided with table, lounge, chairs, and all other conveniences. He could sit, stand, walk, or lie, hear as much of the service as he chose, and withdraw at his pleasure. You may be able, if necessary, in your own churches, to secure something of this sort.

See if you should not have a "Chautauqua Association" for the intellectual profit of your young people.

Issue a regular church paper. The Religious Publication Society, of Chicago, furnishes, at small cost, facilities for this work.

Make much of your *annual church meeting*, for election of officers, reports, and other business. If you cannot otherwise secure full attendance, have in connection with it a simple collation to promote familiar acquaintance among the members. In your announcement of this meeting call special attention to it as one of the *events* in the round of the year. Let the roll of members be called. Let each one give with his name a text of the Bible or Christian sentiment. Have full, but brief, reports of every society and other department of the parochial work. These reports (which should all be *written*) I would carefully preserve in the archives of the church. Add a report of your own work. Request brethren and sisters to name to you any persons who should unite with the church. Remind your people that the church must have a future—that they ought to be providing successors.

Often review the entire work of your flock. Study its different features and departments. See what faults you can eliminate, what improvements you can introduce. I know a manufacturer who has wonderfully perfected his machinery. It acts as if endowed with

intelligence. This he has accomplished by *often going over it*, with the question, "Where can steel and iron be made to take the place of human fingers?" So one invention has followed another. As a pastor, "go and do thou likewise."

CHAPTER III.

OFFICE-BEARERS AND LEADING MEMBERS.

A. THE normal relation between a pastor and his church officers is, of course, one of fraternal and confidential intimacy. They should *often meet* to consult for the interests of the church. They should trust one another. The Christian affection uniting them should be deep and strong.

This ideal relation will, I trust, become to you actual. Some of the closest and happiest friendships of my life have been with the office-bearers of the churches of which successively I was pastor.

But you may encounter others of a different sort. There may be those who will ripen you for heaven as Paul's thorn in the flesh ripened him. Your sorest troubles may be due to men who, *on the whole*, are among the best members of your church. And, stranger still, the trouble may spring from their very virtues. In other words, they may be ever so eager for the growth of the church, so nervously anxious for its success as to become a positive annoyance. Others, who show none of this spirit, may be not so much above it as below it. They have too little heed for the kingdom of Christ to harass you with any anxieties in regard to it. Many an amiable, generous stranger to Christ in your flock may afford you more personal comfort than such a "pillar in the church." But avoid judging the whole character of any man from something vexatious at a single point of his contact with you. Look at him on all sides. My predecessor in a certain pulpit informed me, when commencing my work, that one of the officers was unsound to the core. The pastor had lost all faith in his sincerity as a Christian. I found afterward that the two had been imbroiled in a personal quarrel. The deacon, though by no means ripe for translation, was a good man. The pastor had seen him through jaundiced eyes.

Remember how imperfect servants—you and me, for example—the Lord is always using. If He were to wait for perfect ones, how much could He accomplish? Judge men candidly and charitably.

It would probably have been hard for Uriah to see much virtue in David. But *we* know that, notwithstanding, he was, in the totality of his character, a worthy man.

As early as may be after your settlement, learn all you can of the character and antecedents of each one of the leading brethren in your church. Through neglect of this, and so through ignorantly stumbling against a prejudice of a leading brother, I once came near a bitter, perhaps incurable, quarrel.

Of the faithful amiable office-bearers I will say nothing. In dealing with them you will need no special counsel or wisdom. But there are typical men of a very different sort.

First, there is the radical, impetuous brother. He is by instinct an agitator. He wants new measures. "We must have an evangelist and a revival," he will tell you. Or, "It is time for a temperance campaign." He thinks *anything* would be better than what *is*. Now show no contempt for his plans—no impatience with *him*. Thoughtfully consider what he has to propose. Beware of any disposition to object to a measure simply because he urges it. If you can wisely, in whole or in part, adopt his plans. If obliged to reject them, show him that you do it out of no self-will, but only from considerations lying back of your will, and over which you have no control. By the neglect of this rule you may stir a needless ferment of ill-feeling. No man likes to be confronted with, "I won't!" Also, if at any point that troubles him there is need of improvement, show as hearty and *sincere* an anxiety for it as does he. Never meet him with indifference.

But there is, on the contrary, the over-cautious, apprehensive brother, a kind of animated aspen-leaf, always in a flutter. He will probably object by instinct to any new measure: the first thing that occurs to him is an objection. It was said of one of our generals during the war of the rebellion, that, after building a bridge four times as strong as any weight that could pass over it would require, he was afraid to be the first to cross it. There is many a man of that sort in our churches.

Of course you will show no scorn of his timidity. While courageous and determined, be considerate of his weakness. It may be well to "catch him with guile." That is, if you suspect that he would object to an evidently wise measure, go forward without asking him. You are not bound to tell your suspicions. A friend of mine, when

he sees some little improvement needed in his home to which he fears the other "high, contracting power" would object, instead of proposing and going into a contention about it, has the thing done. Then, as it vindicates itself, there is no controversy. If you consult the over-cautious brother too much, he falls into the way of *expecting* you to consult him.

But, again, your lot may be cast with some magisterial brother, of lordly style of intercourse with all around him. Perhaps he has employed in his service. He is accustomed to say to this man "Go," and he goeth, to that one "Come," and he cometh. His imperious or patronizing ways annoy you. He may be quite unaware how you are affected by them. Speak with him frankly. Go on the assumption that he has not intended to wound your feelings. If there is any Christian manliness in him, he will acknowledge and discard the fault.

There may be, among the "pillars" of your church, an irritable brother who insists on quarreling with you. If so, follow the example of a New England pastor, to whom came a member of his church with fire in his eye and the announcement, "I have a matter to settle with you, sir!" "You are the very man then, brother," said the pastor, with a smile, "whom I want to see. Come right into my study." In they went and the pastor locked the door. "And now, brother," he said, "you will doubtless agree with me that, before proceeding to any business as important as you evidently consider this, we should seek wisdom from above. Let us kneel for a few moments." They knelt side by side. The pastor poured out his heart in earnest entreaty that God would give him the meekness to acknowledge any fault, and to his visitor the tender kindness with which to see him in a charitable light. As he warmed in his Christian love at the mercy seat, it proved rather more than the fiery brother had in his plan of operations. When they rose from their knees, both in tears, and his pastor took him cordially by the hand, saying, "And now, brother, I am ready for the business," he looked awkward, stammered out, "I guess it wasn't much, after all," and was ever after the minister's warmest friend.

The old motto, "*Suum cuique*," i. e., render to every man what he has, reasonably, a right to expect, will save you from many a wrangle, many a heart-burning. "Put yourself in his place," also, is a good rule. See how a given man, in given circumstances, may naturally

feel. Some one, for instance, who was formerly a financial buttress to the church, has lost his means. He is no longer admired and envied as a money-king. He imagines himself neglected if not commiserated. He is intensely sensitive.

Now by misunderstanding and needlessly irritating him, you may incline him to say as did Coleridge to Cottle, "You have poured oil into the raw festering wound of an old friend, Cottle; but it is the oil of vitriol!" Show him that you respect him as thoroughly as if he were still dictator of the market. By your sympathetic manner soothe his embittered feeling. Do not expect him to *tell you* of his wounds. He has too much pride for that. Reply rather to his heart than to his lips.

In all such personal matters take high Christian ground and appeal to high Christian motives. In this way, by *flanking*, rather than by any direct rebuke, aim to cure your brother of any jealous or sour or otherwise unchristian notions he may have imbibed. Love (the "benevolent" love, if the "complacent" is impossible) will prove the grand panacea for these little abrasions.

B. You have spoken of deacons. Would you have deaconesses?

A. Why not? Phœbe (Rom. 16:1) was evidently one. Later in the century deaconesses became very common. If, in an age in which woman was in so depressed and restricted a sphere, she could do good service in such an office, how much more in the nineteenth century, in Christian America! If their sex furnishes two-thirds of the membership of our churches, they ought to be represented among the helpers. And there are, of course, many services of sympathy and aid to the poorer sisters which one of their own sex can best render.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

A. FIRST of all, as to this matter, tell your people to meet *for worship*. The average church-goer too often, even if professedly a Christian, attends a church as he might attend a theatre. He is "a looker-on in Venice." He means to see how well the actors, in pulpit and choir, will perform. If the choir sing of Christ's anguish and his invitation in words and tones that ought to draw tears, he only praises it as very fine. If the preacher does draw tears, he commends him as an orator. I asked a lady where her husband had attended church of late. She replied, without a thought of irony, "I advised him to go to the — church. I thought he would be best *entertained* there." That this state of things is no necessity appears in Scotland plainly enough. The people of Edinburgh crowd their churches for *worship*. Little hinges on the question who is to be in the pulpit. Said an old Scotch woman to her pastor, who expressed to her his wonder that, while disliking him, she was always at church, "Mon, my quarrel's wi' *you*, not wi' the gospel!" But Americans need to be constantly reminded that the worship is the common act of all.

C. I have sometimes wondered that the Lord did not provide more such pulpit-orators as would *draw*.

A. That would only aggravate this folly. Congregations then would think of nothing but the "star" and his performance.

But some general rules for conducting the service I will suggest. In a liturgic church you would, of course, find this matter determined for you beforehand. I shall refer here to those which are not such.

One of them is, to give the *people* the largest possible participation in the worship.

Four hymns, if not even more, might be given them to sing. Responsive reading of Scripture, of course. Occasionally the Lord's Prayer might be repeated. But this last, which often is rattled through at a galloping rate, should be deliberately and reverently pronounced. In one church I have heard the choir and the congre-

gation sometimes read the Bible responsively—the pastor sitting silent. In another the choir and the assembly sing alternate verses of a hymn. In such ways, without resort to anything illegitimate, freshness and variety are brought into the worship. You should introduce as many services, and each as brief, as conveniently may be.

C. Would not that crowd on the sermon?

A. No. It must not be allowed to do so. But the devotional services must be brought into prominence and sustained with life and warmth. The forefathers of New England had seen the liturgic service in the old country abused to such dead mummeries, with no instruction for the people, that they fell to the other extreme. The sermon, lengthened to an hour, was allowed to overshadow the devotional services. Even to our own day we often hear those services called, as if they merely made way for the sermon, “introductory exercises.” Too many a hearer will say, “I was late at church—but in time for the sermon.” Our people must be trained to regard the worship as no less important than the instruction from the pulpit.

Coming now to the different features of the service, aside from the sermon, first is the *prayer*. This should no more be known as the “*long prayer*.” Five to seven minutes might, commonly, suffice. The invocations, at the opening and after sermon, should be not more than two or three minutes each.

Let this principal prayer be one, not for yourself, but for your people. You are their mouthpiece before the Throne. Bring in, therefore, not your personal wants or trials, but theirs. Come home to their common life as in pastoral calls you find it. Let them feel, as they follow you, that you have their daily affairs in mind, as well as their concern for the whole cause of Christ in the world.

Never be perfunctory or professional in prayer. Be fresh, natural, fervent. Give free play to the heart.

So far study this part of the service in advance as to have in mind the main themes you mean to include. Seek variety. Introduce, in a series of Sabbaths, a considerable range of objects. “My pastor,” said the mother of a young seaman, “never prays for the sailors.” Fall into no monotonous routine. Avoid repeating any favorite words or phrases. Even if from Scripture, they may soon be worn and tedious.

Take the opening thoughts of your prayer often from the hymn preceding. You may find it richly suggestive.

Use, ordinarily, simple words and short sentences. To allow the heart liberty you must put little strain on the intellect. And to follow long sentences, and adopt them as one's own, is often a severe intellectual tax. The usage in the Episcopal church of closing with prayer and benediction, while the people remain seated, with bowed heads, is an excellent one. It induces a quiet and reverent departure from the house.

Secondly, as to the "service of song in the house of the Lord." By all means, if possible, acquire at least knowledge enough of music to lead your people in evening meetings. Cultivate congregational singing among them. To render an anthem, and to elevate the musical taste and culture of the people, a choir is very desirable. But let it never become merely an artistic attraction. Let it never sink the words of a hymn or chant out of hearing in a flood of tones. The words are often so dissected, or single syllables so absurdly repeated, as to make nonsense or something worse.

Music—certainly sacred music—like most arts, is a language, a medium for the expression of thought or emotion. The moment it steps beyond that function to regale the ear with charming sounds that convey no intelligible meaning, it loses value as an aid to worship. We all revolt from the idea that, in the fervor of a great revival, we could sit and admire the voices of a choir. At such times of spiritual uplift we insist on liberty for all to unite in song. And the fact shows the spiritual value of congregational singing.

D. Would you insist on a choir of professed Christians?

A. Professed or not, I should very much want them to be *real* ones.

D. But if Christians, who are good singers, are not to be had?

A. Necessity knows no law. Take the best you can get. But I *would* insist on respectful behavior, at least during the service.

Dispense, if you can, with most of the interludes between the stanzas. They add nothing to the effect of the hymn as worship.

Do not let your chorister, as too many a minister does, select the hymns. He is quite likely to govern himself by some special tunes that he wishes to use. In any case, his selections may easily be out of harmony with your sermon.

C. Would you, when announcing the hymn, read it?

If you can read it so *well* as to lift the people into the spirit of it,

yes. And make this a matter of *earnest study*. Do not give up reading your hymns. Dr. G. W. Bethune used so to read them as to draw tears.

When giving out a hymn, add, when appropriate, if you can, some sketch of the author and of the circumstances and experiences out of which the hymn grew. The best compend for this purpose, though there have been many published, is "English Hymns, their Authors and their History," by Rev. S. W. Duffield. Information such as you will find there will throw fresh life and interest into the singing.

Thirdly, *instruction* is an important part of the service. Read the Bible once, responsively, for devotional purposes, and again for exposition. In this latter case it is well to read in course. Commence, say, with Matthew's gospel. In one pastorate of ten years I went, in this way, through to the close of Corinthians. Have your pews all provided with Bibles. In most churches you can make sure of this only by purchase of part of the supply needed. You cannot depend on the people's bringing from their homes their own copies of Scripture. Take but about a dozen verses at a lesson. Study them, if you can, both in the original and with the help of the best commentaries. Ask your people to follow you, with open Bibles, from verse to verse. For yourself, whether they do or not, make some use of the Revised Version. In this exposition neither *preach*, on the one hand, with too much remark, nor confine yourself, on the other, to mere word-criticism. Be pithy, suggestive, and earnest.

C. How can we make the Lord's Supper attractive to the church?

A. In no way. And you ought not to try. No one too dead to rejoice in the feast of love would be drawn by any accessories that you can throw around it. A Scotch Christian, somewhat deaf, was invited forward from the rear of the house toward the Table, that he might hear. "Na, na," he said, "I dinna *want* to hear." As for making the supper attractive, you might as well attempt to make the last words of a dying father interesting to his children.

Say very little at the communion. Our Lord, in instituting it, used few words. The discourse with his disciples, John 14—17, was probably spoken after they had left the Table.

But in all you do say, carry a most cheerful air at this feast. It is quite as much a harbinger of a glorious future as a memorial of a solemn night two thousand years ago. It points forward to the day of recogni-

tion and congratulation, when the Lord will drink anew with us in his kingdom (Matt. 26 : 29). Do not, as is the manner of some pastors, seize the occasion after the supper to lecture the church. Jesus had in the Upper Chamber no rebukes to utter. Let this be only a glad converse of disciples with their Master. Urge the church to a fresh consecration; but for your admonitions and strictures take some other opportunity.

C. Would you have the impenitent present?

A. Yes, but not to exhort them. If you are thoroughly in the spirit of the scene, that alone will affect them more than any exhortation.

Have the church-officers around you. Cherish through the whole the view and spirit of the church as a *family*. Pray for any sick or afflicted in the membership. Especially remember the children of the church.

D. Would you administer the communion at a private house?

A. If there are Christian members of the family who cannot go out, certainly I would. Take with you one or two of your church-officers.

C. As you are speaking of public worship, please tell what shall be done with the problem of the second service.

A. Yes. To most pastors this is a constant burden. To some it raises almost a chronic alarm. A very few, of exceptional magnetic power in the pulpit, look on it in serene assurance. Their sanctuary is as certain to be filled with hearers as with atmosphere. They are, viewed on the whole, by no means of necessity our best, or even ablest, men. There are those who accomplish with the pen no less than they with the voice. Still others who have great names, even as pulpit-orators, and on great occasions are called upon for memorable addresses, speak on Sunday evening to dreary wastes of empty pews.

Various causes act as leakages to drain off the evening audience. Many, wearied with Sunday-school and mission-school labors, seek at evening rest and the enjoyment of family-life. Others insist that one service is as much as can, with profit, be attended. By such examples a current is set which draws off still larger numbers.

C. Is it not, then, best to yield to the inevitable, as many churches do, and have but one service?

A. That points toward a European Sunday, ending at noon.

With our immense foreign immigration, we have already enough of that tendency. To despair of the problem is not to solve it. There are in most of our congregations young people, not under parental care, to whom a pastor, in leaving them to wander like shepherdless sheep from Sunday noon to night will do but ill service.

And there is another reason for maintaining the second service. To a large extent, in many localities, the evening audience is a different one from that in the morning. Strangers take the place of the regular members of the congregation. The pastor may, therefore, reach a larger aggregate number than the house would at one time hold. The time for abandoning the evening service has certainly not yet arrived.

Now as to the pressing question, How can a pastor with only average attractiveness in the pulpit increase his evening audience? It is hardly to be expected that any one method will permanently succeed. However good in itself, it may easily, in time, become wearisome.

A plan adopted by Rev. A. P. Foster, D. D., when pastor of the First Congregational church, Jersey City, succeeded so admirably for a series of years that it seems to me a great contribution toward the solution of the problem. I will let him tell the story in his own words.

“My evening service is a new departure, with the definite purpose of reaching, if possible, the non-church-going. It is based on the idea that the work of the church is two-fold, *constructive*, or building up within, and *aggressive*, or winning from without, and that the former exists for the sake of the latter. Our morning service and Sunday-school are for constructive work, our evening service for aggressive work. To this end we have experimented and studied, till at length we have ascertained a method by which I think any average choir and minister may steadily draw on the church-neglecters.

“The evening service seeks two ends as equally important. First of all, we mean to attract, but, secondly, to attract only to do good. The first end is essential, because we must begin by getting the people there; but there is no use in having them there unless they are spiritually helped by coming. This latter consideration rules out all sensational or clap-trap methods of drawing an audience. As to

attracting people, the things that most repel them seem to be dulness and insincerity. So we strive to avoid these faults as far as possible.

