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Minister as teacher

Brown, William Adams

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LECTURES GIVEN AT MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE
TO THE
CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS OF VERMONT

ASSEMBLED IN THEIR ANNUAL CONVOCATION

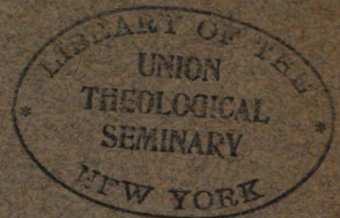
SEPTEMBER 7-9, 1920

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BY

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, Ph. D., D. D.

Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology in the Union Theological Seminary and Secretary of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches.



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“These lectures are privately printed in response to an urgent request by the ministers who heard them. Their printing is made possible by the generosity of Mr. Henry A. Dewey of Castletown, Vermont, who also heard them.”

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE LECTURES.

1. Occasion of the lectures.
2. Importance of the subject.
3. Neglect of the teaching office in Protestantism.
4. Recent revival of interest in the subject.
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1. Let me begin by a frank confession. If I must be quite honest with you, I must confess to a certain feeling of trepidation, when I consider the enterprise upon which we are embarked. Two years ago, when Mr. Merrill's invitation first reached me, we were still at war, and I was in the midst of my work as Secretary of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches. I felt—as all must have felt whose privilege it was to touch the churches intimately at their point of contact with the war—an almost measureless sense of the church's opportunity and responsibility. At such a time there was something almost suffocating in the confinement of office work with its slight opportunity for contact with the men who were touching men in the first-hand conflict of faith and doubt. I, too, longed to be touching men in the things that mattered most. So, when your invitation came to me to spend a few hours in your company in intimate conference on this central interest of the minister's life, I welcomed it as a thirsty man a draught of water. I felt that there was something I must say, and to you.

Other unforeseen duties made my coming at the time originally planned impossible; and in the searching light of after-war psychology I have had leisure to reflect upon the difficulty of the subject I have proposed. I am not so sure that the thoughts I can bring will deserve the attention of which I thought them worthy two years ago. We are living, all of us, more or less, in a mood of disillusionment, and if I come to you to confer about the minister as teacher, it is in a spirit more humble—I will not say less hopeful—than would have been the case two years ago.

2. And yet I am not less convinced of the importance—I may say the imperative importance—of our subject. If it is difficult (and we shall see that it bristles with difficulties), if I must bring you problems rather than offer you solutions, that is all the more reason for tackling it without delay. After all,

the subjects that are really worth while are the hard subjects, and in spite of what I have told you of my momentary hesitation, it is only truth to say that as I look into your faces, and consider what is before us, I am beginning to feel exhilarated already.

I am to speak to you of the Minister as Teacher. This is not the only phase of the minister's work, but as Protestantism conceives it, it is, save one, the most important. The priestly relation alone (and I use the word in the good Protestant sense, to denote the work of the minister in helping his brother men to realize their spiritual relationship to their common Father)—the priestly relation alone is more important, and this depends for its full success upon the other. For Protestantism claims for every individual the right and the duty of direct access to God. The most that his fellowman can do (whether he be minister or layman) is to point the way, and for this he must know where God is to be found and what He is like when one has found Him. Hence Protestantism, just because it has so high an estimate of the value and responsibility of the human soul, magnifies the teaching office of the minister, or for that matter, of every Christian.

3. It is difficult, then, to exaggerate the importance of the minister's function as a teacher. Yet am I wrong in saying that of all the various aspects of the minister's work, this, in our modern Protestantism, is the most neglected? The minister is many things in the modern world, and he is becoming new things every day. He is not only pastor, preacher, leader of worship, but executive, financier, promoter, organizer, club leader, social reformer, and I know not what all beside. But how many ministers can you name who, in the full meaning of that word, deserve to be called by the name that was most commonly addressed to Jesus—*teacher*?

Indirect evidence of the state of the case has come to us from an unexpected quarter. The best way to tell how successful a teacher is, is to catch his pupils unawares, and ask them what they know about what he has been teaching. This the war has given us a unique opportunity to do. It has gathered in our camps a cross section of the young manhood of America and given us an opportunity not likely to recur in our generation to know what they were really thinking about the things that interest us.

Among other things about religion. Two studies have been undertaken, one in this country¹ and one in England,² whose re-

¹ Religion among American Men, as Revealed by a Study of Conditions in the Army. The Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook. Association Press, New York, 1920.

² The Army and Religion. Ed. by David S. Cairns. MacMillan, London, 1919.

sults now lie before us in two compact and instructive, if somewhat disheartening volumes. They are based upon the reports of many hundreds of chaplains, camp pastors, and other religious workers, as to what the men think and believe about the Christian religion. And there is general agreement that, with a few notable exceptions, the results show a surprising and lamentable ignorance on the part of the great majority of the most elementary truths of Christianity. Religion, to most of our young men, if these reports are to be trusted, is an instinct, a sentiment, at most a habit, not a reasoned faith.

This sheds a reflex light upon the subject that interests us. If these men—I am speaking not of outsiders now but of church members and adherents—know little or nothing about Christianity, the fair inference is that they have never been effectively taught.

But indeed this is only what might have been expected by anyone who had taken the pains to inform himself as to the facts. Long before the war began there had been witnessed a lamentable decline in the teaching office of the ministry. The catechism had long ago dropped out of fashion, and nothing equally effective had been devised to take its place. The Sunday School held the children for one short hour a week and depended for the most part upon the services of voluntary and ill-trained teachers. More serious still, the sermon had changed its character. It no longer dealt with doctrine, or at least so seldom as to be practically negligible, and for the gap thus made no substitute had been provided. Whereas Protestantism began by teaching its laymen to understand the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, while the Roman church deliberately fostered their ignorance, today all this is reversed. It is the Roman Church which provides instruction in religion for its laymen. The Protestant church leaves its members to pick up such knowledge as they can by themselves.

There are many reasons for this into which we could enter at length if this were the time and place. The spirit of the age, with its demand for deeds, not words, is one reason. The pressure of other interests, robbing the minister of the quiet hours of study on which his predecessors could count, is another. Not least important, though largely unconfessed, is the lack of clear cut and definite conviction which is the result of the radical changes introduced into men's beliefs by modern scholarship. All these influences and others beside had been at work long before the war and had produced changes in the attitude of the minister toward this most central and fundamental part of his task which were beginning to cause grave concern to thoughtful observers. Protestantism, I repeat, which might

↳ almost be defined as the religion of the teacher, had all but abandoned to Catholicism this most important of its functions.

4. It is true of course that there were exceptions to this rule—notable and gratifying exceptions. One of the most encouraging features of the decade immediately before the war was the renewed emphasis laid in many quarters upon the importance of the teaching of religion. This appeared in various ways: in the increased attention paid to the Sunday School, and the improvement of the helps provided for Sunday School teachers; in the provision in many Seminaries for instruction in Religious Pedagogy, and the Psychology of Religion; in the free discussion of religious difficulties in the student conferences held under the auspices of the Christian Associations, and the improvement of the quality of the literature put forth by the Association presses; above all, in the formation of the Religious Education Association, and other similar agencies for bringing together men and women interested in the problems of religious education. These were signs of a new and better day for which we have every reason to be grateful. But, encouraging as they were, they do not alter the fact that for the church at large, the situation was as I have described it, and that the rank and file of ministers failed to take the teaching office seriously.

I make no apology, therefore, for the subject which I bring before you today, the Minister as Teacher. It may be difficult. It may be illusive. We may not succeed with it as well as we hope. But no one can deny that it is important, one might almost say, all important.

5. Observe the phrasing of the theme. I am to speak of the *minister* as teacher, not of the teaching function of the church in general. That is no doubt a very important and necessary subject. But it is not our subject today. If it were we could get on much faster, and avoid many pitfalls. It is always easier to talk about things in the abstract than in the concrete; to say that the church ought to do this, that or the other. But the minister means you and me. And what we say he ought to do, we must be prepared to undertake ourselves. It is characteristic of Protestantism as we have seen that it makes earnest with the responsibility of the individual. And it is in this spirit that we must approach our subject today. If the church as a whole has failed in its teaching (as we have seen reason to believe that it has failed), it is because individual ministers have failed. We must discover the reasons for that failure and learn how to correct them. And first of all in ourselves.

Yet when we speak of the minister as an individual, this is not quite the whole truth. He is a minister of the church, and

this fact gives his office social significance and relationships which we neglect at our peril. What he has to teach is not ideas of his own devising. It is a faith which he has inherited from the past. What he teaches he has himself learned from that ancient institution to whose service he has committed himself. As truly as a Roman Catholic priest, though in a very different way, he is a child of the church, nurtured at her breast, fed at her table, transmitter to those to whom he is sent in her name of treasures of wisdom and insight which he has first received from her.

This conception of our theme prescribes for us our method of approach. Three questions the minister must ask himself if he would worthily discharge his teaching function: (1) What he is to teach; (2) whom he is to teach; (3) how he is to teach. These three questions, with the answers which they suggest, furnish the natural divisions of our inquiry.

I

WHAT TO TEACH

1. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE MINISTER'S TEACHING.
 1. Preliminary definition.
 2. The subject matter defined by its contrasts.
2. THE CHRISTIAN FACTS AS SUBJECT FOR TEACHING.
 1. Facts which the minister must know about Christianity.
 2. Reasons why this knowledge is important.
3. THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL AS SUBJECT FOR TEACHING.
 1. Christianity as fact and as Gospel.
 2. Christianity as good news to the individual.
 3. Christianity as Gospel for society.
4. THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION AS SUBJECT FOR TEACHING.
 1. What is meant by the church.
 2. The function of the church in society.
 3. The achievements and program of the church.
 4. The church and the churches.

1. *The Subject Matter of the Minister's Teaching.*

1. And first, of the subject matter of our teaching. What are we, who are called to be teachers, to teach? I answer, a very definite, but at the same time, a many-sided and elusive thing. We are to teach Christianity.