"We begin with singing, using for the most part the familiar and simple Gospel Hymns. The choir furnish also some choice solos, duets, and choruses. We make everything brief and snappy, and yet tender and sweet as possible. The singing continues for three-quarters of an hour, with brief intermissions caused by a Scripture reading of about ten verses, a prayer of about two minutes, the notices and offering.

"At 8.15 promptly I begin my sermon, dispensing with all manuscript, and even with a pulpit, and talking, in an off-hand, very familiar way on simple, practical gospel themes. I preach, ordinarily, thirty minutes by the clock, seldom running over even five minutes. I mean to illustrate in every possible way, use simple words, and go into no deep trains of theological argument. The sermon is not great in any sense; but I study it faithfully, and believe I succeed best when I make it plain, earnest, vivacious, and picturesque. The service is closed by a very short prayer, a hymn, and the benediction, the congregation being previously invited to remain for a brief after-meeting. A large proportion of the congregation go out, however, after the benediction (which is pronounced not later than 8.55) and from fifty to three hundred remain at the after-meeting. This continues till 9.15, and is occupied in prayer, testimony, and exhortation. An opportunity to rise for prayers is always given at the close of the meeting, and we seldom fail to have some to respond.

"The results of this Service of Song, as we call the evening meeting, are most admirable in many ways; first of all, in bringing a great multitude into the church who have fallen into a habit of neglecting church; next, in inducing no small number to become fully identified with us as members of our congregation, holding pews and attending the morning services; third, and best of all, in securing the conversion of many souls. We have had no revival, as yet, but we have known of one or more conversions almost every week since the service of song was inaugurated, a year and a half ago; many of them, I might perhaps say more than half of them, finding their way into other churches in this city, or leaving us for homes and churches in other places."

This plan, which trebled or quadrupled the congregation, was continued so many years, and so successfully, as to demonstrate that

something like it might be done in other and far smaller communities. *People enjoy singing.* And if in a service of song there is a brief, well-illustrated and extempore sermon, if the service is diversified by responsive reading of Scripture and any such subordinate changes from time to time as will save it from running in a rut, it will enable a preacher who is no Demosthenes or Cicero to hold and profit a large evening audience.

CHAPTER V.

MISSIONARY CONCERTS.

A. It is discreditable to our churches that the Missionary Concert is not more fully and ardently supported. The reason often given is that the love of many toward the world at large waxes cold. It is by no means always so. The cause is often rather intellectual than moral. Frequently the most earnest, self-sacrificing disciples are those who show little interest in this meeting. The trouble is that they hold themselves within too narrow a horizon. They become absorbed in the poor around their own doors. They insist that these unfortunates are as large a burden as they can carry on their hearts. An excellent and efficient Sunday-school superintendent whom I know can hardly be induced to concern himself with heathen beyond the sea. The conversion of the whole world to God, an object grand enough, one might suppose, to inspire a Christian soul, is so vast that one is lost in it. "Out of sight, out of mind"—the motto applies with emphasis to the pagan world. It is, in one respect, like that heavenly life, beyond the grave, in which many a sincere believer can be made to take only a moderate interest. It requires a larger intellectual range, a finer intellectual cast, than he has to absorb the mind in scenes so distant and mysterious.

But this slack interest is due also, in great part, to the neglect by pastors of the concert for missions. The invention must be taxed for means and methods to insure success to so important a meeting.

Every pastor has, whether aware of it or not, a deep personal interest in the spread of a missionary spirit through his church. The reflex effect of it on the church itself is of incalculable moment. In an age and a country that so exalt material wealth as the one thing needful, we need to be kept in vital contact with the heroic self-abandonment of the missionary spirit. The effect may be like that of the infusion of fresh blood from the veins of a vigorous man into those of an invalid. You will discover that any member of your church who is charged with this high "enthusiasm for humanity"

has an intelligence, a breadth of view, a quality of consecration, far beyond the average. To reach outside one's circle, one's nation, even, and embrace in his faith and love the unnumbered millions at the antipodes, is almost, in itself, a Christian education.

The time of the concert is, in itself, of small account. The name (which once implied that the churches met in concert one with another on the first Monday evening of each month) has long since lost its original meaning. In a small church, Sunday evening, the hour of the usual second service, may be convenient. In many of our churches the concert takes the place of the mid-week prayer-meeting after the first Sunday of the month.

The *material*, or subject-matter, for the concert, as the grand work of evangelizing the world advances and the number of publications devoted to it increases, is always increasing in volume and value. If you write to the headquarters of the Missionary Board of your own church, they will gladly aid you in any way possible. Letters fresh from the missionaries have, of course, a live interest. You can easily open a correspondence with some one of them. The religious weekly journals, and often the daily secular ones, have, often, valuable items bearing on missions.

Remember that "the field is the world." * It covers every good work for saving men that is going on in our day, no less at home than abroad. It is well, therefore, occasionally to leave the beaten track of foreign missions and take a view of work among the seamen, the outcasts in our cities, the Y. M. C. A. work, etc. Give your people some account of the manners and customs of the different heathen nations. This will help them to understand better the missionary reports from the fields. The lives of eminent missionaries are full of instructive scenes and incidents. Pictures illustrative of pagan and Mohammedan life, may be used to advantage.

Very large and useful maps may be made at small cost. Get two or three yards of bleached, double-width cotton sheeting. On this, with a box of colored crayons, you may make a bold, rough outline of the country on which you are to speak. Put in as few mountains, rivers and other details as possible. The objection to the large missionary maps published is not only their cost, but the multitude of

* This text (Matt. 13: 38), however, carries this meaning of great extent only "by accommodation," as preachers say. It occurs in the parable of the Tares, "The field is the world," *i. e.*, is *in* the world. That is the *locality* of it. There is no reference to its extent.

details, which so crowd the space as, at the distance across a church, to obscure the whole. With a rough map, such as I have suggested, you may occupy the concert on a Sunday evening, occasionally, with a very attractive and instructive lecture.

As to the conduct of the concert, for one thing, seek variety. Take each time an entirely different subject. If not for the weekly prayer-meeting, it may be well for the concert, to print and circulate, in December, a schedule of subjects for the year following. If you can get a friend pledged to take charge of each subject, and announce the name, so much the better.

Of reading at the concert, except original papers, there should be very little. Few will listen with interest to it. If you have educated ladies, old or young, in your church, they can hardly do better service than by papers prepared for the concert,

Do not confine all present, who may be inclined to speak, to the special subject of the evening. Make room for questions on missions. As there are in some minds objections to them, allow freedom to objections also.

Let the meeting be one, to a good degree, of prayer. Do not crowd it with mere headwork. Bring in also single stanzas of stirring missionary hymns.

CHAPTER VI.

REFORMS.

A. As to reforms to be urged forward against various sins and evils, you will have both errors to avoid and duties to do.

On the negative side, ride no hobbies. In no less sense than the idea of doing the most possible good in the world, be never a man of one idea. Your mission is too broad to be narrowed within a special crusade against a single evil. Never attempt to make of your church a temperance society or an anti-tobacco society. Put no pledges against any particular indulgence into your church-covenant. Credible discipleship—evidence of a renewed heart and a consecrated life—is the only just requisite for church-membership. The church is Christ's—not ours.

B. Would you, then, leave reforms to be carried on by those who are outside the church?

A. By no means. They are the business of every minister of Christ. Allow no man to excel you in zeal for them. Be self-moved, not drawn by others, into efforts for reform. Whether men will hear or forbear, speak the truth in love in regard to every sin. Be independent, as responsible only to God.

Be earnest for total-abstinence from strong drink as the only safe course, especially for the young. But be charitable toward those who conscientiously believe in the temperate use of wine. However much we may regret the views of such men, we have no right to denounce them as unprincipled. To their own Master they stand or fall.

Oppose the use of tobacco. Show the enormous cost of it to the country, and the immense amount of good that this wasted wealth might accomplish. The time will come—do your utmost to hasten it—when the smoking or chewing habit will be as discreditable to a Christian as is tipping now. The smoker himself will regret to see his son following his example. In a convention of tobacco-growers in the Connecticut Valley a wag proposed a resolution to the effect

that the use of tobacco ought to be encouraged in the public schools. When they showed their embarrassment, he added, "Gentlemen, why do you hesitate? If this is a legitimate business, why not push it?"

In referring to impurity, while speaking with good judgment, be never squeamish. Make no apologies. If you would not embarrass your hearers, show no embarrassment yourself. Timidly touch a nettle and it pricks you, they say. Grasp it firmly and you feel no wound.

Pastors sometimes show a narrow jealousy of the Young Men's Christian Association. They claim that it draws off from their churches the interest of its members. They would suppress the zeal of their young men in the Association that they may develop it toward the church. Why, you might as well cut off a man's head to develop his legs! Dampen a Christian's ardor on one side, and you dampen it on all sides. With occasional exceptions, the best Y. M. C. A. workers in your church will be among the best supporters you have.

Never allow the fact that a moral issue has been carried into politics to deter you from preaching on it *as* a moral issue. If such preaching bears against any political party, they, not you, are in fault. But with questions of mere material or economic interest, you have, in the pulpit, little concern.

BOOK FIFTH.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER-MEETINGS.

A. SOME writer has said to the young pastor, "Give one-third of yourself to your pulpit, one-third to your pastoral calls, and one-third to the prayer-meeting." That estimate of the importance of this service is hardly exaggerated. In the Sabbath worship the church is largely receptive. In the prayer-meeting brethren give expression to their own inner life. As a means of spiritual culture, therefore, it is invaluable.

First, as to the *place* of the meeting. Do your best to make it a cheerful, social room. Give it the air of a home parlor. Get engravings and illuminated Scripture-texts framed and hung around the walls. Have a carpet or drugget on the floor. Especially, whatever else is lacking, let the room be *amply lighted*. A dingy place is enough to take the life out of any meeting that ever was gathered. It is a sad mistake that, where there is no gas, there can be no abundant light. There are oil lamps now made with so large a flame, and oil is so cheap, that there is no excuse for a gloomy room. For seats, if possible, provide chairs. They are both more home-like than settees and more easily moved. See carefully to the *ventilation*.

By all means, if the meeting does not fill the room, gather the people forward around the desk. "A pastor," says Dr. Washington Gladden, "with the people in the back seats, and emptiness between himself and them, feels like singing pathetically :

'Though sundered far, by faith we meet
Around one common mercy-seat.'

You will find it no easy matter to remedy this evil. But the success of your meeting is largely involved in it. Urging the brethren forward may answer in a single instance. But at the next meeting they will begin to sag back.

Various expedients are adopted. I have sometimes turned down, as not to be used, all the seats except a few at the front. Others pass a cord across the seats farthest from the desk. In the lecture-room of a large church in New York is a high screen moving on rollers. Before the prayer-meeting opens this is pushed well forward. Of course all who enter are obliged to take seats in front of it. Then, gradually, as those seats are filled, the screen is pushed back from the front. Of course, lest it seem arbitrary, any such measure must be adopted gently and in good humor. Another method, where chairs are used, is to put at first only one or two concentric half-circles of chairs around the desk. The rest are left gathered in one corner. Any one coming in after the first rows are occupied goes to the corner, takes a chair, and commences a third or fourth semi-circle. I have known a pastor, also, by calling on brethren in the most distant seats for prayer and remark, to intimate that *that* is the *exposed situation*.

Second, there are expedients for increasing the *attendance* at the meeting. Ladies without escort, living at some distance, often suppose it impossible for them to attend. Suggest that two or three of them may escort one another. Also some one who rides has often an extra seat or two. Look after such instances. Induce parents to bring their children—at least the older ones. Carefully notice, from week to week, who are absent. See if they cannot be drawn in. When announcing the meeting from the pulpit, throw emphasis upon it. Never announce it as a matter of course, in a perfunctory way. Report any meeting that is especially interesting. Use it to draw others to the next one.

Induce the church to set apart the regular evening of the meeting as sacred to that purpose.

B. But those who are not constant attendants complain that, as one church takes one evening, another another, there is none left at liberty for anything else.

A. I know they do. You must remedy that. Call a meeting of the pastors. Get the churches to agree on some *one* common evening. If necessary to secure this, willingly surrender your own pref-

erence. And when the arrangement is effected make the most of it. Urge your people to fall in with it. I have in mind a town in Massachusetts where it would be quite vain to appoint any evening entertainment on the mid-week meeting-night. No one would attend it.

Third, as to the *subjects* to be introduced. There is sometimes a notion that if the subject is a large, comprehensive one, it will promote variety in remark and prove rich in suggestion. A great mistake. The result is as when you announce, as your theme, religion in general. Each brother, being left at liberty to fall into the rut in which his mind commonly runs, straightway does it. What you need is so to divide your subject into several varied ones that no one meeting in a series will resemble the others. For the sake of variety, therefore, adhere as closely as may be to each subject.

Have in your own mind a schedule of subjects. One schedule might cover the great themes of theology. But, of course, do not announce it as a *doctrinal* one. That would kill it. Bring in the doctrines, as Jesus did, on their practical side. Another schedule might be on the Gospels and the Acts. Pass along consecutively from verse to verse. Take, of course, only such as will make profitable matters for your meeting.

+ B. Would you announce the schedule from the pulpit?

A. No. Though that is often done, or else the list is printed and distributed, I doubt the wisdom of it. Perhaps by a revival of religion, perhaps by some other striking event in the community, your docket is likely to be interrupted. And when once it has been the people lose faith in it.

D. But is it not worth while for any who have been absent to know what matter is coming up on a particular night?

A. If they could *certainly* know, it might be. But, after all, you will find by experience that they who avail themselves of such a schedule are exceedingly few.

Do not announce a bare text or theme for the meeting. Your people are not homilists. They are not accustomed to analyzing a clause or a subject and drawing out suggestions. A father, serving his little child at table, *cuts up* his food. As to this matter, most of your people are children. When announcing your subject on the previous Sunday, subdivide. Make points. Help them to help you at the meeting.

Do not assume that a subject will be suggestive and fruitful in the ratio of its importance. I remember an announcement of "Prayer for the Holy Spirit," and the meeting was a very dull one.

D. But we *must have* such subjects.

A. Yes, but carefully *work them up* in advance. The one I have just mentioned might have been so drawn out by the pastor as to be abundantly fruitful.

Fourth, the *participants* in the meeting. Remember that it is chiefly a service rather for quickening the spiritual life than for intellectual information and exercise. For this you should secure as *many voices* as possible. And this general sharing in the conference will develop and culture the talents of the membership. If you find fastidious critics, disposed to complain of the unlettered brethren, labor with them privately. Show them of how little moment, compared with spiritual profit, is accuracy of speech. Be always on the lookout for new participants in the meeting. Appeal personally, in private, to those who have been too diffident to open their lips. Suggest to each one of them a thought to be contributed at the meeting. Explain to him that he need make no lengthy speech, that ten words are better than silence. If this fails to draw him out, put to him at the meeting, in an easy, conversational way, some question on the topic before you, such as he can readily answer. You may find the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, with its pledge from every one to take some part, a great help in increasing the number of participants in the general prayer-meeting of the church.

C. But what can be done with one of those prosy bores who insist on tiring out every one, and so killing the meeting?

A. The best remedy, instead of making an issue with the man personally, is to get common consent to an unalterable three-minute rule. Then you can, with no ground for complaint, arrest your persecutor.

But, fifthly, we come to the *conduct* of the meeting. And here rises the question, Shall the pastor always take the lead? I have one in mind who, for several years together, committed the meeting to about a dozen of the "pillars" of his church. Each one led in turn. The pastor, always present when in town, took part only as did other brethren. In that church this plan worked well. But I should not, in general, advise it. In many a church you could hardly make up your list of leaders without coming to some one whom it

would make trouble either to include or exclude. And if you study the meeting and the best methods of conducting it as thoroughly as you should, you will, with yourself in the chair, make it a far more profitable meeting than, with any layman there, it is likely to be.

C. Then when the pastor is absent will it not *drag*?

A. Possibly, somewhat. If anywhere you prove an efficient man, you will in your absence be missed. There is no help for that. But you can, by the Lord's grace, so set the talents of the brethren in running order that, at least for a while, they will keep the momentum. In accomplishing a good meeting you will raise their standard. You will teach them how the thing should be done. Make them recognize that, as a mother with a child, you do not count the meeting well trained and matured till it can *go alone*.

Begin your arrangements for each meeting *in advance*. If your people are backward in sustaining it, get two or three pledged, a separate group each week, to be a dependence. Induce some few of the more spiritual, if you can, to consider the meeting as commencing, a quarter of an hour or more before the set time, in their own homes. Ask them to seek a blessing there—to go with hearts already warm to the church. In your own preparation faithfully give time to prayer as well as to study.

Remember that a meeting is often spoiled by the manner in which it opens. The first one to rise after the pastor strikes a low, weak keynote. Perhaps he is depressed, and brings in his melancholy air like a chill mist from the sea. Select an earnest, live, hopeful brother with whom to begin.

Commence your meeting promptly. If two or three have come punctually, do not keep them waiting for the loiterers. Make the latter, by finding the meeting begun, see that they are loiterers. Sing at first, often, two or three lively hymns.

But have no stereotyped way of commencing. Do it now with a hymn, now with a prayer, then with a responsive reading of the Scripture. It is well to have ready in advance half a dozen or more verses of Scripture that bear on the subject for the evening. Early in the meeting read this list, asking who will volunteer to take each verse and be prepared to read it and make some remark on it. Previously and carefully study these verses yourself. Then call in succession on the readers. Ask them questions. Offer your own exposition. You may be surprised to see how many different phases of the

subject this will develop. Or, as I heard an experienced pastor do lately, you may in the same way divide a *topic*.

It is well either to conduct the entire meeting in your chair or to rise for only the opening. Encourage brethren to speak without rising. Relieve them of any apprehension that they are expected to "make remarks" in the old regulation way. That seems to promise a speech, for which some of the most thoughtful and spiritual will have no courage. While allowing any one the utmost freedom to rise and speak, if he prefers, in the old style, adopt mainly a conversational method. Encourage all to put questions to you on the topic in hand. Respond to a brother (if you are sure it is one who will not be disconcerted) with some question or suggestion of your own.

Never imagine that you have prepared so perfect an edition of a meeting that you can afford to *stereotype* it. *Any* routine, however excellent, will as surely spoil, if *kept*, as the manna in the desert.

Sometimes, not often, the subject or occasion may be such that you can yourself well occupy the time given to remarks. But even then make no long homily. Divide what you say into installments. Intersperse prayer and song.