As Christian ministers, I repeat, we are to teach Christianity. That seems a very simple and obvious thing to say, but there is more in it than appears at first sight. Familiar as it is, Christianity has more than one meaning. For our present purpose it means at least three different things: In the first place, it is a fact of history—a definite body of happenings that are objectively given. In the second place, it is a Gospel—a message of deliverance and hope to the individual, a program of redemption and transformation for society. Finally, it is an institution, or rather, a group of institutions, inwrought into the structure of our social life, of which the particular church to which we belong is part. All three of these aspects of Christianity the minister must understand if he is to discharge his responsibility as a teacher.

Expanding our first definition in the light of this discussion, we may rephrase it as follows: We are to teach the nature of the Christian religion, its message to the individual and to society, and the nature and function of the institution through which it expresses itself in common action.

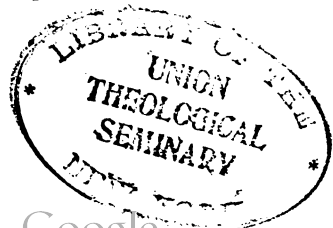
2. We are to teach the Christian religion. This gives definiteness to our work as teachers. There is a specific subject matter for the knowledge of which we are responsible, and this knowledge we are charged to impart to others. This differentiates our work from that of other teachers with whom in many other respects we have much in common. It defines our subject matter in two ways: it takes some things in, it leaves some things out.

It leaves some things out. As ministers we are not responsible for teaching everything. However free we may be to study and to teach whatever we like in the time which remains after our primary duty has been discharged, we are not responsible for teaching anything that lies outside our chosen field. There are a hundred subjects, useful, interesting and important of which, with entire self-respect, we may remain ignorant, or at least possess only that measure of knowledge that goes with the culture of a gentleman. Sociology, political economy, physical science, art, literature—these are fields fascinating in their attraction in which the more widely we wander the better. But they are not *our* fields. We are not responsible for teaching any of these things. Our subject is Christianity.

But it *is* Christianity. This at least we must know, whatever else we leave out. We are not free, as others might be, to choose a subject just because it interests us. Our theme is assigned. We are committed to it by our profession. As Christian ministers it is our business to understand the religion that we profess, and to be able to impart our knowledge to those who do not possess it. No mastery, however complete, of any other theme, however worthy, can serve as substitute for ignorance here.

2. *The Christian Facts as Subject for Teaching.*

1. I say, we must know the Christian religion. First of all, as a body of facts objectively given in history. We are ministers of a spiritual religion, but spirit in religion, as in all other phases of human life, never meets us disembodied. It is incarnate in persons who live and act, and struggle and aspire, and leave the record of their personality in history. It has been embodied in institutions, with laws and customs and traditions that call forth loyalty and reverence. It has passed through a history of change and growth as it has touched other influences outward and inward, and acted upon and been reacted on by them. All these the minister must know and be able to teach. Christianity as a historical religion, in its origin, its development, its various



forms, its present activities must be the subject matter of his teaching.

He must know the origin of the Christian religion, that fascinating story of which our Bible gives us the record, of those epoch-making days which witnessed the first contacts of men with the founder of our religion—contacts which revealed to them the fact that a new and original influence was operating in the life of the world. He must know the setting in which these contacts took place, the inheritance which Christianity took over from Israel, the forms of thought and action which Greece and Rome had forged for its use, the permanent human needs to which it appealed and still appeals.

He must know what followed these first beginnings, tracing the history of Christianity through its many-sided development from the faith of a handful of obscure and despised Jews to the dominant religion of Western civilization. He must know the different forms which it has assumed, Oriental, Greek, Roman, Protestant. Above all, he must know what it is doing in the world today, not only in the particular form which is most congenial to him and in the particular communion with which he may chance to be identified, but as a great and many-sided factor in the world's life, affecting many races and nations and institutions.

Am I wrong in thinking that in spite of all our Seminary training there are items in this list on which we might not find it easy to pass an examination? On the beginnings of our religion we might stand a test. With the main outlines of church history we are no doubt all familiar. But when it comes to understanding Christianity as a present fact, how much do we really know? What do we know of the life of other churches than our own—the Roman Catholic church, for example, or the Russian Orthodox church, or the churches of the farther East? And yet these are churches that minister to more than half our fellow Christians. What do we know of the Roman Catholic church in this country, its plans, its activities, the influence which it is exerting, the causes which explain its hold upon the multitude of its adherents? What do we know of the new Christian churches that are growing up in the mission field, the church of Japan, for instance, or that new national church of India which is beginning to rise above the horizon? Yet these are facts which lie within the direct scope of our responsibility as teachers, facts which it is our business to know and to impart.

2. It is important for us to know them, not for their own sake only, interesting and necessary as they are, but because of their bearing on a larger question, namely, that of the nature

of the Christian religion. We call ourselves Christians, but the Christianity we profess is very different from that which is practiced by many of our fellow Christians. What is the relation between these varying forms? Are they all alike legitimate? Are they all alike Christian? If so, Christianity must be a much larger and more inclusive thing than our ordinary practice would lead men to suspect. What is there common to all these different forms of Christianity which makes them Christian? What new and original thing did Jesus bring into the world, and where, under the crust of ritual and dogma and prejudice with which it is so often and so sadly overlaid, is it to be found in the world today? These are questions which he only can answer who knows the Christian facts in the large, not of the past only, but of the present, not of the part merely, but of the whole.

3. *The Christian Gospel as Subject for Teaching.*

1. But we must come to closer grips with our task. We are to teach not the nature only, but the message of the Christian religion. Christianity is not merely fact. It is Gospel. It came into the world as a message of redemption to men in need. It professed to bring forgiveness for sin, comfort in sorrow, spiritual power for right living, the promise of a better social order for mankind. Its founder was Teacher, indeed, but He was more than Teacher. He was Messiah, the Christ who was to establish the Kingdom of God and be the agent of His saving work. To such a claim it was impossible to be indifferent. It was either true or false. One must be for Christ or against Him.

So from the first Christianity has been a missionary religion. It has had a message to the hearts of men which it could not but preach. Its ministers have been witnesses, ambassadors, pleading with men to be reconciled with God that He might make of them new creatures in Christ Jesus.

2. It has had a message to the individual man, first of all a message of personal salvation. To men conscious of sin and imperfection, living narrow, incomplete, unsatisfied lives, it has brought its word of deliverance and renewal. To the deep needs of the human heart it has spoken, the need of guidance, the need of forgiveness, the need of comfort, the need of strength, the need of inward harmony and peace. In all these varying aspects of human experience it has shown itself the religion of adequacy and power. We have spoken of Christianity as a fact of history but no one can understand it even as a fact who does not perceive that it is more than fact. It is revelation of

things unseen; it is promise of greater and better things to be; it is creative activity in the realm of the Spirit.

One cannot emphasize this aspect of the Christian religion too strongly, for it is this which gives it its present significance for human life. If Christianity were simply a body of facts to be known, we could teach them in school. But Christianity, I repeat, is more than fact. It is a voice, proclaiming salvation, summoning to service. And for this another setting is necessary. The platform must become a pulpit, and the school give place to the church.

Yet the minister, when he preaches the Gospel, does not therefore cease to be a teacher. For the Gospel grows out of a definite philosophy of life and is addressed to certain specific needs. That philosophy the minister must understand, and those needs he must know, if he is to discharge his function aright.

This means that he must be a teacher of doctrine. For doctrine, when understood aright, is only another name for the way in which successive generations of Christians have formulated the answer of Christianity to the permanent needs of the human heart; the need of guidance, which finds its answer in revelation, the need of forgiveness, which finds its satisfaction in the Cross, the need of inward harmony and peace, which finds its answer in the living God who is at once righteousness and wisdom and love.

But above all the need of inspiration and leadership which finds its answer in the Christ. For the offer of salvation, we must never forget, is only half the Christian message. Christianity is challenge as well as promise; summons to conflict as well as assurance of peace. It not only professes to make something new out of the individual man, it invites him to become a maker of that which is new.

Am I wrong in thinking that this is what those who deserve the name of men really want? We want something big enough to do, and Christianity gives it. One of my students has recently written a book on the world's supreme need.¹ It is the need of a man's job, a job that is many-sided enough to enlist all one's powers and so vast that one can never come to the end of it. Such a job Christianity gives us in the Kingdom of God. We are to be fellow workers with God in creating the new and better social order under the Master Workman, Jesus Christ. We are to build a home for the spirit of man. We are to build with and under and after Jesus Christ, using the materials and following the plans which God, our Father, has provided, and

¹ The Christian Task. J. Harold Du Bois. Association Press, 1920.

sustained by the food He furnishes. We are to remake the world after the pattern shown on the mount.

Is not this a man's job, the job we want and need? Well, it is our business as ministers to understand this job and to explain it to our fellow workmen to whom God's invitation comes. We are to know the message of Christianity and this is the biggest and best part of the message, bigger even and better than the message of personal salvation, important and essential as that may be. We are to teach men what it means for the individual man to be a Christian, what it means for his emotions, what it means for his beliefs, but above all, what it means for his purposes. We are to be Christ's recruiting agents in His work of enlisting soldiers for His army of peaceful and constructive labor.

3. Already we have passed from the individual to the social aspect of the Christian message. We are to teach Christianity, we have said, its nature and its message to the individual and to society. We have considered the Christian message to the individual. We must now consider more fully the Christian message to society. This introduces us to a difficult, and among Protestants, a much neglected subject, namely, that of the nature and function of the church.

Am I wrong in saying that of all phases of the minister's work as teacher, this is the one for which he ordinarily feels himself least responsible? With reference to every other phase of the Christian message he will own that he has a duty to perform. He will tell the story of the Christian origins; he will lecture on the great landmarks of Christian history; he will never be weary of explaining the nature of the Christian message to the individual, whether it be on the side of personal salvation or of social service. Indeed, if he be a modern man, social service will be constantly on his lips and the Kingdom of God the theme of his frequent preaching. But of the church in its familiar, everyday form as the institution of religion, he will have little or nothing to say. When he refers to institutional religion it will be in a depreciatory way, as something which concerns high Anglicans and Roman Catholics, from which we more enlightened Protestants have long ago freed ourselves. As the minister of a spiritual religion the church in which he believes is the company of Christian believers, the society of men and women who share Christ's ideals and are loyal to his purposes.