To the last degree possible dispense with any stiffness of church order. Take up any recent incidents that can be turned to spiritual profit. Use illustrations from homely and familiar scenes.

Have ready stanzas of hymns to be opportunely thrown in. *E. g.*, when a brother has been speaking of the blessedness of faith,

"My faith looks up to Thee ;"

or of the preciousness of Christ,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds."

C. But you seem to assume a larger meeting than is possible in a little pioneer church. Suppose we have but two or three who can or will take part?

A. You need not, even then, tread a narrow, monotonous round. Call those few together. Point them to the situation. Have a confidential talk with them. Let no one of them feel obliged to make a long speech or prayer. Each can make a *short* prayer and a *few* remarks, and suggest a verse to be sung. So, with responsive read-

ing, question and answer, remarks of your own, etc., you may have variety enough.

Close promptly. Let no degree of life and warmth in the meeting tempt you to go beyond the hour. Some may have engagements to meet. They will, if you are not punctual, be naturally annoyed and disinclined to attend again.

B. But if others wish to continue?

A. Then say, "*This meeting closes now. Any are free to go. But I gladly remain with some who will hold, for a few moments, another meeting.*"

Encourage the people, after the benediction, to linger for conversation. Intimate acquaintance among them promotes freedom in the meeting.

As to the young people's meetings, where there is no Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, you will have to take, at first, personal charge. Carefully learn what young men will take part. Before each meeting, notify four or five of them to have something to say. Extempore remarks, especially from those young and inexperienced, will soon grow tiresome.

After a few weeks devolve the meeting on the young people themselves. But often go in for a quarter of an hour at the commencement. See whether frivolity, or any other thing objectionable, is making its appearance.

CHAPTER II.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS.

A. As to our style of social life within church walls, there has been, during the century, a complete revolution. What would our fathers have thought of a church parlor in connection with the sanctuary? A most carnal, ungodly intruder, not to be tolerated in a Christian community. But now, in any large church, in some Christian denominations, it has become almost as necessary as a pulpit. All sorts of facilities, too, for the convenience of worshipers are introduced. I read lately of a *baby-room* in a Scandinavian church in Minneapolis. It is an apartment near the pulpit, with its side toward the audience, and windows opening toward the preacher and reaching down to within about four feet of the floor. While the mothers look over the ledges of these windows and join the worship, the babes and little children have ample room, out of sight of the congregation, to play on the floor. A side-door enables the mothers to take out such children as grow restive and vociferous. It is an admirable and a thoroughly Christian provision for careworn hearts that might otherwise lose the privileges of the church.

But to recur for a moment to the fathers, and their reasons for a more bare and austere church-life than that of our time. It was the natural recoil from one extreme to another. The English parish had, under the lead of its wine-drinking, fox-hunting clergy, been given up largely to a wild whirl of festivity. To earnest men it was a perpetual scandal. Each sacrament, as an *opus operatum*, was supposed to carry a spiritual virtue of its own. Whoever partook of it regularly was in the line of promotion heavenward. Purity or self-sacrifice in his private habits was of minor account. Men and women who were most devout with their prayer-books at church were most questionable in their licenses in social life. It was not unnatural that the Puritans should too hastily connect the festivity and the license as cause and effect. Consequently—their poverty also contributing in the same direction—they eschewed whatever would have thrown around their worship a cheerful, lightsome air.

For lecture-rooms, without prayer meetings or Sunday-schools, they had little occasion. To adorn their church walls with pictures, if they had had pictures, would have savored of the harlot of Rome. Flowers on the pulpit would have struck them as one of the world's vanities. Even a stove—after the introduction of stoves in private dwellings—they counted a dangerous concession to self-indulgence. So, in grim repression of all carnality, they sat and shivered through a sixty minutes' sermon.

But the problem now is to levy, for Christ and his church, on every power and element of life. You can see for yourselves how Satan works the social instinct in souls. He is liberal in devising gratifications for it. So, too, for Christ's and men's sakes, must we be. As the fisherman, before dropping his hook, throws out bait gratuitously by the handful, to attract the fish around his boat, so we must study and devise and expend, as fishers of men. "*Fas est et ab hoste doceri.*"

There must be thought and labor given to this matter. The early disciples at Jerusalem, in the warmth of their brotherhood, had all their goods in common stock.

B. But that was a transient arrangement.

A. Yes. And we swing to the other extreme. We lose sight of all community of interest. We look on the church simply as a place where we spend an hour or two together once a week. Returning home from it, we have, till another Sabbath, little concern or connection one with another.

Now the Lord's object, I believe, was to constitute a *redeemed society* on earth. It is the germ of that renewed social state—"the restitution of all things," as Peter calls it—in which love shall be the cohesive force, and in all relations the motive-power. It was a grand suggestion of Dr. Edward Payson that each inhabitant of the heavenly world will receive, to the full, as much pleasure from any blessing conferred by him on another as that other himself enjoys. Consequently the happiness of each will be multiplied by as many as there are of the redeemed millions around him. Now the church on earth is the embryo of a society as perfect as that in its love.

C. But is any such absorption in the happiness of others, while we remain in these temporal conditions a thing possible?

A. Probably not. But we may advance much nearer to it than, in our self-interest, we are apt to imagine:

“Celestial fruits, on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow.”

Raise in this direction the aims and aspirations of your people. As often as may be, without wearying them, dwell on it as a grand uplifting thought. If you infuse the right *spirit*, ways and means for giving it effect will come to light.

Rev. Geo. B. Bacon published, some years ago, an account of what he called “Our Church Lawsuit.” A good lady, a member of his church, was afflicted with a scapegrace for a husband. After making her life a burden, he left for one of the States of the interior. There he took advantage of the miserably loose divorce-laws of the State. Vilifying his wife with every sort of slander in his complaint, and publishing, as the law required, a notice of his application, he hoped the advertisement would not get to her knowledge. He expected the case to go by default against her. But some friend sent her a copy of the advertisement. Her pastor found her helpless under the atrocious charges and in deep distress. At once, calling his officers together, he organized a defense. They employed a lawyer to gather full evidence both of her innocence and of her husband’s guilt. In the Western town in which the trial was to occur they retained another lawyer. When the plaintiff made his appearance he was confronted with such abundant and conclusive testimony that the judge threw his case out of court and left him overwhelmed with confusion. Of course such services of the church would be rare. Not every church could undertake them at all. But they point, at least, toward that full realization of community of interest which, partially on earth, and completely in heaven, is yet to be realized.

In developing the social life of the church the liberal culture of woman in our time is to be called into service. The Roman Catholic church, as you know, puts woman into false, artificial seclusion. The glory of Protestant Christianity is to unfold, to the last degree, her social power, and to use it in the service of Christ.

One lesson we may learn from the Roman priesthood. By feasts and fasts, saints’ days and the confessional, they have aimed to bring life, in all its phases, within the power and influence of the church. Now for better ends, and in the interest rather of the individual than of the church, that policy should be pursued among us. The

Catholic Church keeps its house of worship open the whole week through. Protestants are coming to understand that it is a miserably wasteful use of the Christian treasure invested in the sanctuary to open the house for the benefit of the people only once or twice a week. As a club-house is made a sort of social home for the members (for the family-men among them far more than it ought to be), such, to some extent, especially for the young men of the congregation, the church may become.

We have spent labor enough in the negative work of warning the young against enticing amusements. It is high time for something more positive—for devising something in which they may innocently and profitably indulge. "Nature abhors a vacuum." The mind must love and pursue something. Shut out evil by filling with good. If a room reeks with foul and stifling air, would you tell the occupants not to breathe? They must breathe. If you furnish only the poisonous atmosphere, they will breathe that. But throw up the windows. Let in the fresh, pure gales from heaven. They will displace the noxious gases with their own reviving life.

When Dr. C. L. Goodell commenced his work in St. Louis he found more card-playing and dancing and theatre-going among the young people than was at all to his taste or feeling as their pastor. But he proclaimed no crusade against these indulgences—had hardly a word to say in condemnation of them. There was a more excellent way. He organized methods of Christian work. He formed the youth and maidens into cheerful, social bands and guilds, to clothe and feed and teach the poor. He made their life in the church a very hive of beneficent activity. So, as the husk from around a growing germ, the frivolities of themselves fell off.

If gatherings for mutual acquaintance and the promotion of the household-spirit in the congregation are to succeed, there are certain underlying sentiments that you must carefully cherish and diffuse.

One of them is that of the *unity* of the congregation in a common social life. Especially you must maintain this as against all spirit of caste—all divisive lines of exclusiveness on the one hand or jealousy on the other. You and your family may, by your example of genial sympathy with the poorest and most obscure, do much to promote this. You can induce some, at least, of the most prominent families in the church to do more. You can make any of the working classes of either sex feel at home within church-walls.

C. But will they not then demand recognition and social intimacy *outside* church walls?

A. There may be, on that score, some embarrassment. But less of it than you imagine. People of different degrees of culture and dissimilar tastes, even if mixed, will, like oil and water, soon fall apart. But if there is no haughty assumption on the one side there will be no ill-will on the other.

Another sentiment to be cherished is the *duty* of mutual acquaintance. In a very large church it is not altogether possible. But so far as it *is*, teach it as no merely social, but a Christian obligation. Among those who are not even acquainted there will be small show of sympathy. The ceremonious Frenchman, when reproached for not saving the drowned man, asked with astonishment, "How could I? I had never been introduced to the gentleman." A work of grace that commences among a congregation intimately acquainted one with another will spread far more rapidly than where each stands in his isolation. As when the electric current enters a net-work of steel, all are in connection—all good conductors.

Now as to means for making the social gathering succeed. Many a pastor, with no social instinct, gives the announcement of such a gathering in an indifferent way. You would think it to be to him a matter of small moment. Be more cordial. Throw yourself into the invitation. Urge the people all to attend. Especially press those who are not yet generally acquainted.

As was said of the prayer-meeting, let the *place* for this gathering be made, by abundant light and by embellishments, as attractive as possible.

B. Then you would not have it in a private house?

A. Not commonly, unless forced to that. The diffident and retiring, whom *especially* you have in view and wish to attract, feel less at home in a private house than in the church. The latter seems to them freer ground.

It may be well to send personal invitations to such as would otherwise hardly attend. Search out these distant and lonely ones. Here, if not in their parties at their own homes, your people may follow the precept of Jesus (Luke 14:13), "When thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee."

If the gathering is to succeed, *some one must work*. It is idle to

expect people to enjoy themselves in mere conversation. A highly educated company may do that. In a great range of reading and observation they have resources. But when the uncultivated have passed a few commonplaces about the weather and crops and politics, their stream of conversation trickles and runs dry. They are tired and will not attend a second such meeting. After the first twenty minutes you must have something provided to occupy them.

A committee of young ladies and gentlemen should be on the watch to see that no one is left lonely in a corner. Have it understood that *no introductions* are needed. Let each one, who will, introduce himself.

See what musical resources you have—whether there is any one skilled with the cornet or violin, or other instrument, in addition to your piano or cabinet organ.

As was said of the prayer-meeting, conduct no two social gatherings alike.

Either read some author yourself or find one or two of your people who are good readers. Perhaps they will commit to memory a dialogue or short play and recite it.

D. Would you fit up a stage for acting plays?

A. No. It is so laborious and might prove so expensive that they would tire of it. And it might work dissension among your people. An entertainment that will bring in discord costs more than it is worth.

But the reading may be diversified and made instructive. Devote each evening to some one author. Let prose and poetic writers alternate. Thus, *e. g.*, Irving and Hood, Dickens and Longfellow, Hawthorne and Lowell, Cable and Whittier, Fanny Fern and Holmes, Mrs. Stowe and Saxe. Short stories and poems, each one complete in itself, are better than portions of a whole book. Now and then may be thrown in a little of Mark Twain or Artemus Ward or the Widow Bedott. Let no one sort of entertainment be more than ten minutes long.

Possibly you might induce two or three other pastors to join you in the purchase of a stereopticon, which could be used in your churches successively.

Some slight collation—a biscuit and a cup of coffee are enough—is quite desirable. It affords something to occupy all and promotes sociability. But keep it always simple and inexpensive.

A short exercise in congregational singing—say two or three hymns—will not only make variety, but train the people for your Sabbath worship.

Make it a point, for yourself, to speak to every one in the room. Inquire about each family. You will probably learn of occasions for calling. Have the children, at least the older ones, present. Or, if that does not work well, hold for them a separate social gathering. Let it come oftener than once a year. You will, of course, expect them to take larger liberty in diversion than adults.

C. What ground would you take in regard to amusements in general?

A. In the first place, I would not denounce any amusement in vogue among reputable people with such sweeping condemnation as belongs to a crime. Not only you have no right so broadly to condemn these things, but you will, by stamping yourself as narrow and bigoted, lessen your influence in other directions.

In the second place, remember that these amusements are conventional matters. Like the fashions, they come and go. They are more objectionable in one time and place, less in another. In my boyhood the bowling-alley was, in Christian circles, everywhere condemned. Now it is everywhere allowed. In a community where such amusements are so generally taken under Christian auspices as to be stripped of their bad associations, they are comparatively harmless. But they must not be pursued to excess. "All things," says Paul (1 Cor. 6: 12), "are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any." But in other communities they are still entangled with such associations, and so are eschewed by the good. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient."

In the third place, it is not the amusements themselves which do the mischief. They are the symptoms—not the disease. The disease is the underlying worldliness which becomes absorbed in amusement and pushes it beyond reasonable bounds. One should refrain, then, not because the entertainment is criminal, but because time is too valuable for higher uses, and because indulgence may lead others, with less self-control, to excess. "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." (Rom. 14: 21.)

The best way of correcting excess in amusement among your young people is that already mentioned as taken by Dr. Goodell, of

St. Louis. If you think it necessary to oppose it directly, strike no attitude of holy horror. Take Paul's line of dealing. And, finally, do not denounce Christians, otherwise faithful, who hold, as to these matters, less rigid views and practice than your own. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Judge not, that ye be not judged." Remembering that love is the sum of all Christian character, be charitable to your brethren.

Before leaving the matter of the church social gathering, I will add that the gathering should be closed with hymn and prayer.

An annual social gathering, or fellowship-meeting, for the *church-membership* exclusively, is very desirable. This differs from the annual *business* meeting of the church. It should be held at another period of the year. When announcing this fellowship-meeting, lay stress on it as a gathering of the *household* of faith. Give notice that the roll of resident members will be called and each one asked to respond with a text or sentiment. The meeting might be known as the "Annual Roll-call." Commence with prayer and song and a few earnest, affectionate words, to promote the *family spirit* in the church. Defer your roll till you are sure no more will come in. Then let the meeting break up for free, familiar conversation. Insist that, as they have *covenanted* one with another, no *introductions* should be necessary. Afterward—say in twenty minutes—call them to order again. Have some subject, such as "The love of Christ for his church," or "The blessedness of a fellowship that (unlike earthly friendships) is to last forever." Let there be a free, conversational meeting with that as the theme. It might be well to reserve the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," for this particular meeting, using it at no other time.

BOOK SIXTH.
AMONG THE CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

A. ON the history of this institution you will find, in Dr. H. Clay Trumbull's Yale lectures on the Sunday-school, much interesting matter. I outline a few facts, for which I am indebted to him.

The Sunday-school relies on teaching, not by continuous discourse, but, after the Socratic method, by question and answer. It is rather conversational than homiletic. A teacher who does not arouse in the scholar interest enough to ask and answer questions quite nearly fails.

Teaching a thing is not only telling it. It is *causing another to know* that thing.

When the Catholic reaction against the Reformation in the sixteenth century took place, the far-sighted, zealous leaders, Loyola, Aquaviva, Lainez, Xavier, and others, defended with the Sunday-school their imperiled church. They indoctrinated the children with their dogmas. And, largely by the Sunday-school, the spread of the Reformation was arrested. The dividing line between the Roman and Protestant communions was fixed where, substantially, from that day to this it has remained.

C. But did not the Protestant reformers also avail themselves of the Sunday-school?

A. Yes. And with it they maintained the ground they might otherwise have soon lost. Catechisms, embodying the main truths of Christianity, were prepared. Whether they were more beneficial than harmful may be questioned. They drew the children away from the personal life and teachings of the Lord Jesus to the intellectual process of committing to memory long dogmatic definitions. They gave more play to the head than to the heart. And, in time,

as might have been expected, the catechizing stiffened into a mechanical round of question and answer. The soul went out of it. After which the body, the outward observance, soon perished. As a consequence, in the early history of New England the Sunday-school was hardly known.

Yet the institution became the germ of the English common-school system. The English Bible Society, moreover, and the Religious Tract Society grew out of the need of books for the children in their classes on the Sabbath.

When the Sunday-school was introduced into this country, early in the present century, French infidelity was sweeping over the land. It was perhaps the Sunday-school that saved us from the present condition of France.

The progress of the Sunday-school in the United States has been astonishing. There are nearly as many souls gathered into it as in all the Protestant world besides. We had, in 1887, about 1,000,000 teachers and 8,000,000 scholars.

The International Lessons were introduced in 1873. Young people have little idea of the immense advantage of the *uniformity* secured by this system. Before it was introduced each school had for study every Sabbath its own passage of Scripture. As a consequence, no comments of any sort could be prepared for general use. But now, beside numerous commentaries on the lessons in bound volumes we have in every religious weekly paper, and in multitudes of secular weeklies and dailies (Saturday issues), expositions and hints for teachers. The hold of the Sunday-school on the esteem and love of all Christendom has been immeasurably strengthened by the International Lessons.

Since the schools of Robert Raikes—commenced in 1780, and generally accounted the origin of the modern Sunday-school—were founded, very important changes in the institution have occurred. Raikes gathered from the streets of London little waifs, whom he taught their letters and the first rudiments of knowledge. His aim was to enable them to read the Scriptures. To this day, in England, the children of the “upper classes,” so called, are not found in the Sunday-school. They are instructed separately. The school is not counted, as with us, part of the church machinery.

With all the excellencies of the Sunday-school, certain evils cling to it.

First, this nurturing children by wholesale, so to speak, has its disadvantages. It is true that, on a large scale, where there are most Sunday-schools there is most family religion. But in too many instances, notwithstanding, parents throw on the teacher in the school the whole religious instruction of their children. Now the teacher sees the child, in general, but once a week. The parents see him incessantly, morning, noon, and night. The parents individualize him. They know his temperament. They are familiar with his temptations, troubles, and proclivities. Therefore strongly and repeatedly impress upon parents that no one can possibly either take their place or do their work. They too often take for granted that a Sunday-school teacher is an exceptionally devoted and spiritual Christian. Frequently that is true. But by no means always. A teacher is sometimes indolent, inert, and spiritually of a low grade. The parent should *know* what sort of instruction the child receives, by what sort of influences, in the class, he is surrounded.