It is easy to understand how this state of things has come about. It is a natural reaction against the exaggerated institutionalism of the Roman Catholic church. About the church of the sixteenth century all sorts of superstitions and mistaken

notions had gathered against which our fathers protested. It claimed to be the sole mediator of salvation. It demanded unquestioning obedience from all Christians. It denied to the individual believer the right to direct access to God. It identified the Christian ministry with a sacerdotal caste. It assigned to the Bishop of Rome a superhuman authority and dignity only rightfully to be given to Christ Himself. It was right to protest against this extravagance. It was natural that this protest should extend further and include in its scope the whole range of institutional religion.

It was natural, but it was none the less unfortunate, for institutions are as essential to religion as to every other form of social life. Without institutions common action in any form is impossible. Religion is no exception. The remedy for a bad institution is a good institution. The remedy for a false conception of the church is a true one.

Such a true conception of the church we Protestants have failed to provide, and we are reaping the consequences of our failure in the form which is most disastrous to the ideals we cherish. In the name of the Kingdom we thought that we could ignore the church, and we find that our neglect of the church has for the rank and file of men carried the Kingdom with it.

Whether this be the true reason or not, this fact at least cannot be denied, that for the average young man in this country who is interested in religion at the present time, the Kingdom of God is not a living issue. Of all the surprising and disheartening facts revealed by the American report on the state of religion in the army, this is the most surprising and the most disheartening, that of all the young men whose experiences are recorded in that report, scarcely anyone seemed to know that there was any such thing as a Kingdom of God. Many topics were touched on in the reports of the chaplains and other religious workers whose information formed the basis of the study. The Kingdom of God was conspicuous by its absence. So far as that study goes, it might just as well not have existed.

Yet the Kingdom of God is the central theme of the Christian message. It gives its name to the Christian religion itself. Christianity is the religion of the Christ, and the Christ is the Messiah, the one who is to establish the Kingdom. The Kingdom, if we are to trust the Gospel, is the reign of God on earth, the new social order that will be established when men share the life of Christ, live in His spirit and consciously make His purposes their own. It is the kind of society that will result when men love others as Christ loved them, work for one another in the spirit in which Christ worked for them and make service

to others the test of greatness in their thoughts as He did in His. The message of Christianity to society is that such a social order is not only desirable, but practicable, and the church is the institution which exists to proclaim this message and to furnish the motive power which will make possible the realization of this ideal.

Clearly, then, if men do not know what is meant by the Kingdom it must be because something is the matter with the church. It is because they do not understand what the church is and what it is for, and this failure to understand must be the fault of the minister, for it is the minister who interprets the church to men.

For whether we realize it or not, the church in the familiar sense of that word as the institution of religion is the form in which the ordinary man touches the Christian religion. He judges Christianity by what he sees the church doing; and if the great social ideals of which we have been speaking are not intimately associated with what he sees Christians do when (as we say) they go to church they cease for him to have religious significance. They are matters with which, however important and interesting they may be for their own sake, Christianity, as he understands it, has nothing to do.

If then, we wish to recover for the average man that large and generous conception of the Christian religion which we believe to be the true one, we must recover our lost interest in institutional religion. We must restore the Christian church in the true Protestant conception of it to the central place which it held in the religion of our Puritan forefathers, while at the same time we banish from the conception (and let me add as even more important, from the practice) of the Christian church those remnants of the older Roman Catholic view which still cling to the Puritan conception and which render it for us untenable and misleading.

We come, then, as a central and most fundamental part of the minister's responsibility as teacher, to his responsibility for instruction as to the nature of the Christian church and its function in society. It is to the credit of our Episcopal and Lutheran fellow Christians that more than any other group of Protestants they have recognized this obligation and provided for it in their plans for ministerial education. One of the greatest obstacles in the present day movement for Christian unity is that the ministers of other churches are not equally well furnished. They realize the weakness of institutional religion. They have not adequately recognized its strength. And so they are not at home with those in whose religious life the church as the institution of religion holds the central place.

4. *The Christian Institution as Subject for Teaching.*

1. What, then, must we do to remedy this lack? What must we who are teachers teach about the church? First of all, its nature and function in human society; secondly, its past achievements and present program; thirdly, the forms of its present organization, more especially the points of contact between the different churches and their efforts after unity.

I say, the nature of the church and its function in society. It is the institution of the Christian religion and as such the means under God through which Christ's purpose to establish His Kingdom is to be accomplished.

When I say that the church is the institution of the Christian religion I do not forget that it is more than this. In its largest and most comprehensive meaning it is the Christian society, the company of men and women touched by the Spirit of Christ, through whom His purposes are to be realized in the world.

But this society like all human societies cannot function without organization. The organization which it has created to express its ideals and execute its purposes we call the church. It is the institution of the Christian religion.

It is the institution of the Christian religion. In this lies at once its strength and its weakness. Its weakness, for no institution, even one divinely sanctioned and endowed, as we believe the church to be, can transmit the full content of spiritual revelation without modification or impairment. What God reveals in a moment of inspiration to one of His children can never be completely reproduced. There is something in every human experience that is original and incommunicable. With society we pass into the realm of interpretation and compromise. Institutions are at once the instrument and the record of this transmission. The Christian church is no exception. Claiming to be perfect and infallible, it has failed to be that which it might have been. Nay more, it has often failed to receive credit for what it has really been. To judge the church rightly we must judge it for what it is, an institution like other institutions, subject to all the laws and limitations of institutional life, differing only (but in this supremely) in the uniqueness of its subject matter and the paramount interest of the issues with which it deals.

But with this weakness goes a corresponding strength. The individual dies, the institution lives on. What would otherwise be lost it preserves. Through ritual and custom, through literature and tradition, through sentiments of loyalty and reverence lovingly handed down from generation to generation, it creates

a corporate consciousness as real if different in kind from the consciousness of the individual. The child of great men who have gone before, it becomes the mother of great men who come after. It is the nursery of faith, the home of the soul.

“I love Thy Kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The church our dear Redeemer bought
With His own precious blood.”

These are not the words of a weak man nor of a lover of authority in religion. They come from an old Puritan who had tasted the joys of freedom and did not propose to give them up. But they express all the better for that what an institution may mean in the life of a man with social vision and social conscience.

2. The church, then, is the institution of the Christian religion. It exists for the purposes for which Christianity exists. This defines its function in society. It is the social agent for bringing in the Kingdom of God.

This close connection between church and Kingdom has been recognized from the first. In the Apostle Paul's terminology the words overlap. The church, like the Kingdom is a spiritual conception. It is the Kingdom so far as realized in the world. Later ages have reversed the procedure. Instead of identifying church with Kingdom, they have identified Kingdom with church. Thus to the Roman Catholic the Kingdom is only another name for the triumph of institutional Christianity, and our Puritan forefathers, in spite of their stalwart Protestantism, retained more than a little of the pride of this institutional consciousness. What President Dwight loves and in which he glories may be called indifferently church or Kingdom. We are experiencing a reaction from this exaggerated identification. To us church and Kingdom are so different that we are apt to overlook the vital connection between them. The church is not the Kingdom but it is the agent by which the Kingdom is to be established. It is the institution of the Christian religion, the social means by which the purposes of that religion are to be accomplished.

But this is true only within the limits which the definition itself sets. The church is the agent for bringing in the Kingdom in the measure that it really is what it professes to be, the form in which the Christian religion finds social expression. Christianity, we have seen, is not merely fact, but revelation. It saves men by revealing God; it redeems society by bringing to bear upon every phase of human relationship the principles which

God has revealed as determining the right relation between his creatures and Himself. The church establishes the Kingdom not by becoming the Kingdom, but by inspiring in men and women motives and ideals which, carried out through the appropriate agencies in all the relations of life, will bring the Kingdom to pass.

What this means in detail we shall have occasion later more fully to discuss. Here we are concerned only with general principles. Two extremes are to be avoided—the view which identifies church and Kingdom, the view which separates them completely. The church, we repeat, is not the Kingdom, but it is the agent through which, in spite of many failures and imperfections, the Kingdom is being progressively realized in the world.

3. This is not prophecy merely. It is a statement which has already been verified in history. Where the church has been what she ought to be, the expected results have followed. There is a story here which it is the minister's business to know and to tell. We call it the story of Christian missions. It is much larger and more inclusive than what goes technically by that name. It is the whole story of the expansion of Christianity through the creation of institutions which are self-perpetuating and self-reforming. It is a story which has become so familiar to us that we fail to realize its revolutionary significance or measure the possibilities of world promise that it contains. It is only when we open such a volume as that compiled by the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook entitled "The Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War"¹ and contrast the group of facts there assembled with those that have formed our daily reading for the last six years as we have followed the story of the great war and its aftermath in the renewed rivalry of the nations; it is only, I repeat, in the light of such a contrast that we appreciate what it means for the world that there should be such an institution as the Christian church, committed in spite of all its imperfections to ideals of unselfish service, training its members in habits of systematic giving for people whom they have never seen, using for its daily and weekly text book that unique record of man's aspirations and God's answer to them in redemptive experience which we call our Bible.

This whole subject of the missionary ideals and achievements of the church is one that needs to be taught. For it is not simply a story of individual consecration, but of cooperative activity. It is the story of a great institution recreating itself in other institutions which in turn become the parents of new creative activity. To appreciate what it means you must have seen

¹ Association Press, 1920.

with your own eyes the contrast between Christian and non-Christian civilization. And yet how many people there are, otherwise benevolent and well-meaning, who still think of missions in terms of the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, and who tell us that missions, like charity, begin at home.

If only they would act on their own words it would not be so bad. For here, too, there is a story to be told which needs telling. New forces are active in our home Christianity, a new ideal of what the church means and what it should do. Where our fathers thought of home missions as carrying the Gospel to the frontier and planting churches and Sunday Schools in sparsely settled regions, we think of it as mobilizing all the spiritual resources of the church for the task of Christianizing America. It is not New Mexico and Wyoming alone which are home mission territory, but New York and Boston and Chicago; not Pole and Russian and Italian alone, but native Americans, the rich as well as the poor, the fortunate as well as the outcast and the destitute; not merely the laborer, but the man who employs him, and the banker who supplies the funds which keep the wheels of industry moving. This story, too, the story of the new home missions, the minister must know and be able to tell so that its full significance will be understood by his own people and for his own community.

4. But one cannot go far along this road before he finds himself faced with another and no less important inquiry. We have spoken of the missionary activity of the church, but what we find in fact is not a church, but churches—churches not in the sense of individual congregations simply whose existence can be explained for reasons of local and geographical convenience, but great denominations, powerful, well organized and relatively independent, often competing with one another for men and money within the same territory. This, too, is a phenomenon which he must understand who would interpret to his fellows the nature and present significance of the Christian church.

There was a time when it was possible for the Christian minister to be content to know only his own church and to be ignorant of what concerned his fellow Christians of other denominational names. But today such ignorance is inexcusable. Too great interests are at stake to make such a provincial point of view any longer tolerable. With every passing year the ties which unite Christians are felt to be stronger than the interests which divide. Where the nations are coming together it is unthinkable that the churches should remain any longer apart. If the world is to be won for Christ and the Kingdom established, it must be by the church, not by the churches.

But that there may be a church adequate to so august a mission we must first understand the churches. It is not enough for a man to be a Presbyterian or a Congregationalist, he must know what it means to be an Episcopalian and a Baptist and a Lutheran and a Methodist. The more remote the type of our neighbor's Christianity from our own, the less congenial its forms of expression may be to our own taste, the more we ought to desire to understand what it means to him, for it is only on the basis of an understanding of differences that we can hope to come together.

Nothing is more surprising to one who has followed with any care the movement for church unity than the extraordinary misconceptions that ministers have of the beliefs and ideals of their fellow ministers of other communions. Either they assume agreement where differences exist, or they exaggerate differences which are in fact unimportant and negligible. The minister who would lead his people intelligently must know the differences that exist between Christians and the reasons for them. He must distinguish between those permanent differences of temperament or of conviction which have maintained themselves through history and seem destined to continue indefinitely, and those temporary disagreements on which compromise is possible. He must realize that in an institution as ancient and many-sided as the Christian church, unity does not necessarily mean uniformity, that in the church as in the nation there is room within the larger and all embracing unity for many lesser, relatively independent unities, and be careful not to confuse preference for the second with loyalty to the first.

Take for example the contrast between the type of institutional religion represented by a high church Episcopalian of the sacramentarian and ritualistic kind, and the convinced individualist who regards baptism as the sign and seal of a preceding independent work of God's Spirit in the heart of man. How impossible it seems for men of these two types to understand each other. How easy for the Baptist to say of the Episcopalian, "Oh, well! He's an Episcopalian. You can't do business with him." How often we find the Episcopalian dismissing the Baptist as one who is altogether outside the church as he understands it, and therefore one with whose religious vagaries he has no concern. How unconscious each, that the other represents a permanent type of the religious experience reaching back into the most distant past, manifesting itself in the most different forms, persisting through all changes of intellectual belief and outward environment, appealing to something deep-seated and fundamental in human nature itself. How futile to hope for progress toward the larger and better church for which we long till something happens in

the mind and heart of each of these convinced, if narrow, Christians—something that breaks down the middle wall of partition which tradition, or prejudice, or personal preference, or it may be simple inertia, has built up between them, and makes each visualize the other for what he is, a fellow Christian for whom the Master has a use, a member of the company of His disciples—the custodian for the church as a whole of aspects of Christian faith and experience which, but for his loyalty, narrow and misguided as may often have been the form of its expression—had been in danger of being lost altogether.

The minister then, I repeat, must know the differences between the churches, but he must know also the efforts that are being made to transcend these differences and to translate into appropriate institutional form the spiritual unity which already exists among Christians. This, too, is a long and fascinating story, deserving far more attention than it has yet received. It is a story which bears directly upon the practical tasks which concern every local congregation, for it defines the goal toward which it moves and the methods by which it seeks to realize it. Yet how many ministers are there who have really followed the movement for the reunion of Christendom in all its complicated ramifications and would be able to discriminate intelligently between the different forms of union, organic, federal and administrative, and their different manifestations, local, regional, national and international? How many have followed what their own denominational agencies have done toward devising an effective plan for common action by the different churches in the missionary enterprise to which they are all alike committed? How many are in a position to interpret to their own people the principles and the methods by which union when it comes is to be attained?

How many know the facts of the case—the mere story of what has actually been done and planned? How many can even name the different organizations that are working for the unity of the churches? Of the Interchurch World Movement we all know something. But what do we know of what lies back of it and has gone on beside it? Who could give us an intelligent account of the origin and work of the Federal Council, of the Home Missions Council, of the Foreign Missions Conference, of the Council of Church Boards of Education, of the Commission on Faith and Order, not to speak of the many movements for federation in village, city and state? How many are familiar with the proposals for organic union initiated by the Philadelphia Conference? How many have followed the work of the General War-Time Commission of the Churches and can explain the principles on which it did its work?

How many know the philosophy of the movement for unity, the different principles and ideals which these different organizations represent? How many have thought their way through the complicated questions which arise when one tries to distinguish between unity and union, or between uniformity and union? Above all, how many can explain to us the different conceptions of the church which have emerged in the course of the discussion and can point out the true affinities which unite and separate their advocates?

Finally, how many know what is being done for union in their own denomination and in their own state, and have taken such part in cooperative endeavor within their own community that they can speak out of their own experience of what is at present practicable and what must be postponed to the more distant future?

Yet all this falls within the sphere of the minister's duty as teacher as we defined it at the beginning of the hour. To understand Christianity he must know not only its message to the individual, but its significance for society and for this he must understand the function of the church in human affairs and know what prospect there is of its fulfilling its divinely appointed mission of being the agent for establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

To sum up—as a teacher of the Christian religion, the minister must know, and must be able to teach three things: (1) The facts concerning the Christian religion as objectively given in history; (2) its message to the individual and to society; (3) the institution through which it expresses its ideal, and accomplishes its purposes.

A great task, you say, an impossible task, a task for which no man can be sufficient. Granted. Yet it is just this fact which gives it its inspiration. No one of us can completely realize the ideal which we have outlined, but all of us can feel its challenge and be inspired to greater and more effective service than we could otherwise have hoped to render because of this vision of what the true teacher might be and do if he could realize his ideal.

II.

WHOM TO TEACH

1. THE MINISTER'S SPHERE AS TEACHER DEFINED.
 1. Review of the last lecture.
 2. Theme of the present lecture.
 2. THE CONGREGATION AS A COLLECTION OF INDIVIDUALS GROWING UP TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.
 1. Jesus as the discoverer of the individual man.
 2. The minister as a teacher of individuals.
 3. Points of contact in teaching. The Sunday School and the Sunday service.
 4. Place of the creed in teaching.
 5. Place of the sermon in teaching.
 6. Prayer as a teaching agency.
 3. THE CONGREGATION AS A GROUP OF PERSONALITIES DESTINED FOR IMMORTALITY.
 1. Problems presented by Christianity as Gospel.
 2. Helps provided by the experience of others.
 3. The minister's contribution to his people's faith.
 4. THE CONGREGATION AS A BODY OF CHRISTIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THEIR COMMUNITY.
 1. What it means to Christianize a community.
 2. The church's part in the process.
 3. The minister's part in the process.
 5. THE CONGREGATION AS A PART OF THE ONE UNDIVIDED CHURCH OF CHRIST.
 1. The relation of the local congregation to the church as a whole.
 2. The minister as teacher of the church as a whole.
 6. THE CONGREGATION AS A CROSS SECTION OF HUMANITY.
 1. Wider contacts opened for the minister by the world wide sympathies of Christianity.
 2. The minister as interpreter of Christianity to men as men.
1. *The Minister's Sphere as Teacher Defined.*

1. In the preceding lecture we raised the first of our three questions concerning the Minister as Teacher, namely, what he is to teach, and we saw that it is something very definite and specific. He is to teach the Christian religion. He is not a teacher of things in general, but of one thing in particular, and this fact gives definiteness and precision to his task.

Yet when we ask ourselves more in detail what it means to be a teacher of the Christian religion we find a wide prospect opening before us. Christianity is, in the first place, a fact in history, a particular religion which had its origin at a definite time and place, has passed through certain specific phases and meets us today in certain clearly defined forms which we call churches. These facts the minister must know for they form the background and necessary condition of his teaching.

But Christianity is more than a fact. It is a Gospel. It brings a definite message to the individual and to society; to the individual a message of salvation from sin and invitation to service, to society the promise of a new social order which religion calls the Kingdom of God. The minister must know what this message is and be able to interpret it to those for whom it was meant.

To do this effectively he must be at home in the institution which Christianity has created, for a social Gospel can only be realized by social means, and the church is the form in which the Christian religion finds social expression. It is the agent through which the appeal of the Gospel is brought home to the individual and he is inspired to give his life to the service of the Kingdom.

Here we find much to be desired in the present situation. For what we discover today in Protestant America is not a church, but churches, conscious indeed of common aims and purposes, vaguely well disposed toward one another, but jealous each of its own independence and initiative, and knowing little of the history, the ideals and the particular loyalties of its fellow Christians of other churches. If the ideal of Christianity is ever to be realized, if the energies of Christians are to be effectively mobilized for common service, this situation must be altered. Some means must be found for creating an effective union among Christians, for rediscovering the church among the churches.

But for this education is necessary as to the nature and function of the church. Christians must know what the church is and how it came to be; why it is what it is and what it can and what it cannot do; what accounts for the differences between the churches and how far these differences are capable of reconciliation in a higher unity; above all, what unity already exists in common life, common achievements and common purposes.

This, then, is the subject of the minister's teaching:—Christianity as a fact of history, its message to the individual and to society, and the institutions through which its redemptive purpose is to be accomplished. A definite subject, as we have seen, but many-sided and elusive, reaching out into many bypaths that entice and confuse, presenting many problems that baffle and perplex.

Who am I, a man may well ask, that I should compass so large a matter. What you have outlined is a curriculum for a theological university, but what I want is help in my particular local job.