In the second place, children come to look on the school as *their church*. Too often they desire no other church. So, growing to full years, as they leave the school, and have no church-going habits, they stray out of all Christian surroundings. There have been some alarming statements, perhaps exaggerated, as to the number of Sunday-school children who are afterward found in our penitentiaries. To draw the children into the church, enlist the efforts of the superintendent and teachers. Speak to the children yourself in regard to it in the school. Occasionally, if you can so arrange, have a whole lesson devoted to it. Also labor with the parents of such children as incline to neglect church-worship. Show the peril of it. There are false and absurd ideas of religious liberty for young children afloat. Parents imagine they have no right to control such of them as wish to attend other Sunday-schools or churches. The little ones should be, as to this matter, *controlled* by parents. They should be held to the church that the parents attend. Otherwise they may soon fall away from all churches.

But especially make the church service attractive to the children.

C. But how, while we preach to adults, can that be done?

A. It is not easy. But that there are those who do it proves it possible.

Do not expect in church, especially from the smaller children, the grave decorum of adults. Of course they must be quiet enough to

make no disturbance. But let not parents be nervous with fear that their little ones will annoy the congregation. Let them allow the largest liberty possible. Says one of the foremost pastors in New York, "After the little sermon that I preach to the children, before the discourse to the adults, I say to the wee folks, 'Now you can go home, or go to sleep under the seat, as you like.'" If you do not go as far as that, you should at least remember that, if the younger children are kept under too close constraint, the church will become a perfect prison to them. When five or six years old I was always taken to church. I was at liberty to go to sleep there when I chose. So it was no trial at all to go. But, when awake, I heard truth which I have, and to my dying day shall have, in distinct and vivid memory.

Some pastors, after announcing the text, address the children in a "sermonette" of about eight minutes. This is given extempore. It takes from the text another line of thought than that used with the adults. With ample illustration, it is made as lively and winning as possible.

D. And when this is past, what during the rest of the service are the children to do?

A. True enough. That is one objection to the sermonette. Unless it is followed by other words to the children, interspersed through the service, they will feel after it that the minister has done with them and expects from them no further attention.

It is better, therefore, to bring in several times, along the course of the sermon, remarks and illustrations for little hearers. Say to them, "Now, children, here is something for you," and you will be quite sure to get their attention. To break away, for this purpose, from a written sermon is not easy. But you can accustom yourself to it.

Dr. Goodell, of St. Louis, had the teachers sit in the galleries, with such of the children as had no seats with parents. Each child was furnished with a little memorandum-book. In this he was expected to note, for report on the next Sabbath, the text, the theme, the chief heads, and whatever else he could gather of the sermon. This, of course, would help to hold his attention. At a church in Toledo, Ohio, at the outset of the service, every child who has a Bible is called upon to show it. They have a banner, also, with a gold star, given as a prize to the class which has furnished the largest number

of attendants at the various meetings of the church. The class next in faithfulness has a banner with a silver star. It is well, if practicable, to get some portion of the children together in the church near the pulpit. Scattered throughout the building, they lack the incitement which comes from others close around them.

Remember, in all the service, that you address children. Take a vivacious style. Use much of the language of common life. Bring in abundant illustration.

Let a large number of the hymns used in the Sunday-school be sung in the church also; and take many of the church-hymns into the Sunday-school. There is such a difference in the style of the music and of the words used in the two places, at present, that the children, if they attend the church, complain that it is heavy and dull. In some of our smaller churches a choir of children is made up for the church service.

By such means the children may be strongly attracted toward the worship of the whole congregation.

A third trouble to a pastor from the Sunday-school, sometimes, is a Diotrophes, loving to "have the preëminence." He is jealous for his rights. He grudges the pastor any voice in the direction of the school. Now you should be the pastor of the entire parish, the school included. But do not proceed, by claiming your rights, to raise an issue. Talk kindly with the superintendent. Give him credit for such excellencies as he has. Relieve him from any fear that you wish to supplant either him or his influence. Make helpful suggestions as to the management of the school. If, after long patience, all proves vain (and *you can find a good substitute*—not otherwise), confer with your officers in regard to a change at the end of the year.

A fourth obstacle to the Sunday-school work is the incompetency of teachers. Some few may be, in every respect, qualified and faithful. But others will make too much of the "framework" of the lesson. They will spend the time in the class on points in sacred history, geography, manners and customs. As to the value of such information there is a glamour on the eyes of many Bible-readers. Measurably, of course, the information is needful to a clear idea of a Scripture lesson. But the notion is that one may find something far more edifying, spiritually, in knowing the distance between Jerusalem and Jericho than in being able to tell the number of miles from

New York to Boston, or from Edinburgh to Glasgow. If a preacher in the pulpit finds any exposition, or any sacred geography or archæology, requisite in explaining his text, he gives it. But he deals with it briefly. As soon as may be he hastens over it to the main truth, to which all this is preliminary. So should it be with a Sunday-school teacher. But this subordinate matter is easily furnished. Any good Bible dictionary is a treasury of it. So the indolent teacher deals it out in prodigal abundance.

Endeavor to *level up* the poorest instructors to the grade of the best. A good teachers' meeting will be first in order. But you will probably find that those who least need the meeting will attend. Those who most need it will not. Therefore take three or four of the *former* into your confidence. Remind them that by making such a meeting successful they can do a great service to the school.

If you can secure a full attendance in no other way, make a start with a social gathering and collation for the teachers. Get them thoroughly acquainted, both with you and one with another. Partially at this meeting, and more fully at the next one, a week later, bring in a discussion of the lesson. Get the few better teachers to help you in making the meeting conversational, and so attractive. Do not merely expound the lesson. Show the *practical applications* of it to the children and young people of your school. Give illustrations and anecdotes. Make the meeting so helpful that none will feel able to afford to be absent.

Show teachers how to *individualize* each scholar. Urge them to become personally and intimately acquainted with the home surroundings and influences of each child. No one of them should be satisfied without calling often at the home of each member of his class. Every month or two let him write a letter, with personal greeting and affectionate counsel, to each one of them.

If in any group of boys or girls there is a *leading spirit*, by all means let him or her, if possible, be won to Christ. Secure the confidence of such a leader. Make him feel the responsibility of his position.

"Do not give eight boys to a teacher who has only four-boy power." He is a rare person who can interest and profit more than six.

Often a young man can better deal with boys, or a young lady with girls, than can any one older. But frequently you will find

age to be rather in souls than in bodies. Many an old man or woman has carried into later years the life and freshness of youth. Such a one, having withal the wisdom and experience of age, may be the ideal teacher.

Conduct, if possible, a Normal Bible Class for the training of new instructors. Remember that really *interesting and efficient teachers* are the great want of the Sunday-school.

I would not, as an ordinary teacher, take a class. No general should command a corporal's guard. It is not that you are to be jealous for your position or dignity. But your time may be better spent. You should *teach the teachers*—not the scholars. One pastor whom I knew made it a practice to walk around among the classes. Often as he greeted one teacher and another, he would find some knotty question up in the class. They wished his counsel. So, for five or ten minutes, he would sit and talk with them. He found it as useful a course as he could adopt.

Make the school, occasionally, the theme of a whole sermon. Impress on parents their *obligation to teachers* for this gratuitous work done in behalf of their children. Show them that the least they can do, is, both with sympathy and pecuniary aid, liberally to support the school.

It is well to promote in each class, especially of the young children, something of an *esprit du corps*. Give each class a name, as "Little Gleaners," "The Children in the Temple," the "Shepherd's Lambs," or whatever. Let them have a banner, inscribed with the name. Let them be taught to make it, by their faithfulness, justify their pride.

Look over your church, especially over your Normal Class or Bible Class, for new teachers. They need not be church members. Though that is desirable, let it be enough if they are apparently Christians.

C. But suppose we cannot find a full supply even of Christians?

A. Well, necessity knows no law. It is, in general, better that children should be in the Sunday-school than in the street. In such an exigency I should take the best teachers I could get. But as soon as possible put in such as will lead the scholars directly to Christ.

Keep on the lookout, also, for scholars who are either interested in religious things or so evidently renewed that they ought to profess

their faith. "Shake the tree often for ripe fruit." I have known a pastor whose way it was, in the autumn, soon after his vacation, to gather the teachers that they might report the spiritual condition of members of their classes. This not only increased his stock of information, but kept the teachers on the alert in regard to those in their charge.

D. Would you have the church control the school?

A. As the highest authority, in the last appeal, by all means I would. The teachers may, well enough, nominate the superintendent. But the church should elect. But the *pecuniary support* of the school must go with the control of it. A man who sends off his son to earn his own livelihood can hardly expect from him very implicit obedience. "Many a scholar, belonging to a church to-day that liberally pays its pastor, choir, and sexton, might well cry, 'How many hired servants of my futher have bread enough and to spare: but I perish here with hunger!'"

B. But would you have collections taken up weekly in the classes?

A. Certainly. But these should go for the benefit of the world at large, to outside charities. Great part of the spiritual training the children need is the grace of beneficence. They ought to be kept in vital contact with the great evangelistic movements at home and abroad. It is a serious wrong to them to be debarred from all this. The expenses of the school should be as much a part of the current expenses of the church as the pastor's or the sexton's salary. If there must be a resort to fairs or lectures or other entertainments to increase the income, let these be undertaken by the church—not by the school, left to shift for itself.

Suggest a new programme of opening services in the school each year. Let this include a passage of Scripture. For the first quarter, let the passage be read from the printed slips. But the school should be expected to commit it, meanwhile, to memory. By the first of April let it be recited without the slips. In this way a good deal of Scripture will be learned by heart.

C. What as to the library of the school?

A. In Wales, I am told, they have no libraries. They fear a diversion of the children from the Bible. But I would not follow the Welsh example.

The books should be selected either by yourself or by a carefully

chosen committee. The bad fashion often is, when a library is well run down, to throw into it, at once, a large addition of new books. There are several evils in this. So large a number of books is likely to be hastily selected. Moreover, as no other addition follows for a long period, the children soon get the impression that the library is growing stale again. A better way is, first, to make an agreement with the bookseller for wholesale prices for the entire amount, and then select, examine and put on the shelves a few volumes at a time. Let the children know that a stream of new books is always flowing in.

Some thoughtful minds object to the name *Sunday-school*. For Robert Raikes' movement, which was mainly to teach children the rudiments of knowledge, it was a natural title. But it seems to imply too exclusively *headwork*—the learning of lessons. The service should be a religious one. The main object should be spiritual profit. Many, for this reason, would call it the *Bible Service*. They would make it an occasion in which the congregation resolves itself into a committee of the whole for the study of Scripture.

The second objection raised to the present name is that, when the children grow too old for the "common *school*," they count themselves equally so for the *Sunday-school*. Whereas, if as many as possible of the fathers and mothers in Israel attend, and the meeting is called a Bible Service, they will get no such impression. Dr. Asa Bullard used to tell of a church in Massachusetts, of 536 members, of whom 502 were in the Bible Service. The pastor called on any one who absented himself from that service as promptly as he would had the person fallen into some scandal. "How shall we keep the children as they grow up?" some one asked at a Sunday-school convention. "Build a wall of grown folks," he was answered, "between them and the door."

If the school is not too large, *call the roll* at every session. This makes each teacher and scholar feel that, if absent, he is missed. It singles him out and lodges responsibility on him.

The "Home Department" is coming to be a very useful annex to the school. It is an arrangement by which invalids, those living at a distance from the church, and others who, for various reasons, are non-attendants, may study on each Sunday the same lesson with the school. They are furnished with Quarterly Lessons and various other lesson helps. They make reports of their work, and receive reports of work done by others in this department. They thus come

to feel themselves included in the membership of the school. This good work has spread very rapidly and accomplished great good.

Finally, if you have any degraded out-lying neighborhood, plant a Sunday-school there. This is better for securing the first foothold than a service with preaching. The worst parents often desire that their children may do better than themselves. Loving, patient, persistent work may, in time, revolutionize and redeem the whole vicinity.

CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONCERTS.

A. PROPERLY conducted, this meeting will be one of the most enjoyable and profitable of the month. There is a charm in the sight of the children. Parents are drawn to hear the voices of their own children. Among the adults the church has, like a tree in its trunk, a still, undemonstrative growth. But among the children it blooms in beauty. From a well-managed Sunday-school concert you are quite sure to go home in good spirits.

The fashion in some churches is to hold the missionary concert on the first, and the Sunday-school concert on the second, Sunday evening of each month. But the time, of course, will vary with the convenience of each parish.

A danger on these occasions is that of bringing in too much dramatic display. Spiritual profit is displaced by zeal for entertainment. A recitation by a single scholar is apt to kindle more vanity—as perhaps, also, jealousy in others—than any Christian sentiment. Dialogues on a stage offer more excitement than edification. A good rule is to bring in no recitations but in the language of Scripture. As I know by experience, that will afford you all the range and variety you need. The most successful series of Sunday-school concerts I ever attended were conducted by this rule. In reading the Bible, often take some familiar passage, and ask the children to *help you* by throwing in a word. Thus, “The Lord is my —— (children say “Shepherd”); I shall not ——. He maketh me to lie down in ——.” As they cannot without close attention supply the missing word, you are quite sure to have their eyes upon you.

But no two programmes should be alike. To vary them, secure at each one different *participants*. Sometimes give the teachers the more prominent place. Assign to different teachers various features of the general subject of the evening. Let no one occupy

more than five minutes. Address whatever you say yourself to the children.

If any teacher prefers, let him prepare a short paper. Do not readily accept excuses. With a strong will, but a gentle manner, you can secure almost every one.

On another evening let the Normal Class, or the Bible Class, take the chief part. On still another call upon certain classes of the school at large—the infant-class, by all means, included.

As was said of the prayer-meeting, if you are obliged yourself, by want of speakers, to occupy much of the time, do it by short installments thrown in along through the meeting.

Vary the services also, by diversified schedules of subjects. In the successful series of concerts just mentioned the subjects were such as the mountains of the Bible, the rivers, the seas, the lakes, the kings, the eminent good men, the eminent bad men, good women, bad women, remarkable conversions, death scenes, godly children. So you might bring in the animals of the Bible, the birds, the plants. Again, take the battles, the covenants, the occasions on which God brought good out of evil—and so on. There is no limit to this variety. Confine each concert to some *one* of these subjects. Preserve a unity in each meeting. Carefully avoid too much mere ingenious headwork. Draw *spiritual lessons* from each subject. Let the meeting be one for earnest and saving impression.

B. What would you do with the festivals of the Christian Year?

A. Of course, in different communions of Christians there will be, as to these festivals, various methods. But churches of all faiths are beginning to observe at least two—Christmas and Easter. Make them times of cheer and gladness. At Christmas, especially, preach to the children. Deck your church with evergreens and flowers.

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CHAPTER III.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

A. ENTER on your ministry with the determination to *labor earnestly and hopefully for children*. In regard to this there has been, within the last few years, very much said. But even yet we have hardly more than touched the subject. The plastic state of the mind and heart in childhood, the tenacious hold on the memory and life of whatever is learned at that period, the pleasure of laboring among one's little parishioners, all call us to appreciate such work as this.

Adults, even if renewed, are quite apt to make very imperfect disciples. They are prepossessed by sentiments formed and habits cherished through the long course of impenitent years. These, like veteran troops defeated, give way only slowly and stubbornly. They return from time to time to plague the believer, and, through him, others associated with him. He runs the Christian race as with a ball and chain at each ankle. But the converted child is free from all this. In taking possession of him the Lord comes into a house not already tenanted, but, in good measure, open with warm welcome. The sentiments formed, the habits cherished, become Christian sentiments and habits. The practical value to the church, as every experienced pastor knows, of a disciple renewed in childhood is often ten-fold greater than that of "one born out of due time."

Ministers, in giving so large share of their labors to adults, have been about as wise as would be a horse dealer who should make no attempt to break or train his animals till they were ten or twelve years old. Nothing short of a tornado will uproot old trees. Nothing short of a tremendous spiritual movement in the community will tear from his deep-bedded worldliness a full-grown man. If we are to follow the order of nature and of the grace of God, we shall devote to the children a far larger portion of our time and strength than has been hitherto common among the ministry.

B. But suppose we have no tact in adapting ourselves to children?

A. Then, I should almost say, you had better take some other profession. But that is not quite true. There are pastors who, while doing little for the children, make very useful men. But this neglect is, none the less, a serious defect in their ministry. You *have* tact. You can reach the lambs of the flock. The chief requirement is a great warm heart. Show the children that you love them, and you will find them the least critical hearers who ever listened to your words. Skill in ministering to children is not, like poetic genius, born in a man. No one is without a share of it. You can culture and develop it.

For the endeavor to do this there are two reasons. One is the reflex effect on yourself. It will keep you fresh, natural, lively in your style of address. In *all* your sermons that will appear. And secondly, you will by this effort for the little hearers reach the overgrown children in your parish. I mean such adults, of moderate early advantages, as are likely to be more interested and profited by your children's sermons than by any others.

D. But you have told us that the children should attend *all* the services of the church.

A. Yes. Set that as your ideal. By the methods I suggested come as near it as you can. But you will not fully reach it. And if you should, it is still desirable to address the children in meetings devoted exclusively to them. In such meetings you feel a greater liberty. And especially in them the children can, as they cannot in the regular church services, reply to questions and otherwise take audible part. In the Children's Service, moreover, you may learn by practice how to preach to the little ones in the Sabbath congregations.

First, what are the best materials for sermons to children? "Study the children themselves." Watch them in their intercourse one with another. Look on while they are at play. See how they view different subjects. Notice what things, and what aspects of things, most deeply interest them. Compare different children together. Contrast a child's ideas with those of adults. Make notes of these points. You will find them suggestive and helpful.

The subject-matter for a sermon to children is mainly the same as for full-grown hearers. It is a mistake to suppose that they can appreciate nothing but stories. They want solid instruction. I know one pastor who preached an entire course of theology, includ-

ing the doctrine of the Trinity, to children. And he said he never had, from any audience, better attention. There are few truths profitable for adults that may not be made so for children.

But, of course, you must shape and color your instruction for your little hearers. Take, in general, not abstract, but concrete, forms of truth. Instead of discussing faith, preach on Noah building the huge ark, hundreds of miles from any navigable water, or Abraham sacrificing Isaac, or the three holy children before the king's furnace. Instead of a homily on courage, take David meeting Goliath, or Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. In general, the narratives of the Old Testament and the parables of the New will cover a large share of the truths you have to convey.