It is a fair criticism. Perhaps we shall find that it points the way to its own answer. Whether that be so or not, it introduces us directly to the second of the three questions proposed concerning the teaching work of the minister, namely, whom he is to teach. I answer, first of all his own congregation and through them all the other people whom he can reach.

2. I say, first of all his own congregation. This is a most important point on which we cannot insist too strongly at the outset. The minister is not free to choose whom he shall teach any more than he is free to choose what he shall teach. He has a definite responsibility given him for a particular group of people. They are his point of contact with the larger world of men. What he does he must do through them. What he knows he must impart to them. Whatever may be true of others, for him success or failure must be judged by what happens in the minds of the men and women and children into whose faces he looks from Sunday to Sunday.

At first sight this seems a disheartening limitation, for the average parish is not, for the superficial observer, the most exciting field for the display of a mature man's intellectual powers. Many people still think of the parish minister primarily as a consolator of old ladies and a planner of Sunday School picnics. And you know only too well by your own experience how much routine enters into the minister's life; how easy it is to lower one's ideal to the measure, I will not say of the actual, but of the immediately visible; how remote from the interests that fill the lives of the men and women you touch from week to week in your congregations seem the profound and complicated questions which confronted us yesterday when we tried to define the subject matter of the minister's teaching.

It may help to reconcile us somewhat to the situation to remember that some such limitation is inherent in the task of every teacher. The teacher who is really effective is never a teacher of people in general. He is always the teacher of something to somebody. Numerous as his pupils may be, remote as may seem his opportunities of personal contact, he is always touching individuals with some specific thought which is meant for them. He is not concerned with truth in general, the abstract principles and general laws of which the man of science is in quest, but with truth in its application to the needs and aspirations of some particular human being or group of human beings.

There is limitation in this, but there is compensation, too, for it gives concentration and definiteness to effort. The teacher touches life at first hand. He is a doer. Teaching, as we shall see more fully at a later hour, is personal communion, contact of spirit with spirit, creation in the realm where creation means most and carries farthest.

But we must bring the matter closer home. The minister, I say, is to teach his congregation, but who and what are the people who make up this congregation? When we look at them more closely we may be tempted to revise our earlier estimate, for they are not one, but many things, and each of the many things they are makes its own separate and unique appeal to the minister as teacher.

In the first place, a congregation is a group of individuals, each with his own separate and irreproducible life, who are growing up to Christian discipleship.

In the second place, a congregation is a collection of personalities living their lives under the conditions of time and space, but destined for immortality.

In the third place, a congregation is a body of Christians living in a definite locality who are responsible for the Christianization of their community.

In the fourth place, a congregation is a part of the one undivided church of Christ, and as such responsible with its fellow Christians of other congregations for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Finally, a congregation is a cross section of humanity including men and women of many different tastes and occupations, and touching directly or potentially every major interest of mankind.

Here surely is a school big enough for any man's best efforts. A school, did I say? Rather should I have said a whole collection of schools, each with its own particular need and appeal, each presenting a fresh point of contact with the particular group of facts and truths which form the subject matter of the minister's teaching.

2. *The Congregation as a Collection of Individuals Growing up to Christian Discipleship.*

1. First of all, a congregation is a group of individuals, each with his own separate and irreproducible life, who are growing up to Christian discipleship.

I suppose that if there is one thing on which scholars are agreed it is that the most distinctive and original thing about ✓

✓ Jesus was his exalted estimate of personality. He was in a very true sense the discoverer of the individual man. When Nietzsche heaped scorn upon Christianity as the religion of slaves, he put his finger on what was really the central characteristic of the Christian religion. It was a religion which put new value upon familiar and simple things. It taught men to call nothing common or unclean. It believed in the potentialities of the lowliest.

This estimate was not the result of shallow sentimentality. It was not reached by shutting one's eyes to the facts of life. Jesus was under no illusion as to the failures and weaknesses of humanity. No one was clearer eyed in his perception of sin or more uncompromising in his denunciation of it. But he believed that the bad could be made good, and the good better. He saw in the world a field in which good seed was to be sown, which was to grow up and bear fruit in due season. Growth, then, is of the essence of the Christian view of life, growth in knowledge, growth in wisdom, growth in character, growth in sympathy and understanding of others,—and growth is the teacher's specialty. He is a sower of seed and it is his privilege to watch each separate seed take root and ripen to maturity.

2. Against this background we must consider the minister's relation to his congregation as a group of individuals. He sees in each one a disciple of Christ, actual or possible, whom it is his privilege to help forward into a rounded and mature Christian character. All that he knows of the Christian religion, its ideals, its experiences, its methods of operation in the lives of men, he holds in trust for this human spirit, whom Christ invites into fellowship with Himself. All that is done in the services of the church, all that is said in the daily contacts of pastor and people must be done and said in the light of this ideal and in its bearing upon this all-embracing purpose. ✓

Simple as it seems, it will not be easy in practice to realize this ideal, for it is characteristic of human individuality that no two men are alike. What will do for one will not do for another. Each separate personality is a new problem to be met where he is and dealt with for himself alone. And not only where he is, but where he is presently to be, for personalities do not stay put. They are constantly changing, and what will do for one man at one time will not do next month or next year. New powers are awakening, new needs discovering themselves. Each new contact is a new voyage of discovery, revealing something unexpected of opportunity or of danger.

3. If this be true it is clear that the Sunday School can cover but the smallest part of the minister's responsibility as teacher. The Sunday School is indeed an indispensable agency

of which he will make constant use. It gives him contact with the children at the formative period of their lives. It opens doors to home relationships and home intimacies otherwise impossible. It is a place for training young people to be themselves teachers. But even when it is worked to the full it leaves much of the field untilled. It reaches only part of the people and these only part of the time. The adults it scarcely touches, the young men and young women only in part. It is clear that other agencies must be devised and other points of contact found if the ideal is to be realized.

What these methods are we cannot indicate here, for they will vary widely according to the conditions and needs of different congregations. In some the minister can count on effective helpers and may do his work as teacher largely through training them. In others almost the whole responsibility will fall upon his own shoulders. In some communities the men's Bible class or the open forum provides a useful instrument. In others (especially in large cities) several churches may cooperate in a community school or a course of public lectures on themes of common interest. Much may be done by a lending library or by individual counsel to older and more mature people. But whatever else may be done or left undone, there is one agency which is put in the minister's hand which he will neglect at his peril, and that is the Sunday service itself.

When I say that the minister is to make his Sunday service a teaching service I do not mean that he is to make any radical change in its nature or parts, but rather that he is to bring to its conduct a new ideal, the ideal of the teacher. He is to see in the service the opportunity to interpret to his people, as he could do in no other way, the meaning of the religion they profess and the nature of the institutions through which it finds expression.

This is true of all parts of the service. One and all they lend themselves to the teaching function. It is true of the reading of the Scripture. The Bible, as we shall see more fully later, is the great text book of the Christian religion. It tells us the story of the origin and antecedents of Christianity. It is the point of departure for its later development. It is the spring from which the great men of all ages and of all the churches have drawn their inspiration. It is the tie which those have in common who in all else disagree. The minister should approach the reading of the Scripture conscious of all that this means. He should choose his selections so that in time they will cover all the more important parts of the Bible and make the congregation familiar with the book as a whole. He should comment intelligently from time to time on what he reads. Above all he should

revive the neglected habit of expository preaching—preaching, that is to say, that not only grows out of the Bible, but makes men aware of the unity and continuity of its thought.

It is true of the hymns. The hymns are our great witness to the unity of Christians. Coming to us from all sections of the church, born out of every phase of Christian experience, they have lived on because they have been the inspiration to new experience. What this fact means the minister should understand. Luther and St. Bernard, John Milton and John Wesley were not merely poets who voiced a passing mood of piety; they were creative personalities who built their lives into the lives of the Christian church and through whom we can enter, as we can enter in no other way, into the meaning of Christian history. The wise minister will use this fact as his helper in interpreting to his people the past out of which they have come to the new problems which challenge them in the present.

4. It is true of the creed. I know that I enter here upon disputed ground and raise questions on which I can count upon no agreement. What ought to be the attitude of the church of the present to the creeds of the past is a subject on which men equally able and sincere may honestly differ. Whether the creed shall be retained or abandoned—I mean of course the creed as a definite form of words handed down to us from the past, not the living convictions for which these words stand—whether, I repeat, the creed shall be retained or abandoned, revised or simply reinterpreted, whether its use in worship shall be given up where it now obtains, or introduced where it is now omitted—these are matters on which for the moment we can count on no agreement.

On one thing at least, however, I think we may fairly expect agreement, and that is that whatever we do with the creed or leave undone, we ought to understand it, and this you will admit is far from the case today. Whether in its earlier form as Apostles' or Nicene creed, or in the more elaborate confessions of Protestantism, the creed is a part of the history of Christianity, inwrought into the structure of that great institution which we call the Christian church. It is today a central part of the worship of the liturgical churches. It is the test which determines ministerial membership in bodies like the Presbyterian and the Lutheran. It forms part of the well-known platform of Christian union which is known as the Lambeth quadrilateral. Take it in its most repellent and uninviting aspect. Say, if you will, that it is an obstacle which keeps men out of the church and repels them from its service of worship. Whatever it may be or whatever it may mean for good or for evil, for helpfulness or the reverse, it is a fact of central importance which it is our business to

understand and to interpret to our people. It is not enough to denounce it. It is even more foolish to ignore it, for it stands in the middle of our path, an obstacle or a help as we may choose to make it, a barrier blocking the way to reunion if we take it in one way, a door that leads into the hearts of our fellow Christians if we take it in another.

My contention here is that we ought to take it as a door rather than as a barrier. It has meant much to our fellow Christians in the past. It was the confession which they took upon their lips when they first professed their faith in Christ. It has been recited in solemn triumph over the graves of their beloved dead; it has been the witness to a personal salvation to Protestant and Catholic alike. In ages when division and suspicion were in the air it has held aloft the ideal of the unity of the church. It has been misused and misunderstood, narrowly or wrongly interpreted, subject, like every part of institutional Christianity, to the limitations and abuses of institutional life. But such as it is, it is next to the Bible the part of our Christian inheritance which has had most to do with making the church what it is. Let us study it then, sympathetically, intelligently, patiently, that we may understand what it means to those who value it and the reasons which lead those who reject it to do so; that if we retain it in our worship we may do so in such a way as to make it no barrier between us and our fellow Christians; and if we abstain from using it we may yet make place in other ways for the expression of the great convictions it voices in which we feel our oneness with our fellow Christians of other ages and other names.