For illustrations, in which your sermons to children should be rich, you must be ever on the alert. Cull the best ones from the cyclopædias of illustrations and of anecdote. "Moody's Anecdotes" are, most of them, fresh and excellent. The "Clerical Library" has a store of valuable matter of this sort. Dr. Richard H. Newton's sermons to children are amply illustrated. Take his anecdotes and apply them to other subjects. Keep, of course, a scrap-book for this general purpose. Cut from the religious and secular papers material for it. Have an index in it.

C. Would you use such directories as Todd's "Index Rerum," or "Gould's Index," or the other sorts, arranged with cards, more recently published?

A. I have never found them of much service. The fact is, the same incident is often a good illustration of any one of three or four different truths or subjects. When you come to use an anecdote which you have indexed under one head, you may find it far more available under another. In short, you can hardly tell till you put your illustration to use what is the best use to make of it. So my way has been to make out simply a miscellaneous list of the material in my scrap-book.

To avoid repetition, mark on your list anything you have used.

Especially illustrate from the schools, stores, factories, machine shops, farms, or whatever the children daily see around them. Be free and informal in this. One great advantage of taking such objects is that when the children see through the week the objects themselves, they are reminded of the lessons attached to them.

The second point is the *arrangements* for this service. I would

have for it a specific name by which it shall be known. "Children's Service," or "Children's Church," is a good one. In general, hold the meeting monthly. Once a quarter have a "Children's Sabbath." On that day let the sermons be addressed to the children, the singing be by a choir of children, and teach the children that the church ought to be their home. Adorn your pulpit with flowers. Make the day a glad one for all concerned.

At the children's service have the little people gathered in front of the pulpit. You need to look them directly in the face. If the Sunday-school classes have banners, let them first assemble in the lecture-room. Thence they can enter the church with their banners in procession.

Have your cabinet-organ or piano near you. Let the singing be largely antiphonal. For change of position, let the children rise in singing. If the sermon is more than about twenty minutes long, pause midway in it, that a verse of a hymn may be sung.

Gently but firmly insist on quiet and attention. If any fall to whispering, cease speaking, and without rebuke or even a frown, look pleasantly at them. That will suffice.

As one of the services, have responsive reading of Scripture.

Now as to your style and manner in conducting the service. It hardly needs be said that the children must be *interested*. Otherwise you do them not only the negative injury of affording them no profit, but the positive one of leaving the impression on them that religion is a dull matter. That perilous notion there are too many, at the best, to insinuate.

D. Would you use a written sermon?

A. I knew one pastor who wrote out in full and read his discourses to the children. And he said he had excellent attention. But that is an exceptional case. I would extemporize. Your address should be *conversational* in manner.

Early accustom the children to answer questions. With a written sermon you can hardly do that. If necessary, pledge three or four of the more intelligent and self-possessed of your little auditors to take the lead in the answers. When you have anything important, yet trite, to say, put a question and let *them* say it. Do not rest till all have come to full freedom in replying. "A telegraph operator who could get no response would conclude that his connections were broken." You may well judge likewise.

That you may be perfectly free, ignore as completely as if they were absent any adults who may be present. Announce to them in the outset that you intend to do so.

Occasionally, as when supposing a case for illustration, call some one of the children by name. In such ways dispense with all formality.

To acquire an easy, animated style, read Fanny Fern's "Little Ferns." Dr. Richard H. Newton's style also is a good one. It is well to attend Sunday-school conventions. They have generally there some exceptionally good speakers to children. Study their style and methods.

The imagination is in children one of the faculties earliest developed. When a boy reads "Robinson Crusoe," or the "Arabian Nights," it has a charm for him that he would give almost anything, thirty years later, to find in it. Let this fact in the child's nature guide your style in preaching to him. Do not draw out the heads of your sermon logically one from another. Do not appeal chiefly to the reasoning faculty. But without neglecting that, *picture* your divisions of the subject successively. Take illustrations that will set forth on different sides the one theme of the sermon.

But in using illustration avoid a common and serious mistake. You have in hand, for instance, an anecdote. As it interests you as well as your hearers, you tell it vividly and with effect. The children are quite absorbed in it. But the truth to be illustrated by it is less fascinating. You present it less vigorously. There is a very perceptible falling away, and the truth, of course, makes but a dull impression. So absorb yourself, therefore, in the lesson you are to teach by your word-picture as to rather rise than fall in energy when making your application.

While presenting your subject in this pictorial rather than logical way, preserve from first to last the *unity* of impression. Allow yourself to be drawn aside from that by no illustration whatever.

Use a revolving blackboard. With chalk, in large letters, mark on it the text, theme, and chief heads of the sermon. Instead of announcing any one of these, swing your board, present the words, and let the children themselves make the announcement. To help the memory often put the chief points alliteratively. Generally couch them in a single word. Thus, "Obedience: Grudging, Glad, Godly." "Faith: Simple, Strong, Steadfast." Dr. S. H. Tyng,

Sr., preached on 2 Chron. 34 : 1, 2. "What king Josiah did : Why? When? How?"

In a sermon to adults the heads need not always stand out conspicuously. But for children they should. And at each service, before proceeding, call for the chief divisions of the previous sermon. In referring by way of illustration to any object, as a cane, a watch, a flower, or whatever, have with you the thing itself. Hold it up, to impress the eye as well as ear.

Very interesting "Chalk-talks," so-called, are given by speakers to children. A blackboard is prepared with slight points and outlines previously set on it. With these guides and with colored crayons, pictures are drawn as illustrations in the view of the children and lessons applied. They are very interesting and instructive.

Mr. Smithson, of Chicago, has delivered some admirable lectures with object-lessons to children. One that I heard was from the text John 12 : 32, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." He had suspended above his table a large magnet. This, of course, represented the Master. First, by putting a needle near the magnet, he showed how the Lord draws a soul, even before it has yielded to Him. Secondly, putting near the magnet a bar of steel too heavy for the magnet to lift, he showed that many a sinner feels so full and self-sufficient as to need no Saviour. Third, a much smaller piece of steel, which at once yielded to the attraction, represented a child conscious of his spiritual want. Fourth, a nickel-plated nail that the magnet would not affect, and a plain, rough steel pin, which instantly flew to the magnet, showed the contrast between a Dives and a Lazarus. Fifth, a straight, bright piece of silver, and a crooked, rusted bit of steel, answered to a self-righteous and a consciously guilty soul. Sixth, a glass rod, not drawn, and a knife-blade, strongly pulled by the attraction, represented two souls, one so hardened as to have lost the very *capacity* of responding to Christ, while the other has not. Seventh, a steel needle rubbed on the magnet, and so made in turn a magnet itself, showed the effect of a Christian's living in close contact with Christ. Finally, the magnet was passed under a sheet of paper on which was sprinkled black sand. When the metal grains in the sand left the flinty ones and followed the unseen magnet, they beautifully pictured the text "There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." So, as you see, the uses of such an object-lesson are almost numberless.

Another lecture on "Ye are the light of the world," might be illustrated with different varieties of lights. One alone, and one with a *reflector* (a consistent life) behind it. A dark lantern, having light within, but showing little without. A beautiful but dim candle. A homely but powerful one. Danger signals. Lights for protection of a house, others for illumination. So with *shades*, transparent, others translucent.

Again, take "Ye are the salt of the earth." The difference between our pure, Western salt and the adulterated article anciently used in the East. Salt is diffusive. Beautiful salt-crystals of no more *use* than if not crystallized. Salt not in contact with the provisions, so not preservative.

Different *masks* might play their part in another sermon. A beautiful, a hideous mask, making one appear better or worse than he should. A cheerful mask on a man with heavy heart. Threatening mask (one of the Lord's dark providences) on a person who means no harm. An old face on a young man, a young one on an old man.

Varieties of *chains*, to illustrate "His own iniquity shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin." Chains that are heavy and burdensome. Chains light but strong. Handsome chains and grim looking ones. Chains of *gold*. Chains that are counted an honor, and those reckoned a disgrace. Chains that stop all motion, and the ball and chain which only clog.

Various sorts of *traps* and *snares*, illustrating Satan's enticements. A trap that catches only, and one that kills. A hidden trap that surprises. One that shows bait. A trap in which the previous victim is the lure.

Varieties of *colors*, illustrating Christian character shown in the life. Vivid and dim colors. Colors that show sharp contrasts (with worldliness) and those which imperceptibly shade away. Colors that are mere shadows made by tinted glass; others, striking deeper, made by paints or stains; others, still deeper, "dyed in the wool." Warm, bright colors and cold, gloomy ones. *Neutral* tints.

Flowers. Showy and modest ones. Beautiful but odorless, and plain but fragrant ones. Handsome but poisonous flowers. Stiff flowers, and the sensitive plant. The thorny cactus with its beautiful bloom.

So Psalm 23 : 4, "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," illustrated by various sorts of *canes*, heavy and light, homely and ornamental, home-made and from beyond the ocean.

There is no end to these object-lessons. I have suggested only such as could be easily secured at moderate cost. Very many of them you could borrow for the occasion.

In all your work among children *look for results*. Expect conversions and additions to your church. But do not depend on harrowing convictions of sin or on any sudden and startling experiences. Children will, in general, be simply, artlessly led, like lambs following the shepherd, by the attraction of the love of Christ. ~~The ancient shepherd, with whom Jesus compared Himself, was no drover.~~

Finally, train the children to Christian beneficence. In this, if you are to succeed, parents and the Sunday-school must, of course, cooperate with you. Dr. Titus Coan saw in the Sandwich Islands a native Christian woman putting the hand of her babe, with a coin clasped in it, over the contribution-box. Then gently unclasping the little fingers, she taught the child to make its offering. So she began early with her beautiful lesson. A lady in Chicago replied to her pastor, who was thanking her for a munificent donation to free the church from debt, "Why, I was *educated to give*." Occasionally, as more than one wise superintendent is beginning to do, I would invite the Sunday-school children at Christmas to *give* for the poor instead of receiving presents. And at your children's service I would always take a collection of pennies for some object.

BOOK SEVENTH.
CHURCH FINANCIAL AFFAIRS.

CHAPTER I.

CHURCH BENEFICENCE.

A. "THE next great problem," said Dr. Horace Bushnell, "is the consecration of wealth." And as this nation is the richest on earth, that problem is for us preëminent. With the enormous increase of our means, those of professed Christians with the rest, it is the shame of the American churches that the increase of our charities is so miserably slow. There was in "Puck," not long ago, a fine cartoon of a man sowing dollars broadcast, with churches, colleges, and asylums springing, as the harvest, behind him. That is the work which the clear call of God demands from our people. And pastors have in the premises, to the extent of their influence, a serious responsibility.

First correct the notion in which some persist, that the raising of money for Christian uses is such secular work as is unfit for the Sabbath. A Scotch pastor invited Dr. Chalmers to give in his pulpit a charity sermon. He hoped especially that the eloquence of the great preacher might reach the hearts of two rich but penurious elders in his church. Though every one else was in tears, one of the elders was overheard whispering to the other, as they went down the aisle, "A verra *worldly* sermon, that!" More Christian was the spirit of the good man in the missionary meeting who, when called on to pray, began fumbling in his pocket. "But, brother," said the leader, "I asked you only to lead us in prayer." "Yes," he answered, "I know. But I cannot pray till I have given something."

The constant training the Jews underwent in giving in connection with the tabernacle and the temple service, the announcement of the

angel to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God," the direction of Paul that each one lay by, on the first day of the week, for charity, as the Lord had prospered him, show clearly that in the Lord's view giving is as clearly as prayer or praise a part of true worship.

Second, show your people that the church of Christ is a means, not an end. It exists for something outside and beyond itself. Beware too of that subtle self-interest with which a pastor fears that whatever his people give for the world's sake is likely to be subtracted from their dues to him. Just the reverse is true. Cutting off their liberality in one direction to develop it in another is like cutting off a man's head to develop his hands. A pastor in a Western city, with this notion, so discouraged his people from beneficence that he dried the stream of their generosity toward himself as well. They fairly starved him out.

Thirdly, be not impatient with a parsimonious people. Impatience accomplishes nothing but a quarrel. You may without offense rebuke almost any other sin than illiberality. But sharp words against that are sparks to powder. Remember always that grief carries power—anger none. If your people are penurious, show them that it burdens and distresses you.

C. But suppose the church is so poor that it can do no more than exist and meet its own expenses?

A. Then thank Heaven that it is able to exist. But I would do more. I would present as regularly as if in the richest church in the land the great Christian enterprises.

D. And ask for collections?

A. Yes. But I should clearly show and carefully urge the truth that the poor can do their whole duty, in regard to this matter, as easily as the rich. Each carries only his own load. The pressure of responsibility on the soul is like the pressure of the atmosphere on the body. Though a human frame bears in the average some fifteen tons' weight of that, the burden is so happily distributed and adjusted, bearing on us within as well as without, that the feeblest girl carries her share of it as easily as any athlete. Let your people give penny collections if they can do no more. But make them see that they need, for *their own spiritual good*, to have an intelligent acquaintance with and interest in the great evangelistic enterprises.

Turn off their attention from the *amount* in dollars and cents that they are able to give. Show them, from the widow's mite and the cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, how unimportant a matter is the amount. Train them to take as deep an interest in maintaining their collections, and, if they can do no more, in giving their smaller sums, as any richer brethren could take in greater.

Occasionally, when no collection is to follow, preach on some one of the great Christian charities. You want an *intelligent* people. They need to know what is going on for the world's redemption.

In your annual schedule of beneficence give precedence to the evangelistic enterprises of your own denomination. They have the prior claim on your support. But keep in connection with others also, the American Bible Society, American Tract Society, Seamen's Friend Society, which are undenominational. Indeed you must, while doing justice to your own sect, watch warily against a sectarian spirit. It is, in many quarters, the shame and curse of our common Christianity. Be always broad and brotherly in your sympathies. Do what you can to promote union meetings of various churches. Make more of the great saving truths which all disciples hold in common than of the minor matters not needful to salvation on which they differ. Rejoice in the progress of Christ's kingdom on earth, whether it advances your sect or not.

Say little of the *society* through which the gifts will pass. Dwell on the *work* and the souls to be reached. Your people will take more interest in that and in them than in a corporation. ✕

If you find it practicable, introduce, at least for a year or two, the "envelope-system." This method, carried out, will probably by the end of the year surprise your people. In a parish to which I once ministered the church-building was burned. We had to strain every nerve to erect a new one. The Sunday-school had been giving, in common with another school of about the same means, two hundred and fifty dollars toward the support of a Western Sunday-school missionary. But the superintendent, in this emergency, suggested that for one year all collections should go toward the new church. His plan proposed four classes of givers. One class was to give a cent a month, another a cent a week, a third a cent a day, and a fourth two cents a day. They smiled at the scheme as trivial and promising nothing. But some two hundred and sixty teachers and

scholars were induced to go into it—and the result was about twelve hundred and fifty dollars. “Many a little makes a mickle.”

The envelope-plan which many of the smaller churches adopt for their current expenses, includes, first, a card given to each contributor. On one side of this card is a list of the objects to which it is proposed to contribute. There are blank spaces for the sum per week subscribed to each cause. These sums added at the bottom show the aggregate that the subscriber agrees to pay each Sabbath. Blank spaces are left for the substitution or addition, at the pleasure of the contributor, of any other objects. When these cards have been collected, each subscriber receives a package of fifty-two small envelopes, marked with his name and the dates of the fifty-two Sabbaths of the year. On each Sunday he encloses in the appropriate envelope the aggregate weekly amount of his subscription, and passes it in at the church collection. If he has been absent, or is otherwise in arrears, he encloses the amount for two or three Sundays, as the case may be. The dates on his package of envelopes always show where he stands. The treasurer, who has the whole scheme in charge, keeps a separate account with each subscriber.

The advantages of this plan are: First, that it is free from any constraint. No one but the treasurer and the donor need know the amount subscribed. Also, he is at liberty any time during the year, if he finds it necessary, to withdraw from the plan.

Secondly, the scheme allows full liberty in the selection of objects to which to give and the sum to be allotted to each.

Thirdly, it is independent of rainy days and small congregations.

B. But will not this freedom of choice and of withdrawing during the year prove fatal to the success of the plan?

A. No. In every instance, perhaps, in which it has been tried it has increased, sometimes largely, the amount contributed. The success of the scheme will greatly depend on the person selected as treasurer or manager.

The envelopes should be *collected* in the church, not dropped in a box at the door. So they will be more thoroughly gathered up. Also, any persons who decline using the envelopes may contribute in money.

Urge any who prefer to give semi-annually or quarterly to do so *in advance*. Otherwise they may fail altogether.

Envelope Plan

CHAPTER II.

CHURCH DEBTS AND CURRENT EXPENSES.

A. PAUL's language in Romans 13 : 8, "Owe no man anything," has been misunderstood. He is discussing there our duty to magistrates. Members of the church at Rome, many of whom had been Jews, had apparently thought it dishonorable to the people of God to obey heathen rulers. Paul teaches the contrary. He enjoins on them to pay all due tribute and render all due honor to rulers. He then adds : "Owe no man anything but to love one another." In other words, refuse to fulfill no obligation but that of love, which, as it will rest on you forever, you never can fulfill. It is not an injunction never to be in debt. We all *must* be in debt. A merchant who pays his clerks monthly, for twenty-nine days in the thirty is in debt to them.

C. But is there not some limit to that ?

A. Of course. To go in debt when one has no reasonable prospect of payment is dishonorable. And such a burden as that on a church means misery to the pastor. His life is expended in simply keeping the ship afloat. Progress is out of the question. The good name of the church, too, in the community suffers.

But sometimes when a building-committee is blamed the fault is with the church. When a man plans a dwelling for himself, he commonly sets apart beforehand means sufficient for the purpose. But it is rarely that a church and congregation will, before the ground is broken, provide their committee with funds for such a building as all will agree, in the sequel, that they ought to have secured. So, of course, after the foundation is in and the plans cannot be altered, a debt ensues. The best remedy, perhaps, is that of the Roman Catholic clergy. When they have collected a sum large enough for a foundation, they lay the foundation and board it over for protection from the weather. It then remains as a silent, constant pleader for new contributions. When another fund is secured, the walls are carried a few feet higher and again boarded over. So on, till the

building is finished without a debt. Absurd almost as this process seems to us, it attains its aim.