How this is to be done I cannot here indicate. In churches where the creed is used the point of contact is clear, and it will not be hard to find the way to give the instruction which will make its use honest and intelligent. But in churches where this is not the case, instruction is even more important, for without it the people cannot understand the past from which they have come or intelligently define their relation to their fellow Christians of other churches with whom they must cooperate. There are many ways in which this can be done. It may be done by an evening lecture or course of lectures on the creeds of the church; by a course of sermons on the great doctrines of the Christian faith; by discussion in a catechetical class or in an open forum. The minister who is alert enough to feel the importance of the subject will in time find the right way to bring it to the attention of his people.

5. Two more parts of the service remain to be considered: the sermon and the prayer. Of the former we have already more than once had occasion to speak in connection with our

previous discussion. The sermon gives the minister his unique opportunity as a teacher, for in it he is free to choose his own subject and to shape his thought to any line he may desire.

I say, he is free to choose his own subject. Rather should I have said, he is free to choose what part of his subject he shall take and in what form he shall treat it. For the subject, as we have already seen, has been chosen for him. It is the nature of the Christian religion and its message to the individual and to society. This is the one theme with which the minister has a right to concern himself in the precious half hour that is given him from week to week.

When I say that the minister must use the sermon as a help in the teaching function I do not mean, of course, that he is to make his sermon a lecture. Preaching is a different thing from teaching, much as the two have in common. In teaching the primary emphasis falls on the mind, in preaching upon the emotions and the will. Teaching appeals to the will to secure access to ideas. Preaching uses ideas to appeal to the will.

Preaching, I say, uses ideas to appeal to the will. But there is more than one way to use ideas. We may use them as independent and unrelated units, taking them haphazard as they come and turning them to our immediate purpose without thought or care for their wider and permanent relations. Or we may think of them as parts of a coherent and rounded whole, one part of which for the moment may need more emphasis than the rest but all of which are necessary for complete and effective living and thinking.

A ministry which uses the ideas of a sermon in the second of these senses rather than the first is a teaching ministry. It sees the parts in the light of the whole and makes what is done and planned each Sunday a step toward what is to follow in the next.

That is one of the difficulties in much of our college preaching. It has no continuity. It treats great themes, but at haphazard, without order and relation. It makes sermon tasters, not mature and ripe Christians. We need great sermons and great men to preach them, but unless there be a sound basis of knowledge to which their message can appeal, they will leave no permanent and lasting result. The fruitful ministry, I repeat, is a teaching ministry, a ministry that sees the end from the beginning and consciously shapes all that is done to that end.

6. And the prayer. What shall we say of that? Here surely we reach a point where the teacher's task is at an end and the spirit may be trusted to range freely through the open heavens as it rises to meet its God.

Yet even in this most sacred and intimate of all the min-

ister's functions there is a sense in which he is still and must consciously endeavor to be a teacher. What is prayer? It is communion of the spirit with God, the definite realization not only that God is, but that He is here and that we may have fellowship with Him. But how much prayer actually realizes its ideal? How often when we bow our heads in the hush that follows the minister's invitation, "Let us pray," are we conscious that we are in the presence of an unseen Comrade whose Spirit meets our own as we look up to Him in the mood of penitence, or aspiration or gratitude which our appointed spokesman is voicing for us? How often is it not rather the case that the minister seems to be talking to us or to himself, if indeed he is not simply saying over words which long association has robbed of any vital and significant meaning?

What is the trouble here? Is it not the failure of the teacher's instinct? To pray means to practice the presence of God. But this means intelligent and concentrated thought. To pray aright I must realize who God is and what He wants and how I can approach Him. And what is more, I must realize who I am and what I want and need. And if my prayer is not for myself alone, but for others as well, the demand upon mind and will is correspondingly intensified. All the individual lives that compose my congregation in their manifold needs and varying experiences of joy and sorrow, faith and doubt, aspiration and failure, must be present in my mind if I am rightly to lead my people in prayer and all that I would have them become if they are to realize the splendid possibilities that God has opened to them through His Gospel of salvation and service. There is no room for carelessness or chance. All must be definite and precise, shaped to the desired end.

Does this seem to make of prayer too formal or rigid a thing? We have the best of precedent for the association of prayer with teaching. It was our Lord Himself to whom the disciples came with the request, "Teach us to pray." And we know the spirit in which He met them. Simple and unassuming as are the familiar words He gave them, a whole philosophy of life lies back of them. In choice, order and relation to one another they are a model to all future teachers of the way in which thought may be made to serve devotion in the highest and most sacred experience of life.

We touch here the most difficult and responsible of all the phases of the minister's work as a teacher. He is to teach men to pray. He is to help them to realize, not with the mind alone, but with the vividness of a personal experience that God is, and that He is near. He is so to treat all parts of the Sunday service, but especially that part which we call the worship, that it

shall make it easy for even the youngest who enter the church doors to realize that they are in the presence of the God of all the earth and be uplifted and solemnized by the consciousness. He is to incarnate in his own person that mood of reverent confidence and solemn joy that befits one who has learned from Christ to call God Father, sees in the world the outworking of his Father's purpose, and goes to his daily work in the spirit of Him who said, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" This cannot be done without the most concentrated, the most exacting work. More than all else the minister does, learning to pray requires discipline. To teach men to pray is at once the most difficult, and the most inspiring of his tasks.

3. *The Congregation as a Group of Personalities Destined for Immortality.*

1. I have spoken of the splendid possibilities which the Gospel opens before the imagination of man; and with this we have passed to another aspect of the minister's teaching function, implicit indeed in what has gone before but important enough to deserve special emphasis. We have said that a congregation is a group of individuals growing up to Christian discipleship, but it is more than this. It is a collection of personalities living under the conditions of time and space but destined for immortality.

This consciousness of living in two worlds is what gives Christianity its unique and revolutionary significance. It lifts it above the world of fact into the realm of faith. It makes it Gospel—the Gospel as Christians believe—but it brings with it problems and difficulties of its own. We are to live as seeing Him who is invisible and to do on earth the will of our Father in heaven. But with what eyes are we to see and where is heaven in which this unseen Father dwells?

Here is matter for teaching. Not the teaching of authority simply which repeats the words of creed and catechism and says, "This you must believe because God has revealed it," but the teaching which shares with the pupil the insight which has been already won. How do I know that there is more in life than I can see? What is my assurance that this world, so baffling and mysterious, has a reasonable and satisfying meaning. By what right do I, limited and incomplete as I am, look forward to a larger and more satisfying life, a life in which this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal immortality? These are ancient questions but never fresher or more insistent than today. It is the minister's privilege to help his people answer them.

2. How is he to do this? Partly by reminding them of the answers which have been given them in the past. There is rich matter here in the Bible that is grist to the teacher's mill, Job and Isaiah and the Psalms, the 15th chapter of I. Corinthians and the 14th to the 17th of the Gospel of John. These are words which have come out of the experience of men who have wrestled for themselves with these perennial problems of the soul and won a satisfying faith.

Partly by pointing out that the reasons which gave rise to the problems of the past are still valid today. I have spoken of faith as contrasted with fact, but faith is itself a fact and the needs and capacities of human nature which have brought it into existence. We are learning the limitations of pure science. We know that all great achievement in whatever realm is a response to the vision of the unseen. Religion is no longer confined to the narrow room of the supernatural in the technical sense of the miraculous, but is seen to be part of the warp and woof of human life. To be a man means to be a dweller in two worlds, a seer of things that are invisible.

Along the earth and up the sky
The Fowler spreads his net:
O soul, what pinions wild and shy
Are on thy shoulders set?
What wings of longing undeterred
Are native to thee, spirit bird?

What sky is thine behind the sky,
For refuge and for ecstasy?
Of all thy heavens of clear delight
Why is each heaven twain,
O soul! that when the lure is cast
Before thy heedless flight,
And thou art snared and taken fast
Within one sky of light,
Behold, the net is empty, the cast is vain,
And from thy circling in the other sky the
lyric laughters rain!¹

3. The minister then is to explain to his people what facts give rise to faith. But above all he is to illustrate in his own life what Christian faith may mean for character. Our choice is not, I repeat, between faith and sight, but between faith and faith. What is the nature of the mysterious being on whom

¹ William Vaughn Moody, *The Fire Bringer*.

we depend who is shaping our lives to issues we cannot foresee? Is it good or evil, conscious or unconscious, blind fate or malevolent will or loving Father? All these answers have been given and more beside. How can we tell which is right? Only by choosing and testing the results of our choice in experience.

But in this we can be helped by others' choices. We can see what faith has done for others who have chosen before us and who are living out the consequences of their choice by our side. I suspect that all that we may say to our people about the unseen Father and the immortal life will fall on deaf ears unless they see in our faces something of the light that is reflected from the face of Christ and are conscious, as they touch us, of those reserves of strength which they possess who know that they are heirs of all the ages. The minister who would help his people to realize what it means to be immortal spirits must first realize what it means to be an immortal spirit himself.

4. *The Congregation as a Body of Christians Responsible for the Christianization of their Community.*

Here surely is a field ample enough for the exercise of the largest powers. We are to train individuals to be disciples of Christ and to live in time as those who are heirs of an immortal destiny. But vast as it is it does not end the minister's function as a teacher or exhaust the meaning of the congregation which is his school. Thus far we have been speaking of it as a collection of individuals, but it is more than this. It is a social unit with definite duties and responsibilities. It is a body of Christians living in a definite locality which is responsible for the Christianization of its community.