B. Would you advise a committee, then, if the money in hand is insufficient, to proceed to build?

A. Sometimes most decidedly. In one of my former churches a fund for a mission-chapel had been raised. It proved to be adequate only to completing the walls, roof, and windows. Two of the committee proposed to wait till more money should come in. "No," said the third, "let us finish the outside of the house. Then if our people choose to leave it in that forlorn condition, let them." He knew they would not. His advice was taken, and the money to finish and furnish soon came in. People like to *see something* for what they have given.

C. In what you said a while since did you mean to favor a debt on a church?

A. By no means. It is generally a heavy incubus. It is a standing excuse for any illiberality in any direction. It is always threatening a crisis. If, when called to a church, you learn that it is so burdened, see if you cannot make the payment of at least a part of it a condition of your accepting the call.

And let any efforts to raise large sums in the church be *Christian work*. Do not let the plea, "This is business, and must be done in a business way," (which is very true and proper) chill out of it all faith and devotion. It is Christ's work that you are doing. You want His spirit and help. Be thoroughly cheerful, too, in the effort. Allow no thought of discouragement.

One church heavily in debt agreed to raise each year, not only the interest but a portion of the principal. This strengthened their credit. They were able to secure a lower rate of interest.

But perhaps the most effectual way of throwing off a large church debt is to "Kimballize" it. Mr. Kimball, "the finangelist" as he has been called, had succeeded several years ago in throwing off from churches debts amounting in the aggregate to more than \$5,000,000.

The chief requisites for conducting such an effort are a prayerful faith in God and a tenacious will. Following Napoleon's rule, "Assure your soldiers of success to win success." You first address the people in strong, unquestioning confidence that *the thing can be done*, that other churches by the hundred, with as small means and as

great a load to lift, have wonderfully succeeded. You will have previously studied and divided the debt in such way that about ten large subscriptions will cover a third of the whole. Then, having suppose \$6000 to raise, make ten shares of \$200 each; 20 of \$100 each; and shares of \$50, \$10 and \$5 covering the remainder.

You should have some few, at least, of the largest shares taken in advance.

Then let your church officers go up and down the aisles to solicit individuals for the other subscriptions of the ten. As each pledge is secured, announce it for the encouragement of the congregation. When these ten are secured, good part of the battle is won. With an unflinching will, keep through the whole a cheerful mood. Multitudes of churches at such a meeting have spent with closed doors three or four hours. The effort puts a heavy strain, of course, on those who conduct it. But you can accomplish in this way in a few hours what you could not with a subscription-paper in three months.

D. And do they *fulfill* pledges made in this rather coercive way?

A. Yes. As each one knows that all the rest are aware of his subscription, and feels, too, the obligation of his promise, he is quite sure to make it good. There is no serious trouble or loss on that score. The advantages of this method are that the work is done for Christ with prayer and song and the common enthusiasm of an assembly stimulating one another. A subscription-paper is in comparison a cold, dead thing.

There are three or four modes of meeting the church current expenses. One formerly common, but now, happily, almost obsolete, is by selling the pews outright when the building is erected, and then taxing them from year to year. The buyer owns his pew in fee simple, as he does his dwelling-house. He may sell it when and to whom he pleases. The trustees have no other control over it than the right of annual taxation. This method is too unmanageable to need discussion. The only excuse for it has been in cases where money for the erection of the church could not be otherwise obtained.

Another plan is the annual auction-sale of the pews. As this often dislodges the previous occupant, it may awaken (though without good reason) no little ill-feeling. For a pastor it is a most uncomfortable ordeal. The announcement in the newspaper, "Rev. Mr. A's pews sold for——dollars, and Rev. Mr. B's for——dollars," is not promotive of a quiet frame of mind.

By a third method the pews, having been first rated at sums sufficient in the aggregate to meet the current expenses, are let to the previous occupants. Any one joining the congregation takes his choice among the pews not let. This fashion, if the pews are to be rented at all, is perhaps the best yet devised.

The fourth plan, which is, especially in the Interior States, rapidly extending, preserves the seats free and resorts for an income to weekly offerings in envelopes. This would seem at first view the ideal way. It has a most hospitable look. It strikes one as falling in with a free gospel. Wherever it can be successfully carried out, *without injury to other interests*, which I will presently mention, it certainly should be.

But some arguments urged for it are more specious than sound. That families may not be scattered, or sit here and there, changing each Sunday, they are allowed to take pews either by lot or in the order of their application. But a stranger would feel no more free to take a seat in a pew assigned than in one rented. Also, the chief reason that neglecters of worship are not found in our churches is rather indifference than a fear that in *any* church, however the pews may be regulated, they would not be welcome.

But the most serious objection to the free-seat plan as at present conducted is that it so deplorably *reduces the beneficence of the church*. The current expenses are met by collections, with or without envelopes, taken in the church on Sunday. Collections for charities are also taken in the church on Sunday. Now it is idle to expect that people will give liberally to two objects at the same moment. It avails nothing to say that what is given for home expenses is as truly the *payment of a debt* as is the settlement of a grocer's bill—that it ought, therefore, no more than the grocer's bill, to interfere with one's charities. True enough that is, no doubt. But, with a few choice exceptions, our congregations will not feel it.

C. Why not, then, when a collection of charities is to come in, omit the one for current expenses?

A. Because you will have the trustees on your track, with sundry specific remarks about your interference with their income. The temptation, therefore, to bring in as rarely as possible any appeal for aid from outside the church is almost irresistible. Now pews, paid like other bills on week-days, are not so easily confounded with charities, and they do not so easily interfere with the

church beneficence. The "Congregationalist," of Boston, gave an account recently of two churches near each other of about the same membership and financial ability. One rented pews, the other maintained free seats, and the charities of the former were about five times those of the latter. This is a serious matter. A church must exist not for itself alone. It must as freely give money for the kingdom of Christ on earth as seats for any strangers in its sanctuary.

B. Is there, without sacrificing the free-seat system, any remedy?

A. So far as I see, only one: the subscriptions for home-expenses should be taken on week-days outside the church-building.

C. Then on most Sundays you would have no collections of any sort in the church?

A. I would have a collection every Sunday. For their own spiritual good, if nothing else, the people need it: The idea of the church as a luxurious lounging-place, in which to hear good preaching and good music and make no sacrifice for Christ or the world, is a deadly anodyne.

D. But for what will your collections be needed?

A. Partly to supplement the amount paid on week-days for current expenses. They alone are rarely sufficient for their purpose. But if they bear most of that burden, the way will be open for charitable collections within church-walls.

B. How often should these collections for charities come?

A. Monthly, if possible. You cannot, otherwise, reach all the objects to which you ought to give. This is the practice of all our larger churches. Bi-monthly collections for beneficence are the fewest that should be counted respectable.

BOOK EIGHTH.

IN THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

PASTORAL CALLS.

A. SINCE the times of the fathers these, like other parochial duties of the minister, have gone through modifications. Anciently the church settled two spiritual guides, a pastor and a teacher. The teacher found his chief sphere in his study and his pulpit. He was seldom seen in the homes of the people. Pastoral calls devolved on the pastor. As he went his rounds he gathered the whole family in every house he visited. The father was called in from the farm to listen to prayer. The children were gathered to be catechized. It was no small event in the round of the year.

But in our day, especially in towns and cities, conditions have completely changed. A pastor in calling is apt to find only the ladies of the house at home. The father is at his business—the children at school. Catechizing, even were it desirable, is out of the question. Meanwhile the demands on the pulpit are so constantly rising, the necessity for more work in the study so steadily increasing, that *some* restriction on pastoral calls is inevitable.

There are a few families in each church that stand foremost. They are leaders in all sorts of Christian activities. They are teachers and scholars in the Sunday-school. They are the main stay of the prayer-meetings. They no more need shepherding than the family of the pastor. On principle, therefore, I should take time for calling from them and give it to the neglected and those who, as yet, are strangers to Christ. Then if any one complains that you are rarely in his home, you can explain this policy, and inform him that you have *him* on your list as a "pillar" in the church!

A pastor in a city in the interior, on account of the changed con-

ditions within the century just referred to, calls, during the first three months after his vacation, *with his wife*, on the whole congregation. For the remaining period (not neglecting the sick, afflicted, strangers, etc.) he asks his people to save his time by calling on *him*.

There are several objects to be secured by pastoral calls. First, you may in this way reach individuals. In the pulpit you shoot somewhat at random. You might almost begin your sermon, "To whom it may concern." With astonishing generosity the average hearer bestows your rebukes and exhortations on the next pew. Here, at least, he counts it more blessed to give than to receive. But if you come face to face with one in a personal interview, this evasion is not so easy. In this way, too, you learn the antecedents and inner lives of individuals. The family physician is more successful in practice in the household, other things being equal, than a stranger. He knows the strength or weakness, the habits, the physical tendencies of each member of the family. Somewhat so should it be with the physician of souls.

A second object is to hold individuals who can hardly be held by the pulpit alone. There is in most congregations a small class who, for the sake of strong nutritive sermons, are willing to forego your calls. There is a larger class who for the sake of frequent calls are willing to forego the best work in the pulpit. You must neglect neither.

Thirdly, your calls will incline your people to hear with deeper and more affectionate interest your public instructions and appeals. When you have won their love by looking into their faces and taking their hands, you have gained an immense advantage for your pulpit.

Once more, you may gather in the homes of your people the most useful material for sermons. You will meet new phases of experience, new doubts, new questions of duty. You will learn on what the thoughts of your people are running. You will hear of sorrows that afflict and temptations that endanger them. Always carry a note-book in your calls.

Now as to the *spirit* in which you should enter the homes of your people. This service you may find distasteful. You may have, or think you have, no "parlor talent." You would rather be among your books. In a course of theologic study we are somewhat educated away from such social work. To counteract this, cultivate a *real*, not merely professional *interest in the individuals of your flock*.

Look through whatever is transient about them—their ignorance, perhaps, or mediocrity or narrowness—to their value and dignity as born for an endless existence, as committed to you to be guided along the radiant way that leads above the stars. Throw your soul into the care and culture of such beings as these. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. This power of *taking an interest in people* is one which, like any other, can be developed and matured.

But again, be *cheerful* in your calls. While profoundly earnest, do not attempt to be solemn. Go to neither extreme of frivolity or of sombre austerity. Carry sunshine with you into every home. Be a man whose face the children will delight to see.

Neither fawn on the rich nor patronize the poor. Remembering how trivial and transient are these distinctions, treat all with impartial respect and affection.

Lastly, as to *methods*. In your first round of calls after settlement, learn the name of every member of each family. Overlook no child, no aged invalid who never appears out of doors, no absent son or daughter. Get the names of the children. Make sure, before calling again, that these are all fresh in your memory. If they are not, look them up in your record.

To accomplish your work in the time at your command, ascertain the whole number of calls to be made in your parish. Divide these, and learn the number you have on hand for each week. By constantly *keeping up*, never falling into arrears, you can without burdening yourself complete the work within due time.

Prepare something profitable for your calls. Rarely enter a house to say only what may happen to turn up at the moment. Have some such thought in mind as the members of the family need, and then guide yourself by circumstances.

In calling on the sick carry with you a large stock of discretion. Physicians are much blamed for their complaints of ministers' service in sick-rooms. Many of them ought to be blamed. Being irreligious men, having no sympathy with a pastor's work, they assume that his mere presence in the room will depress the spirits and retard the recovery of the patient. But Christian physicians sometimes join the complaint, and that for good reason. The minister is sombre and solemn, or he is careless in speech or act, or shows in other ways want of good sense.

If the disease is acute and painful, be very brief in your call. Do not think it necessary always to offer prayer. A refreshing word of Christian comfort may be all that it is wise to say. Wear into a sick-room no damp clothes. Have on no creaking shoes. In winter remove your gloves and warm your hands before going to the bedside. Avoid any subject that will needlessly annoy the sick. Be so cheery and buoyant, spread around you such an air of Christian courage and hopefulness, that any physician will thank you as an assistant that he could ill spare.

When there is occasion for a prolonged conversation, see the invalid, if possible, alone. Memorize a good number of Scripture passages and hymns to repeat to those whose minds are weak. You will find them grateful for these *familiar* words, which are so easily apprehended.

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.

In comforting the afflicted, especially those suffering from secret sorrows, induce them, if possible, to confide to you their troubles. You can then far more wisely counsel and solace them. Never betray any secret. And do not expect that those crushed with sudden and great calamities will at once be satisfied and calmed by your consolations. Let them weep for a while. Nature must have her way. Be patient. Show your sympathy rather by simply pressing the sufferer's hand in silence than by insisting prematurely on any Christian truth, however precious.

CHAPTER II.

FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS.

A. First as to funerals. Of course, attend those of your own people. But beyond that you are under no especial obligation. Every faithful pastor will do all the good possible in his neighborhood. He will wish to comfort any one in affliction. He will, when it consists with his duties to his own people, bury the dead of non-church-goers. For this purpose, if there are several pastors in a town, they should take their vacations in succession. Let there be always one on the ground.

But there is in many communities, among those who attend no worship, a notion that a minister, like a town pump, is public property. They have a *right*, whenever it suits their convenience, to summon him. To that notion be not weak enough to yield.

If a conveyance is necessary, and you have none of your own, ask, when invited to the service, how you are to be carried. I knew one minister who, after being repeatedly left to hire a carriage for a funeral, ventured to send a bill for one of them to the family he had served. And there was as much ado made over it as if he had committed a crime.

B. I have heard it said that people are never so selfish as when in affliction.

A. Too often true enough! They call without scruple for comfort or service on any one in any direction. The subtle reason seems to be that they regard themselves as in some sense made sacred by their sorrow. They are lifted, they seem to imagine, out of the ordinary relations and responsibilities of life.

C. What shall we do as to Sunday funerals?

A. Set yourself like adamant against them. In exceedingly rare instances they may be a necessity. But generally they are contrivances for taking time from the Sabbath to save it on the days when money may be made. They overburden pastors and often in various ways interfere with public worship. On some day when

there has for a long time been no such funeral, speak to your people frankly but kindly on the matter from the pulpit. If there are other churches near you, induce the pastors to combine their influence and make public their protest against the practice.

D. Is there any way of relieving the bereaved from the heavy expense of funerals?

A. Certainly there ought to be. Often, when the only breadwinner in the family is borne to his burial, while the hearts of 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 put the interment, privately, some hours or the next day after the funeral service. They can then in the arrangements consult their own means and convenience.

B. Is it wise to linger as long as is customary around the grave?

A. By no means. "Many a funeral," some one has said, "makes two or three more." People in weak health stand on cold, damp ground, perhaps till the grave is filled, contracting pneumonia or consumption. They do it frequently when they would prefer to leave, from the fear that some one will think them wanting in respect for the deceased. I have often, in such cases, suggested to them the danger of remaining, and, to their evident relief, led them away.

C. What of funeral sermons and remarks at funerals?

A. The "sermon," once generally in vogue, has in our day diminished to a brief "address," or "remarks." And I wish it might shrink still farther, to the vanishing point. Such a speech is expected to consist largely of laudation of the dead. If he were a man of unsavory reputation, that is an embarrassing matter. If he were an amiable but irreligious character, a different difficulty comes in. You eulogize his virtues, you carry him up from one point to another, till you seem about to declare him an heir of heaven—but somewhere short of that you stop. There is a disappointment—almost a jolt—as when going up-stairs in the dark you find one less stair than you expected.

D. But is there not a chance in these funeral addresses to preach truth and win souls?

A. Yes, at times. Especially if the service be held in the outskirts of the community, in a godless neighborhood, I should wish

to spread thereabouts some of the flood of blessing you enjoy at the home-church. Preach the gospel plainly and earnestly.

C. May we not hope that those present are already mellowed by the death itself, and so will gladly receive the good seed?

A. 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, their 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 deepening 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. Still, you may well sow beside all waters. You know not what shall prosper, whether this or that.

D. But suppose you can say very little in favor of the deceased?

A. It is wiser then to say nothing. If you begin referring to him, it is embarrassing to stop. But if you take altogether another line of thought, you will awaken no jealousy of friends. At least I have had, in a pastoral service of more than a quarter of a century, no trouble on that score. Speak of the fact of death, its general lessons, the uncertainty of life, the need of being found watching, and like truths.

You will sometimes, in preparing a funeral address, strike a very interesting vein of thought. Have a memorandum-book in which to make a note of it. You will be suddenly called to attend funerals without preparation, when such a note-book will be very convenient. I have been helped by mine out of many a strait. I have often looked it over in the carriage on my way to the service.

C. Would you attempt to converse with the mourners at a funeral?

A. Not commonly. With others sitting by, it is embarrassing. Simply greet the mourners tenderly, and promise to call again the next day.

D. Would you endeavor in the prayer to specify all the relatives?

A. 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 for a 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.

As to weddings. Learn, as soon as possible after settlement, and carefully conform to the marriage-laws of your State. From neglect of that I have known ministers caught in very serious trouble. If a certificate or license is requisite, ask for it *when invited* to officiate. Have it furnished to you before the ceremony.

B. Would you marry a person who had been divorced for unscriptural reasons?

A. Not if the facts should come to my knowledge. But I should not feel bound to put through a course of questioning every one who should come to me with the due legal authority. Unless something appears suspicious, you may fairly take it for granted no obstacle is in the way.

BOOK NINTH.

SPECIAL SERVICES.

CHAPTER I.

REVIVALS.

A. THERE is in the churches much questioning as to the legitimacy of revivals. It is urged that they are not, by any means, the ideal method of evangelization. It is pleaded that the church ought to be always in a revived condition. It is claimed that a revival, with its over-strained excitement, leaves behind it a disastrous reaction. An eminent Presbyterian pastor in an Eastern State insists that no revival, in the sense in which that word is used, occurs in Scripture. As to Pentecost, he quotes Acts 2: 5, "There were in Jerusalem *devout* men out of every nation under heaven." He holds that the three thousand, having been in great part godly before, were, many of them at least, converted not from nature to grace, but only from Judaism to Christianity. In all this there is certainly a mixture of truth. But the fault in it is the presumption that the Spirit of God must always operate in some one way—and that not the way of revival. Probably (though not certainly) there will be no more such wide-sweeping and convulsive movements as those in the earlier half of the last century in this country, and under Wesley and Whitefield in England. There is no such antecedent spiritual stagnation as the Half-Way Covenant here, and ecclesiastical formalism in England, had produced. Revivals seem likely to be more local, and individual conversions in the intervals between them more frequent. But they have too generally marked the history of the church, they are too obviously consistent with the laws of Divine grace and of human nature, to allow the belief that God is no more to work through such methods.