This sense of social responsibility is implicit in what we have been saying all along but it needs to be amplified and applied. A Christian is a disciple of Christ and as such bound to his fellows by relations of helpfulness and service. He is a member of the family of God and required to act to other members of the family as brothers should. But what I have in mind is something different and more precise than this. The Christian is not related to the men and women in the community in which he lives simply as an individual to other individuals. He is a member of a Christian congregation which as such sustains relations to the community life. He is not simply responsible for helping individual men and women whom he can influence into the Christian life. He is responsible with his fellow Christians for the Christianization of the community.

What does it mean to Christianize the community? It means to permeate all its relationships with the spirit of Jesus Christ. It means to make its members Christian in their political relations as office-holders, politicians and voters; in their economic relations as employers and employees, producers and consumers; in their financial relations as borrowers and lenders, investors and promoters; in their social relations as entertainers and entertained; in their educational relations as teachers and taught. It means that in each of these complicated relationships with all their many-sided contacts nothing should be done or said or planned which is not inspired by the consciousness of God's Fatherly plan for His world and the determination to do what in one lies to bring that plan to realization in the community.

2. And this ideal it is the function of the local church to help to realize. That is what it is for. That is the standard by which its success or failure is to be measured. If it fail here, it fails in that which is its distinctive mission. No sorrow or misfortune or sickness or suffering or sin which befalls the humblest member of the community, no selfishness or arrogance or oppression on the part of the most powerful but concerns the group of Christians who make up the Christian church in that locality. They are to Christianize their community and the minister is their leader to teach them what this means and how it can be done.

This is a different conception of the church's function from that which obtained a generation ago. Then the minister's responsibility was confined to the individual members of his own congregation or to those whom he could win out of the community by which they were surrounded. His business was, as he expressed it, to save souls, as many as he could and wherever he found them, but as to how the community fared from which these souls were drawn he had little concern. Let him but save individuals enough and society would in the end be saved. That was the form in which the social Gospel phrased itself to our fathers.

But we know today that this is not enough. Between the individual and society there are other social groups, with individuality and responsibility of their own, and the individual expresses himself—nay more in a true sense we may say, *becomes* himself—through these alone. There is the family into which he was born, the school where he received his education, the factory or the store where he earns his living, the bank where he deposits his money, the club where he seeks his amusement, the party for which he votes. These too are entities with individuality and history of their own. They express ideals

and achieve purposes in which the individual shares. If these ideals are narrow and these purposes selfish, his freedom is limited and his character debased. You cannot make him a Christian and leave them unchanged. To realize your ideal completely both must be transformed.

How is this to be done? Only by creating some social medium in which Christians can give social expression to their Christianity. And such a medium in its ideal is the local congregation. It, too, is a unit with an individuality and history of its own. It, too, has ideals and purposes which distinguish it from other contiguous groups. It, too, shapes individuals to its own uses and lends their activities larger significance because of the wider range of its own powers. Four men can do more than twice two, and a congregation is more than the sum total of all the individual Christians who compose it.

Now the aim for which the congregation exists, I repeat, is the Christianization of the community. This it is which gives it its distinctive sphere and mission. It is the power house which reinforces the individual purposes of its members. It is the lighthouse which determines their common objective, and in both these capacities of reinforcement of motive and definition of aim the minister as the teacher of his people has definite and important responsibilities.

3. He has a responsibility for the definition of their aim. In interpreting to them what Christian discipleship means he is to think of them not as individuals simply, but as individuals who are members of this congregation in this community. To be a Christian will mean to use all one's powers to make the particular part of the community life in which one shares express the ideal of the family of God. It will mean, further, to cooperate with one's fellow Christians in bringing about those wider changes in community standards and community life which are possible only through concerted action.

How this is to be done in detail will differ in each particular community, for the needs of communities, like the needs of individuals, vary and no two are alike. The minister must bring to the study of his neighborhood an open mind, waiting to draw his conclusions until he has all the facts before him. He must be ready to learn from anyone who can teach him, most of all from those whom he dislikes. They, too, are parts of his parish, men and women to be won for Christ, forces that make either for good or for evil in the community, integral factors in the related units which together constitute its communal life.

But if the nature of the problem differs in each community the motive and purpose remain the same. Our aim must be to

make Christianity common property, a communal as distinct from an individual possession. There is inspiration here which no merely individualistic ideal can command, energies which no sum of unrelated units can release. What these energies may be the war gave us a hint, as it revealed to us also the force of the obstacles with which they have to contend. We must apply the lessons we have learned to our special task of mobilizing the church for the Christianization of the community.

But this opens a wider vista than we have yet visualized. So far we have been thinking of the church as the local congregation. But most communities contain more congregations than one and the task of mobilizing the Christian forces involves the definition of the relation between these contiguous but often unrelated bodies.

Here we enter upon a new phase of the minister's work as teacher. He is to instruct his people in the nature of these relationships and what they mean for the wider work of which the community is a part. For as the individual is but a part of the community to which he belongs and of the congregation in which he worships, so the congregation is itself but a part of the one undivided church of Christ and the men and women in it are but a cross section of humanity as a whole. Each of these facts helps further to define the responsibility of the minister as a teacher.

5. *The Congregation as a Part of the One Undivided Church of Christ.*

1. In the first place his congregation is part of the one undivided church of Christ and as such responsible with its fellow Christians of other congregations for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

We see now the bearing of our discussion of yesterday. Taking it in the large, much of it seemed abstract and remote. Why should I, the minister of a Congregational church in a Vermont parish, concern myself about the history or beliefs of Episcopalians or Baptists?

Well, for one reason, because I cannot do my work in my own congregation effectively unless I do. Here is a community in which there are three churches, Episcopal, Baptist and Congregational, and it is proposed to hold a joint communion service; but the plan falls through because the Episcopal minister cannot take part in the service if it is to be held in the Congregational church and involves the participation of other ministers than himself. Why cannot he do so? Because his bishop will not let him. But why will not his bishop let him do what seems

to his fellow ministers so simple and Christian a thing? Here we are plunged into all the complicated questions of church history and church polity at which we could but glance in passing an hour ago. The point is that they are not academic questions simply, but practical matters that affect the relation of the Christian to his fellow Christians in the community. The congregation is itself but part of a larger unit and before we can determine the relation of the churches we must be clear as to the nature and function of the church.

2. Here the minister's responsibility as teacher appears. It is a responsibility, first of all, to his own people, that they may understand the reasons for the situation they face and be kept from unintelligent and censorious judgment; next to his fellow Christians of other communions that they may understand the position of his own body and that obstacles which are due to misunderstanding and ignorance may be removed; but also and above all, to the larger body to which both belong, the church universal of every name which alone is adequate to meet humanity's need and to which alone Christ has committed the task of establishing the Kingdom of God.

For the church universal is made up of companies of individual Christians and realizes its larger and more complete life only as they attain freedom and maturity. As the community depends for its health and welfare upon the state of the individuals who compose it, as the congregation realizes its ideal as a witness to the Christian religion, only as the men and women in it attain a full and rounded Christian character, so the church universal can serve the larger purpose to which it is called effectively, only as each of the lesser units which compose it is functioning properly in its appointed place. Its unity is unity in variety, its ministry that of a whole through its parts. What they do is determined by its aim, what it is by what they do.

Of this larger and many-sided unity the individual minister, too, is part. He is not only the pastor of such and such a local church. He is a minister of the one undivided church of Christ. What he does he does in the name of all Christians, what he learns he holds in trust for them.

This opens a wider sphere for the minister's teaching function than at first appeared. We said he was to teach his own congregation and others only through them. But it appears that he cannot teach them effectively without teaching others also, for what goes on in any particular community when Christians make earnest with the ideal of their religion concerns their fellow Christians everywhere. What they have done, others can do.

Where they fail, others may take warning. Your congregation is a laboratory, an experiment station in which experience is being gained which may benefit the whole church of Christ.

And yet how few ministers there are who realize this wider aspect of their mission. How easy for the ordinary minister to confine himself to his own parish alone and to leave to others the conduct of the affairs of the denomination to which he belongs and of the various interchurch movements which seek to unite all the denominations. As the politicians run our government, so the ecclesiastics our churches, and if the church like the state fails to realize the ideals we cherish, it is we ourselves who are in large part to blame.

I know that it is easier to point out evils than to suggest remedies. It is all very well to tell men that they ought to go into politics, whether ecclesiastical or secular, but how are they to do it without giving up their present job and becoming professional politicians themselves? What influence can they use powerful enough to control those who possess such power?

There is one influence at least which they can use, and that is public opinion. In church and state alike action is finally determined by what the people who compose church and state insist shall be done. And it is the teacher who forms public opinion. Sometimes by spoken voice, more often by the pen, most of all by the silent witness of deed, the beliefs and convictions are being formed which determine the action of the future. It is so in the state. It is so no less in the church. And this gives the minister his unique opportunity and power.

I commend to you, then, my fellow ministers, this new and larger sphere for your usefulness. You are to be teachers of the church as a whole. Her hopes, her plans, her ideals, her responsibilities are your chosen field, your appointed subject matter. Live, think, work, speak, write in your special corner of God's world as those who are called to be teachers of the church universal.

6. *The Congregation as a Cross Section of Humanity.*

1. But that you may do this successfully there is one thing more that you must know, and that is the world to which the church is sent. The church, as we have seen, is to establish the Kingdom of God, God's reign among men on earth. But to do this she must know men, what they are and what they need.

Here, too, your point of departure is your own congregation. We have noted already many things that it is—a group of individuals growing up to discipleship, a collection of personalities destined for immortality, a body of Christians charged

with the Christianization of the community, an integral part of the one undivided church of God.

One thing more it is, which is the key to all the rest, a cross section of humanity, including men and women of very different tastes and occupations, touching directly or potentially every major interest of mankind.

This new and inclusive definition throws the door wide open to all that is worth while in human life. It gives us our point of contact with those other phases of experience which we saw were not our primary concern, economics, politics, finance, art, literature. All these make up the many-sided life of man. We touched them in part when we tried to define our responsibility for Christianizing the community. We come back to them in a new and larger context when we consider the place of the church in the life of humanity as a whole. If I am to know what the church must do to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, I must know the world of men out of which the Kingdom is to be built. Not individuals only, but humanity must be my study, all history my laboratory, all literature my text book. The Kingdom of God knows no boundaries of space and time. All races belong to it; all countries fall within its jurisdiction. Nothing that I can learn anywhere of anything but fits me better for my chosen task—that of the teacher of the Christian religion to the men for whom it was meant.