Four main questions I will consider in order:

1st. What is a revival? Your view of the nature of one of these movements will color your whole practice in regard to it. Always and everywhere, the more conscientious a man is, the more directly his rules of action will flow from his principles. He will be warped by no timid expediency. He will be deflected by no self-interest. Talk with men who by questionable ways engineer artificial revivals. You will be sure to find that their philosophy, either of human nature or of God's inworking in souls, is unsound. It is because they start from false premises that they reach false conclusions.

Observe then, first, that a revival is not a mere spasmodic excitement of the religious sensibility. There are many who locate Christian character largely in the emotions. Though they recognize the necessity of faith and obedience, the *depth* of one's piety they measure by the depth and warmth of his feeling. When this comes in as with the rush of a flood-tide, when one is moved in the intensity of his conviction to groan out his plea for the mercy of God, and afterward to shout his hallelujahs in ecstasy, they count the good work thoroughly done. Of course with such a theory they regard the states between revivals, of only ordinary strength of feeling, as deplorable lapses into spiritual torpor, if not death. The remedy they find in any operation by which to rouse again a tempest of feeling.

In general they succeed best by terrorizing their hearers with a dread of retribution. They draw lurid pictures of the world of woe. Under physical necessity there must be a reaction from scenes like these. The nervous system will bear for only a brief period such a strain. Exhaustion and relapse are as certain as after a violent fever in the blood.

B. But in revivals of that very sort I have seen apparently genuine and enduring conversions.

A. Yes. And the conductors of the movement point to these and cry, "See there! the manifest sanction of God on the work!" But you must never assume that God endorses every method of winning men which He sees fit to use for his own ends. If He makes the wrath of men to praise Him, why not their extravagances as well? There have been revivals of this sort successfully conducted by preachers who proved afterward to have been morally as hollow as a gourd. With men "nothing succeeds but success." But with

God apparent success is no test of the genuineness of anything whatever.

Some one has well and wisely said that "a soul may be saved at too great cost." That is, the saving may be done by such measures as cauterize and sear the sensibilities of scores of others, and leave them in more hopeless condition than ever before. A whole church, indeed, may be afflicted by this moral "chills and fever," as fatal to any spiritual health as is that physical disease to the body. Be not beguiled by the plea, "Anything is better than stagnation." There are many things worse.

But there is always danger that a revival may be violent just in proportion to the length and depth of the previous spiritual deadness. It is as a freshet in spring is more overwhelming after a winter severe enough to clog its channel with unyielding ice.

Again, a revival is not to be regarded as a periodical observance, with as regular place in the church-calendar as Lent or the Week of Prayer. The theory of some is that these seasons are as much under the operation of cause and effect as seed-sowing and harvest. They hold that if the proper means at the proper time are used, we may as confidently look for a revival as one kindling combustibles may look for a fire. Now it may be that the Holy Ghost, in the dispensation of his grace, acts under fixed and uniform laws. But if so, they move through too large a range for us to comprehend. The circle is too vast for us to trace the curve of the arc. Every pastor of many years' standing will tell you that he has been sometimes surprised by the advent of a revival—that sometimes he and his church have prayed and confidently hoped for a revival which did not appear.

B. Is it, then, of no use to labor for such a blessing?

A. By all means it *is* of use. A farmer does not always get his harvest. Drought or mildew or insects may defraud him of it. But he does not for that reason refuse to sow. No church will ever labor for a revival without gaining its reward. The reward may or may not be in just the shape they wish. The only object of what I have said was to caution you against the hasty, not to say flippant, way in which revivalists sometimes speak of the Holy Spirit as being hardly less at their call than the powers of physical nature.

C. Would you then never, till the whole church is so aroused as to call for it, make any unusual effort?

A. The gospel is always in order. Whether through my own lips or those of an evangelist, in the regular meeting or in one specially appointed, I would not hesitate to preach the gospel and to invite men to Christ. But be careful to make it the pure, unadulterated gospel. Preach the solemn truth of retribution. Show that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. But rely mainly on Christ's invitation to Himself for salvation. No harm can come from that. No disastrous reaction can follow it.

D. You have told us what a revival is not. Will you define it as in your view it is?

A. It is a movement when, under the leading of Providence and the incitement of the Holy Ghost, a church is led specially to labor and pray that men may be brought to Christ. It is not an importation of a new stock of grace. It is rather a special use of the grace possessed before. Some professed disciples who have been living coldly and feebly will be revived. Some who may have been deceived as to their own condition will be renewed. But the really ripe and earnest believers will only change somewhat their methods of work. Jonathan Edwards was probably no nearer to Christ, walking no more fully in the light of Christ, when preaching amidst the scenes of the Great Awakening, than when writing in his little study at Stockbridge his "Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will."

Use, therefore, in any effort toward such a movement, only legitimate methods. Seriously and tenderly announce to your people your belief, if you have the belief, that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Call them to a new consecration and to earnest work. But avoid any such statement as is often made, that "one Achan in the camp may prevent the coming of the Lord." We have no authority for giving to that ancient incident such an application as this in our day. It is certain only that if any one is as faithless as Achan, he does *what he can* to prevent the blessing, and is responsible to God for so doing.

CHAPTER II.

REVIVALS—CONTINUED.

A. THE second main question is, How to secure a revival. Though God's work is supernatural, He observes the laws of human nature. There are times and seasons which are more favorable than others for the commencement of special effort. Do not resort to it just as a congregation on the approach of summer is becoming unsettled. Do not plan for it amidst a great political excitement. But a period of business depression, when men are made to feel how uncertain is all earthly treasure, when they are tossed with disappointments and find no rest, may be, as it has often proved, a happy juncture for an invitation to things eternal and Divine. Sometimes the sudden death of a very prominent and popular young person has brought a community to deep thoughtfulness.

But these are means, not causes. It is idle to depend on any power but the Holy Ghost for such a work. The temptation to look to some other recourse is subtle and strong—an evangelist, for instance, who has had success in revivals. The cry is, "O, if Mr.— could be secured, we might hope for a blessing!" Mr.— would be visible. God is invisible. Beware of attempting to walk rather by sight than by faith.

You should preach plainly and earnestly to your church. The church is the channel through which commonly the power from above will flow in. Ask them to clear the channel of every obstruction. Call them to renewed consecration, to reconciliation of any variances, to united and fervent prayer, to labor with individual souls.

Special meetings for renewal of covenant with God and for intercession with Him will be well. An early morning meeting, when the body is refreshed by rest, the mind is clear, and the heart may be specially active, is very desirable. Encourage small neighborhood meetings, in which Christian women may together plead with God.

In your whole spirit and utterance make this work a *joyous* one. It is caricaturing a gracious advent of the Divine Life in a church to shroud it in awful folds of gloom. Under the notion that he must impress his flock with the solemnity of the occasion, and arouse them with dread of retribution, many a pastor weighs down the elasticity in a soul till he almost breaks the spring.

B. But if we are to awaken the impenitent, must we not preach retribution?

A. Yes, and with emphasis. But carefully avoid the idea that *you* are bringing in the gloom that follows them with its black shadow. Explain that the shadow is *already* there, resting on them. Show that he who believeth not is condemned already. Make it clear that what *you* introduce, what the Lord offers through you, is glad tidings of salvation and peace to every penitent. The lie which Satan is always whispering to the young—that religion is a doleful matter—the preacher in time of revival too often unwittingly endorses. In your personal attitude never cringe as under a load of awful responsibility such as God has not called you to carry. “The *joy* of the Lord is your *strength*.” Never speak to your church as if they were now to go into a Gethsemane and vicariously bear the sins of the world. Let all you say and do be suffused with the buoyant gladness of one bringing a message not only of warning but of deliverance and grace. No such exhaustion will attend a work thus conducted as to involve a reaction and a collapse.

In connection with the meetings for prayer already recommended, induce individuals to labor with individuals. There is much vague talk of the responsibility of the church, which comes home to no one and means little. It costs nothing and is worth its cost.

The third main question is, How to promote and conduct a revival.

D. Shall an evangelist be employed?

A. I should answer, Never, in chief dependence on *him*. There is a more excellent way.

The question is often asked, Why does not a pastor win souls equally with an evangelist? Perhaps, with any *single sermon*, he does. He brings a hearer almost up to the point of decision for Christ. But gradually through the week the interest awakened sags away. When, on the next Sunday, the pastor rouses the hearer again, he soon lapses as before. It is as if a smith were to heat an iron time after time almost up to the welding point, and then leave

it to cool down. The iron must be kept longer in the fire. The soul must be kept longer under the power of the truth. That means more meetings. If more, the pastor in conducting them needs help. If help is sought, it is most naturally that of some one experienced and previously successful in such work. But be careful as to the man you select. Learn from pastors with whom he has labored their impression of him.

B. Would you allow him to take entire charge of the work?

A. If you are young and inexperienced in such scenes, and he is a safe man to whom to intrust the helm, perhaps I would. Otherwise I would keep the control myself.

When there is clearly a rise of interest among your people, promptly make the most of it. Summon your church to the glad work before them. Give some publicity to it. Take your meetings from the lecture-room into the main auditorium. Many who are but slightly impressed and who would not go into the smaller room, will be found in the larger.

D. Would you urge the people to lay aside their business?

A. Some of them cannot. As clerks and other employés, they have sold their time to others. You cannot therefore lay this down as a duty on your people. But if eternity is greater than time and the interests of time, it is not unnatural on such an occasion as this, for as many as can, by partly suspending those interests, to make that fact apparent. Induce some at least to devote themselves wholly to the work. But avoid any impression that secular business is *our* work, while revival-work belongs to the *Lord*. *All* is his— one sort as truly as another.

There are various incidental means for promoting the movement. Circulars, with announcements of the meetings and earnest appeals for assistance, may be sent to the whole church. Let Christians invite their friends into the meetings. Leading brethren of the church may go out, two by two, to visit and interest the congregation. Sisters may greatly aid in this. Have a liberal supply of selected and appropriate hymns. They have often more power than a sermon. Request invalids confined at home to be instant and earnest in prayer. Repeated instances are recorded in which a revival that has blessed a whole community like a great rain has been as clearly due to the prayers of some such secluded saint as was the rain in Israel to the prayer of Elijah.

B. Would you preach the great doctrines in a revival?

A. I would not announce a series of sermons on the doctrines. It might strike the "pillars" in your church with dismay. But the doctrines on their practical side, as Jesus taught them, I would clearly and earnestly preach. Especially show the alienation of the heart from God, the necessity of a return to Him, the helplessness of our condition in sin without aid from above, and the way of salvation through Christ. Theories of the atonement in its relations to the Divine administration, whether the "commercial" or the "moral influence" or the "moral government" theory, I would avoid. It is not so much through a work that Christ did for us as by Himself, who is our ransom, our life and our light, that we are to be saved. Christians, unable to visit and invite to Christ those who are without may send through the mail personal notes of expostulation and entreaty.

It is a shallow mistake that we need in a revival exhortation only. Explain the great facts and truths on which as a bedplate the whole machinery of the gospel works. In time of revival men hear with deep interest these fundamentals of the Christian system. They hunger and thirst for them. These truths make at such times profound impressions on the heart. The impressions are photographs taken in a strong light.

But do not plead for the doctrines as a lawyer for his client. With emphasis affirm them as the truth of God.

If you ordinarily write out your sermons, a revival may help you to commence extemporizing. Your people are then eager for the truth. They are in no critical mood. Your own soul is so moved that you are likely to preach with power. And you are so pressed with extra engagements in prayer-meetings, inquiry-meetings, and labor with individuals, that the work of sermon-writing becomes almost impossible.

In your meetings young converts should not be chosen to counsel inquirers.

C. But ought not the young converts to be in some Christian work?

A. Certainly. But a sea-captain would not set a cabin-boy navigating the ship. To guide an inquirer after Christ is very critical work. It calls for knowledge and experience. A novice is apt to suppose that an inquirer must go through the same type of con-

version with himself. He is not the person for an adviser. Show inquirers that no two persons are likely to go through the same experience. Some have read Christian biographies that record marvelous heights and depths of feeling. They wonder that they have themselves gone through no such agonies and ecstasies. They fear that if the experience in the book was genuine, their own must be spurious. Enlighten them as to that.

In your appeals to the impenitent, address rather the conscience than the feelings. Show them that Christian character consists not in excited emotion, but in an obedient will.

Be calmly patient with an inquirer's evasions and follies. Never allow the least trace of vexation to appear.

If he inclines to any special sin, insist especially on his abandoning that. There can be no compromise. If he has wealth and clings to it, show him that without surrendering that to Christ there can be no salvation for him.

If he fears he has committed the unpardonable sin, explain that this sin consists essentially of a hardness of heart that will never be forgiven, solely because it will never *seek* forgiveness. Show him that his interest in his own salvation and desire to secure it are evidence enough that he is in no such condition.

Urge him to submit *at once, on the spot*, to Christ. Allow no thought for an instant of anything else.

D. Would you ask inquirers to rise for prayers?

A. I would. But frankly explain that you claim no Divine authority for requiring the act. It is only a natural way of indicating that one takes Christ as his Saviour, and asks the sympathies and prayers of Christ's disciples. Make it understood that no such act has in itself any saving efficacy whatever. Caution every one, also, against relying on a social glow of interest in the subject in a public meeting. It is a personal matter between a man's own soul and his Maker. If he consecrates himself publicly, he must, in the secrecy and silence of his room at home, repeat it again and again.

Use no violent measures. Do not attempt to force a submission to Christ. I knew an evangelist who, at a meeting which crowded the house to its utmost capacity, asked those who had resolved for Christ to come forward to pews which he wished vacated, and those who had not so resolved to leave the house. It made deplorable confusion and ill-feeling.

B. What shall we say to inquirers who, after submitting as fully as they know how to submit to Christ, find no peace?

A. Advise them to cease looking for peace and begin to look for duty. One may be as really selfish in seeking Christian assurance and joy as in seeking money. To be in pursuit, chiefly, of *anything* that will gratify self is an unwholesome process. Let them take at his word Him who has offered to pardon the penitent. Let them believe his promise, and then, like Him, go about doing good. To an inquirer who said, "I would be ready to go through fire and water for Christ's sake, if I could know before starting that I were a Christian," a wise pastor answered, "You must be ready *without* knowing that you are a Christian to do that." So, and only so, the joy of sins forgiven and of perfect peace will come. The Lord does not pay us our wages in advance.

B. Would you tell an inquirer who says he has submitted to Christ that he is a Christian and ought to believe it?

A. No. Never tell any one that he is a Christian. You do not know that he is. You cannot judge the state of souls. But do not leave him to seek some *new way* of becoming a Christian. *Obedience* is the essence of Christian character. If the inquirer seems to have made a complete submission, then tell him to take the Lord at his word, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," and at once *go to work* for Him. When all self-searching and seeking for joy are in vain, earnest Christian work will dispose of his debts and fears.

I have known one who was just beginning the Christian life to find much comfort in a *written* covenant or consecration of himself signed with his own hand. It is an interesting document to keep and occasionally read over as the years go by. A brief *journal*, also, of the outer and inner life, covering two or three weeks at the crisis of the surrender to Christ, is helpful. Let it be prepared and privately preserved for the writer's own eye alone.

The fourth question to be considered is: How to save the fruits of a revival. Indulge in no predictions, such as a young pastor in his sanguine ardor may rashly make, that the special revival interest is to continue indefinitely. With such forecasting you may prepare a disappointment both for yourself and for your church. You and they will have on hand a work of instruction and upbuilding of souls which is quite as important as that of warning and invitation.

If the special fervor abates, allow no thought of discouragement or depression. It is quite as indispensable to preserve as to gather the fruit. Invite those who seem to be genuine converts to unite with the church.

B. I have heard it said that we must wait till they are enough in earnest to offer themselves.

A. In some instances, of those who seem over-confident, I would wait—and perhaps only to decline them. But many who give the best evidence of a radical change are so diffident or otherwise deterred as to leave a clear duty for the pastor to do. Show them what the church *is*. Many assume it to be a society of those who are already ripe in the Christian life. They should know that the church is a training-school for very imperfect souls. It is a conservatory, in which weak plants, somewhat sheltered from the world's chill air, may grow.

D. Would you encourage young children to unite with the church?

A. Why not? If they are old enough to sin they are old enough to become Christ's disciples.

C. At what age would you admit them?

A. It is hardly possible to prescribe the age. Some are more mature at eight than others at sixteen. Of course you should carefully see that they understand themselves. But so you should as to adults.

Look especially after converts who are unprotected and exposed, as sheep without the fold in godless families.

Suggest ways for the Christian activity of young disciples. The best protection from the rust of evil is to keep the machinery running. See to the young people's prayer-meeting. Lest some irregularity should creep in, keep informed (without attending in person) of the management of it.

Also organize juvenile mission-bands. Preach on the model Christian son, daughter, scholar, clerk, etc.

Deter older church-members from too high demands on young converts and from uncharitable criticisms. This harshness has chilled many a young Christian life and withered it in the bud.

By all these and like means you may garner the harvest from a season of revival and enrich with it the kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

OPEN-AIR SERVICES.

A. Not every man can succeed in this sort of work. It requires not only Christian character, but knowledge of human nature, with sound common sense and tact.

There are some advantages in such work which are not to be had in the pulpit. Mercenary men, who judge others by themselves, insist that ministers preach, as lawyers plead and merchants trade, simply to make money. But the most unconscionable mammon-worshiper will bring no such charge as this against the work a preacher does in these open-air services. Here, if nowhere else, you are able to say to your audience, without fear of caviling, "I seek not yours, but you."

On the other hand there is the disadvantage that you sow beside all waters. You know not what shall prosper, whether this or that. Your audience gathers and scatters like a snow-drift. You can expect to see but little result of your work. You can only send your plea heavenward that some lasting, saving impression may be made.

"Full many an arrow wildly sent
Finds mark the archer never meant."

Yet, of course, you must be, as must brethren who assist you, on the watch for any one who seems specially responsive to your appeal. If he is not already a church-goer, draw him into your own flock. Make your open-air work a vestibule to the church. But if you succeed in no such efforts, never conclude that the service is in vain. You may meet in heaven, if nowhere before, evidence that you spoke to good purpose.

As to special measures, first, advertise, if possible, the place and time for your meeting. Only the warm season of the year, of course, is available. The place should be as near your church as is practicable. A public park on Sunday afternoon, where every one is at leisure to hear, offers the best hope of success.

A few brethren, earnest and devoted men and good singers, should attend you. With three or four familiar hymns in succession, draw together your audience.

Your address, though founded throughout on the Bible, would be better without a text announced. Give it as little as possible the cast of a formal sermon. Make it usually not more than about twenty minutes in length. Speak extempore, in a familiar, conversational way. Anecdote and illustration you should freely use. But do not let them break the unity of your address. From beginning to end drive at a definite, specific point. Endeavor to look directly in the face of every one before you. Allow yourself to be drawn into no controversy. If any objector persist, deal with him courteously; but tell him you will meet him in private at another time. You have a right to set forth the truth as you hold it. Tell him, if necessary, that he is as free to speak to some other group of listeners elsewhere.

Keep careful watch of the faces of your audience. Ask your assistants to do likewise. If any one seems impressed, after the service learn his residence and endeavor to lead him to Christ.

BOOK TENTH.

MISCELLANIES.

CHAPTER I.

RELATIONS TO OTHER MINISTERS AND CHURCHES—ANNOYANCES.

A. OTHER pastors and churches are, of course, at work for the same kingdom of Christ with you. But there are, nevertheless, such distinct interests as may cause friction and trouble. You are in danger of being forced into misunderstanding with them. You may hear, in regard to a brother-minister, that he is proselyting in your flock. In such a case believe nothing till you can come face to face with the accused. Be always and everywhere slow to assume evil of any man whom you have seen reason to esteem. That is the dictate not only of charity but of discretion. If a damaging rumor seems important, if it is not beneath your notice, before crediting it *run it down* to its source. You will perhaps be astonished, as I have been, to discover how reports which seemed to smite each other in the face will prove not inconsistent.

B. I have seen ministers whom, in spite of all charitable allowances, I was forced to recognize as prowlers in other men's folds.

A. Yes, so have I. But even they will often appear at other points conscientious enough.

B. Why then do they, as to this matter, show so little scruple?

A. I suppose because the conscience of such a man is warped by the conviction that his one exclusive mission is to build up his own church. He may be narrow enough to think other churches so seriously in error that their members are all victims whom he ought to rescue. If you are thrown in with such a man, you must simply endure him as you would a toothache.

C. And would you make reprisals on him?

A. Certainly not. Two wrongs will never make a right. But

while letting his flock alone, keep a sharp outlook over yours. Meanwhile, if any opportunity occurs to serve him a good turn, seize it and heap coals of fire on his head.

Never envy a popular preacher. This is, unhappily, one of the besetting sins of our profession. In a little group of clergymen intimate one with another, if the conversation turns on some brother who draws a larger audience than any of them, you are too likely to hear that he is a bubble and that the world will presently find it out. Remember always that many a man whom you would not choose as your pastor is doing a world of good to multitudes whom you could never reach. It is said that when Wesley and Whitefield were at odds on theology and ecclesiastical matters, one of Wesley's adherents asked him, "Do you think we shall see Mr. Whitefield in heaven?" "No," he answered, "I do not. I think he will be so near the Throne, and you and I so far away, that we shall not get within sight of him."

If you meet with non-church-goers who have such antecedents that they naturally belong to some neighboring pastor, promptly inform him of the fact. So you may accomplish two good ends at once: you may both recover a wanderer to the fold of Christ and oblige a ministerial brother.

As to preaching in others' pulpits. If you do so at the request of the church, you will naturally expect compensation. If it be at the request of a brother-minister, you should, as a rule, expect nothing. Physicians attend without charge one another's family, and so should pastors one another's flock.

D. But suppose the minister who invites us is rich and we poor?

A. That would furnish an exception to the rule. If you request some brother to relieve *you*, I should offer a fee, which he ought to decline.

Call promptly and cordially on any new minister who comes into your neighborhood. If you neglect it he may remember that "two of a trade cannot agree," and suppose you jealous. If practicable, propose an exchange of pulpits when he shall find it convenient.

B. But suppose he is of a church with which you are not in fellowship?

A. No matter. Though you would in that case not propose the exchange, you could welcome him as a fellow-citizen, as presumably a

good man aiming at the welfare of the community. On that general score you and he may have much ground in common.

D. If you had opportunity, how often would you exchange?

A. It is to be regretted that exchanges seem going out of vogue. They have many advantages. They afford almost the only mutual recognition among churches of different communions. Two churches are set in more kindly relations when each has listened to the pastor of the other. Then, too, by exchanging you reach with the same sermon a much larger number of hearers. And you gain relief and time for study, or for extra work in the homes of your people. I would stem the tide that seems running against this good usage. Exchange, if possible, once in a month or six weeks.

D. But what if your church complain that their contract is with the pastor and no one else?

A. You contract to be responsible for the pulpit. But you by no means promise to be in it every Sabbath the year round. Explain, if you hear complaints, the advantages of exchanges that I have just mentioned. You can bring your people to look more kindly on the practice.

Of course you will not take advantage of another pastor by saying in his pulpit anything that he would not say himself. Nothing could be more dishonorable.

B. What as to officiating at weddings and funerals in another's parish?

A. Be cautious. A householder who is a parishioner of another pastor may feel free to invite you. But it would not follow that you ought to accept. You have an obligation to your brother-minister. If the family inviting you are your near relatives, that is an exceptional case. But commonly I should not, without making sure that the pastor would approve, officiate in the home of any of his people.

B. What as to ministers' meetings?

A. They are invaluable. Count them as by no means merely occasions for rest and recreation. Look on them as grand opportunities for usefulness. They enable you to give and receive brotherly sympathy. A good thought broached at such a meeting has a hearty welcome and hearty appreciation. Through the pastors it is likely to reach hundreds of their hearers. By all means attend ministers' meetings.

B. How would you have the time at such a meeting occupied?

A. There may be sermons read for criticism and essays on matters of doctrine and duty. To promote discussion, it is well to take a subject on which there are divergent opinions. Two brief essays on opposite sides are usually more stimulating than a single long one.

A meeting once or twice a year of pastors attended by their wives, may be a happy occasion. A ministerial association in Massachusetts have for a long period been accustomed to meet, with their wives, in an annual picnic on an island in one of the small lakes in that State.

C. Would you encourage interdenominational ministers' meetings?

A. Certainly. They broaden your sympathies and your charity. You come to a more catholic fellowship with the whole great family of Christ, and intellectually they are more stimulating than denominational meetings.

The relations of *churches* one to another are by no means as numerous and intimate as they might be made. When members of your own church remove, induce them to take letters and unite elsewhere. Persuade others who come to live in your neighborhood to transfer their relations. Through neglect of this simple duty thousands fall away into indifference and godlessness.

There are sundry annoyances to which a pastor may be exposed. If your people interrupt you in your study, take certain hours—say the last three forenoons of the week—and request that, extraordinaries excepted, these may be left to you undisturbed.

If books are borrowed from your library, make a record on the spot of both the volume and the borrower. Then after a reasonable time recover your property.

If you are annoyed by beggars, who go first of all to a minister, inaugurate a relief-society. Let its agent be charged with the duty of investigating the case of every applicant. Give the beggar a card to the agent, and save both money and time. Very rarely will such a card be presented at the office of the society. Of ostentatiously *pious* beggars, beware. They are almost sure to be frauds.

If any one, with a threat of slandering you, should attempt blackmail, prosecute him promptly and vigorously to the extent of the law or till he makes full confession. Pay never one penny of hush-money. By a cowardly act of that sort you would put your foot in a trap.

CHAPTER II.

RESIGNATIONS.

A. THE pastor's tie to his flock is, with gratifying exceptions here and there, far too weak and precarious. This is one of the serious evils of our time. It leaves us constantly with thousands of shepherdless churches, thousands of churchless shepherds. To the utmost of your influence set yourselves against it. Enter on a pastorate, each one of you, with a fixed resolve that till Providence clearly calls you elsewhere, you will count yourself as there *to stay*.

B. But the causes of dismissal do not generally lie with the minister.

A. Perhaps not. But often his discontent or ambition has too much to do with it. If his firm purpose is to make no capricious changes, he will at least be clear of a grave responsibility.

The question whether or not to resign a pulpit is often a sorely perplexing one.

First, what are insufficient reasons for such a step?

You should not, unless in sore straits from poverty, resign merely for a larger salary. If you have in your present field been living in some comfort, if you have not been feeling that in justice to your family or your creditors you must seek relief, you should not seize the first larger income that offers. Men ought to be led to see in a Christian minister—as in *every* disciple, of course, they should—somewhat of the cross-bearing spirit of the Master. And remember another fact: a flattering call declined never leaves a pastor where he was before. In his present position he is immensely strengthened. He stands higher in the esteem of his people. His influence widens and deepens. He declines money for a far more valuable thing than money—moral power.

Again, a disaffection among your people which is controllable affords no valid reason for resigning. Almost everywhere in the ministry of the Lord Jesus He met with opposition. In every one of Paul's churches but that of Philippi there was a clique set

against him. Why should you insist on exemption? Many a minister at the first whisper of alienation has broken away, in turbulent impatience, from a church with which he ought to have remained. Whatever may be true of the "*vox populi*," the voice of the schismatic is not the voice of God. Yielding to a little faction is allowing a minority to govern a church. It is treachery to the church as well as to its Great Head.

Neither, again, should you resign to secure better society for your family. A pastor's wife at times not unnaturally longs for more cultivated society for herself and her children. But if in your own household you keep a high grade of spirituality, intelligence, and refinement, your children will be secure against coarser associations out of doors. Such associations will slip off from your sons and daughters like turbid water from transparent ice.

Beware of settling a question of resignation on any lower ground than that of the highest cross-bearing devotion to Christ.

But there are good reasons for retiring from a pulpit.

If, on the rise of a disaffection, your leading men should refuse to stand by you. If by discouraging words, or silence more discouraging still, they should show their attitude, they, not you, would assume the responsibility for your departure.

An actually insufficient support would justify a resignation.

C. But is not that word "insufficient" a rather elastic one?

A. Certainly. You cannot sharply define it. One is liable under the cloak of it to hide his ambition or greed or discontent. But, none the less, self-preservation is the first law of nature. He who provides not when he can for his own has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

A third valid reason for resigning would be a field that should evidently offer larger harvest for Christ. But as such a field would in most cases offer also a larger support and more comforts, the danger of self-deception would be very great.

So too the necessity of removal on account of failing health, or to educate your children, might be a good reason for resignation.

The open secret of long and happy pastorates is *first-rate work* both within and without the pulpit. I knew a good brother who fell into the notion that if he spent his time from house to house in winning souls, God would provide him with material for his sermons. When asked if he had read a certain new and valuable commentary, he

said he read only his Testament. He forgot that "he who knows nothing but the Bible does not know the Bible." So, neglecting his study, he soon wearied his people and was obliged to leave them.

If you should ever find a crisis and a resignation apparently impending, trust God and "bate no jot of heart or hope." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," says Isaiah, "whose mind is stayed on Thee." Calmly and carefully inquire into the reason of the alienation. See if it is probably such as any effort of yours can remedy. A young pastor in Connecticut, who afterward became one of the foremost in New England, was told by some of his people that he "didn't fill the place." "Then," said he manfully, "I *will* fill it." And he applied himself with such energy to his work that no complaint after that was ever heard. The complaint proved to be the greatest blessing of his life. Another whom I knew was informed that his neglect of the young people had so alienated them that they were turning against him. But so promptly and systematically did he set himself at work among them that through many happy years they remained his strongest friends. The pastor for forty years of a Massachusetts church told me that at two or three crises in that period it had seemed to him that nothing but a miracle could keep him and his people together.

Should a resignation prove inevitable, do not be hasty. Intimate to your leading brethren that you intend retiring ere long. With the main question settled, even opponents would then probably be patient.

Rarely, if ever, make a public issue with a church that wrongs you. The case may seem so clear and the injury so grievous as to promise nothing but full vindication and justice to yourself. But the public will have neither time nor interest in the matter to go into details. They will learn only that you had trouble. They will "strike the average" and believe that it was probably, in part at least, your fault. It will be more apt to work against than for you in the future.

Besides, it is no small object to leave a church on such terms that they will be glad to see you—and you to appear—in their pulpit again. Neither contend, therefore, nor, if you can prevent it, allow your friends to contend for you.

If possible do something, provided you are in a denomination of Christians in which the church elects its own pastor, toward securing

a successor. When leaving one church I obtained a pastor who commenced his work the same day on which I closed my own. For another I found one who began within a week or two after my departure. If pastors on retiring would oftener give attention to this matter they might frequently fill the vacuum they make.

CHAPTER III.

DISAFFECTIONS IN THE PARISH—RECONCILING THOSE AT VARIANCE
—CHURCH DISCIPLINE—ABSENT MEMBERS.

A. You must not conclude from my counsel on various hindrances and annoyances in a pastor's work that I anticipate them, as a matter of course, for you. My advice in regard to them is like life-boats and life-preservers on shipboard—ready for emergencies, but, as is hoped, never to come into use.

As the best safe-guard for your place is in the esteem and affection of your people, keep well up in all lines of a pastor's work. Depend, with God's blessing, on no other protection. Grow in grace. Serve your people better day by day. Make every sermon an ascending step. Dr. Beecher used to say that if he needed more salary, instead of dunning his church for it he tried by improving his sermons to be worthy of it.

Too many a pastor after neglecting some line of duty and opening a flood-gate of complaint, begins to recriminate. A sad mistake. It is suicidal. It is as if a ship's captain, in a leaky vessel, instead of stopping the leak should mount benches on the decks to keep out of the water.

If you hear of any serious disaffection, patiently and thoroughly get at the facts. Allow for that liability which is in every man to suppose that all others see through his eyes. A pastor in New England, hearing that some disaffection had arisen against himself, inquired of one of his officers who were the complainants. "Oh," was the comforting answer, "anybody down the broad aisle. You cannot miss them!" It transpired that this man was one of the foremost of them, and that his report was a gross exaggeration.

Allow little weight to complaints sent by letter anonymously. They are a mean and cowardly method of multiplying the writer's own individuality—making the impression that he represents a great number.

If you learn that any *one* person is offended through some misun-

derstanding, seek an interview directly with him. Do nothing either by pen and ink or through any third party. And appeal to the highest Christian motives. Settle the matter, so to speak, in a Christian atmosphere. Probably the man's grudge is due to his not having breathed such an atmosphere.

Be most eager to learn of any fault in yourself. A young artist or author chases his friends for criticisms. He overflows with thanks for good ones—the more trenchant the better. But what is a picture or a book compared with the perfect pastor that you ought to become? Be impartial in judging any complaints of yourself. And at once apply the remedy.

With choir-quarrels rarely, if ever, intermeddle. They are generally due to such petty jealousies as you can do nothing to heal.

Never make strong issues on small matters. Learn, where no principle is involved, to yield gracefully.

Learn also the great lesson of *holding your peace* on occasion. Few lessons are more important to a pastor than this. And many a pastor, too, if he could induce his helpmeet to do likewise, would save them both a world of trouble.

D. I have heard of a minister who had more trouble in reconciling two brethren who were at odds between themselves than in reconciling either with himself.

A. Very likely. A word of counsel on such cases. It may be that the variance is based so largely on inborn peculiarities of each as to allow no hope of a cordial understanding. For instance, I once knew two men, both prominent members of the same church. One, with a fertile imagination, fluent tongue, and a poor memory, never could tell the same fact or incident twice in the same way. He would set it masquerading in such strange guises that you could hardly recognize it. And these misrepresentations never seemed to trouble his conscience—good man as, on the whole, he certainly was—with any compunction. As he meant no wrong, verbal accuracy seemed to him of no great account. But the other was a cool, accurate, matter-of-fact character, who measured his words as if he were under oath on a witness-stand. Of course, he had little charity for his free-and-easy brother. And, of course, his brother regarded his strictures as harsh and cruel. After some effort I discovered that I could as easily mix oil and water as bring these two brethren into harmony. They have now both been long in heaven, as I

doubt not, and perhaps have learned to look, through spiritual eyes, more kindly each on the other. The moral of the story is that you will do well, before attempting to reconcile two belligerent brethren, to make sure that they were not so *born* that you will waste your breath.

If the differences, however, are not congenital, if you have reason to hope for success as a peacemaker, begin by laboring separately with each of the parties in controversy. Point each to the good qualities of the other, which, in his prejudice, he may have overlooked. And, secondly, learn a lesson from the sower of strife. He reports to A. whatever hateful thing, in regard to him, he has heard from B., and, *vice versa*, carries to B. the bitter words of A. So, as a wedge, he forces them apart. Now reverse the process. Report to each whatever kind utterance, in regard to him, you may have drawn from the other. So, as a shuttle moving back and forth between the two, gradually weave them together.

B. And would you expect them to meet in a formal reconciliation, each begging pardon of the other?

A. No. They may both hate a *scene*. You might fail to bring them to that. And it is of no great moment. If you succeed in the substance of a reconciliation, the form is comparatively immaterial.

C. Is not church-discipline much less observed than in the last century?

A. Possibly. There was a sternness in the ecclesiastical, as well as social and domestic, life of the fathers which found a grim satisfaction in calling offenders to account.

D. But is it not a duty which ought to be revived and maintained in the churches?

A. In some churches, undoubtedly, it ought. But you must not forget the parable of the Tares and the Wheat. As there was a Judas among the Twelve, there will in a church of any considerable size always be unfaithful members. If the church should take up the case of every inconsistent member, it could do nothing but discipline the year round.

In a case, however, in which the good name of the church necessitates action the initiative should be taken by the officers of the church. It is unreasonable to throw this painful and thankless task on the pastor.

Be cautious of proceeding on an individual complaint. Often the first man to carry his charges to the church is the first one who ought to be called to account.

Except in notorious cases of public scandal, adhere to our Lord's rule in Matthew 18: 15.

Finally, never let the process of discipline degenerate into a cold, technical trial of charges. Commence every session held in the course of it with earnest prayer. Suffuse the whole with a devout and tender Christian spirit.

C. Would you drop absent members as promptly and completely as is the manner of some churches?

A. Far from it. A church is not a debating society, from whose membership one may, at his pleasure, withdraw. It is a very serious matter to sever one's connection with a church. The fact of membership, with its responsibilities, may serve as a leverage to rouse from his lethargy a backslidden believer.

D. But what of absent members, of whom nothing can be learned?

A. If the church-clerk had been vigilant, there would rarely be such members. But if there are, do not erase their names and dismiss them to the world. Put them in a separate list. Exert yourself to find some trace of them. If they make themselves known, and explaining their previous silence, ask for letters of dismission and recommendation, hold yourselves at liberty to grant them.

I believe I have now covered most of the occasions and emergencies that are likely to arise in your work. The supreme recourse in every exigency is to Him whose commission you bear, and whose word to sustain you is pledged. With faith in Him, and works united, go out to your several fields. And may the blessing of the Great Husbandman be on you, till, in the good, glad day approaching, you shall shout the harvest home!

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