It would be fascinating, if there were time, to enter some of the rooms which this new key opens for us, and catalogue the treasures they contain. There is no interest known to man, I repeat, but your parish, if you be but alert to see it, will introduce you to it. It is a parish of workers and all the complicated questions of modern finance and industry are raised in principle by what they are doing day by day. It is a parish of citizens and year by year they meet at the polls to decide questions on whose right decision the welfare of the country at large may depend. It is a parish of Americans, but small indeed must be that Vermont community, and exceptional indeed its fortune into which some representatives of the polyglot races that make up our cosmopolitan citizenship have not strayed. The Negro is here, and the Irish, the Slav and the Italian. Frenchman and German may be found side by side. Politicians may declare the League of Nations no concern of America, but the questions which gave birth to the League are in your parish in the elemental facts of race difference and race jealousy and race pride. Above all it is a parish of people who each in his own way and according to his own lights, has some ideal of beauty or dignity or fitness which he would express in his home, or illustrate in his neighbor-

hood. For humanity at heart is one and in each human being you may find somewhere some point of contact which will introduce him to the best in his fellowmen of every country and of every age.

2. This work of interpretation is peculiarly the minister's office. It is his to see life as a whole, and to report what he sees.

First of all, to his own congregation. Where life is narrow and isolated, he must be the point of contact with the larger world. To men and women doing simple and familiar things he must interpret the worth and significance of what they are doing so that they shall feel their sympathy with people to whom but for him they would be strangers. But no less to the wider public of which he is himself one, the world of men and women with human needs and sympathies and aspirations and capacities, who are hungry for what Christianity has to give if only some one could be found to explain it to them in their own language and at the point of their present need.

This wider parish too, the world of persons in the widest sense, the minister may claim for his own. Only he must enter it by the door of his own parish and his own congregation. He must see in his own people types of what men and women are feeling and experiencing everywhere and be able to report what he sees.

Some of us have been reading those charming letters of Miss Jean Mackenzie in the *Atlantic*,¹ revealing as in a picture, the souls of the simple black folk in West Africa, among whom for so many years her life had been lived. Surely it must have seemed when she bade goodbye to her friends and started on her long journey to that most remote and forgotten portion of the dark continent, as if she had turned her back upon the larger life, and cut the points of contact between herself and the world of art and letters in which her former life had been lived. But one thing she had not left behind, and that was man himself; and in these simple folk among whom her lot was cast she had the vision to perceive and the sympathy to follow human spirits as they steeled their courage for the struggle with Nature and bowed their heads before its mysteries. And she saw, too, what Christian faith can do to help such people to conquer in their struggle and to rob the mystery by which they are encompassed of its terrors. And what she saw she has retold to us with a simple and compelling charm that has lifted her writing out of the category of conventional missionary reporting, and made it literature.

¹ *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1915—December, 1917.

What Jean Mackenzie did with her distant parish in West Africa, you may do with yours in Vermont, if only you have her eyes, and her pen. You may speak through it to men and women everywhere of what is in the heart of man.

Our modest beginning has brought us to an impressive ending. We began with the local congregation. We end with the church as a whole and with all humanity, and beginning and ending belong together. As the restricted subject matter of our teaching broadened out until it took in all knowledge, so the narrow circle of our pupils has expanded until it includes all the men and women who have ever lived. Who is sufficient for such an audience and for such a subject? How can we teachers, set so impossible a task, fit ourselves to do what we are charged to do? That will be our subject in our third and closing lecture.

III.

HOW TO TEACH.

1. THE RESULTING PROBLEM OF METHOD.
2. TEACHING AS IMPARTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.
 1. Teaching as impartation.
 2. The place of content in teaching.
 3. The Bible as the minister's text book.
3. TEACHING AS CONTACT OF SPIRIT WITH SPIRIT.
 1. Teaching as the impartation of knowledge personally appropriated.
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4. TEACHING AS THE PERPETUATION OF THE GAINS OF THE PAST.
 1. The significance of the past for the present.
 2. Teaching as making friends with the great men of the past.
 3. The church as the custodian of the gains of the past.
 4. Doctrine as the interpretation of past experience.
5. TEACHING AS INSPIRATION TO NEW INSIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE.
 1. The importance of the forward look.
 2. State and church as experiment stations.
 3. The parish minister's opportunity.
6. THE QUESTION OF TECHNIQUE.
 1. The place of technique in teaching.
 2. The minister as student of theology.

1. *The Resulting Problem of Method.*

In the last lecture we considered who were the pupils whom the minister is to teach and we saw that they are a numerous company. His first responsibility is to the members of his own congregation, but through them his influence reaches out to a constantly expanding circle. They are members of the local community in which they live, but at the same time they are a part of the one undivided church of Christ and a cross section of humanity with all its varying needs and interests. With all these the minister is concerned and for each he has his message.

But there is one member of this company of pupils of whom we have not yet spoken who presents problems more challenging and insistent than all the rest, and that is the minister himself. He is learner as well as teacher, and his responsibility will not be discharged until he has done for this particular pupil all that it is possible for him to do.

This is anything but easy. To teach ordinary pupils is hard enough, but to train teachers is superlatively difficult. If the church as a whole has failed in its teaching function this, I suspect, is the main reason. It is not that its ministers have not realized how important it was that they should be teachers of the Christian religion, but that they have perceived only too clearly how difficult it was to do this well.

And in this feeling of hesitation one can only sympathize with them. The more one knows about teaching, the more he realizes the demands which it makes upon mind and will alike; the more he has learned by experience how baffling and nerve-racking a thing a group of pupils may be, the greater will be the gap between the ideal he sets himself in his mind, and the results which he will expect to see realized in experience.

2. *Teaching as Impartation of Knowledge.*

1. For what is it to teach? It is to impart knowledge from personality to personality to the end that the gains of the past may be preserved for the present and new insights won which will enrich the future.

In the first place teaching is impartation. It is activity—the putting forth of spiritual energy. Teaching is the commerce of person with person in the realm of thought. It is trying to share that which you possess with another in such form that it becomes a part of the very life of the person you teach.

In a self-revealing article in the *Atlantic*,¹ Professor Palmer of Harvard has painted the picture of the ideal teacher. He is the man who, deliberately turning aside from each inviting by-path that would deflect him from his appointed goal—whether it be to discovery, or to contemplation, or to self-expression, or to any other subsidiary end, however fascinating and worthy—gives himself whole-heartedly to his chosen calling,—the work of using all he has learned or can learn to develop his pupils to the uttermost, and make them, in turn, teachers of others.

2. And it is knowledge which the teacher imparts. It is important to remember this in these days when Method is spelled with a big M and exalted to the throne that used to be occupied by Content. By all means let us study method. By all means let us realize that the person we teach is a living, willing, growing, experiencing, active being. By all means let us be clear that if we are to succeed in our aim we must arouse his interest and secure the cooperation of his will. But that for which we desire to awaken interest and secure attention is not something vague

¹ The Ideal Teacher. George Herbert Palmer, April, 1907.

and indefinite, coming to us as a surprise out of the formless void of the unborn, but a definite body of facts and ideas which have grown up in history and which together constitute what we call knowledge.

It seems gratuitous to insist upon anything so obvious, but I have had experiences which lead me to believe that there are quarters where a reminder of this sort will not be out of place. I have met men in influential positions, even Directors of Religious Education, so impressed with the new possibilities lying dormant in the pupils with whom they had to deal that they were not willing to admit that anything could come to them from others. They were so intent upon their duty to awaken that they quite forgot they had anything to impart. To yield to the natural temptation to share their own convictions on any matter whatsoever—even so central a matter as the personality of God or the unique significance of Jesus—seemed to them to sin against human freedom; to commit an impertinence of which those only could be guilty who were still living in the outworn world of absolutism and dogmatism.

Now God forbid that I should say anything to minimize the rights of individual initiative or the duty of the teacher to respect the creative possibilities in even the dullest of his pupils. We shall have much to say of this aspect of the teacher's work later on. But it may not be out of place to remind ourselves at the outset that such respect is quite consistent with the perception of this other fact, that social intercourse in any form is possible only through the existence of a body of objective knowledge which both parties take for granted, and which forms the common platform on which both alike stand. The teacher's work is to broaden this platform and render it more secure so that the contact of spirit with spirit may be freer and more enduring.

Let us take the illustration that lies closest at hand, the Christian religion itself, of which we have been speaking all along. This religion as we have seen has many different aspects, touching every side of human nature, with all of which the teacher has to do. But whatever else it may or may not be, it is a body of facts which it is his duty to impart. It is a fact that the Christian church exists in the world in such and such a form. It is a fact that Roman Catholics and Episcopalians and Lutherans and Presbyterians and Congregationalists and Baptists differ in such and such ways. It is a fact that I, the teacher, and the pupils whom I teach belong to one of these bodies and not another, and that this fact in turn leads to practical consequences which determine our lives in such and such ways. Say, if you will that all this belongs to the periphery of religion, that it is body and not

soul. The point is that religion has body as well as soul. And in religion as truly as in every other phase of life it is dangerous for soul to ignore body or to be ignorant of the facts and laws in which its life consists.

It is true further that this body, like the human body, has had a history. The Christian church has come to be what it is today through successive stages in which definite forces have been operating and specific lessons learned which it is important for us to know. Just because he is dealing with free personalities who have their own lives to live and their own decisions to make it is essential that the teacher convey this information accurately so that they may be properly furnished with the knowledge they need to guide them in the new decisions of the future.

To teach, then, it is clear that one must begin by knowing what is to be taught and finding some suitable medium by which this knowledge is to be conveyed.

In the first place one must know what he is to teach. And knowledge comes by study, patient, unremitting, persistent. What we would impart, we must first have acquired. And this along all the lines of our previous analysis of our subject matter.

But it is not enough to know. One must impart this knowledge. And for this some appropriate medium is necessary. The teacher must have a text book. And a text book, to be serviceable, must have two qualities. It must be something which provides a point of contact with the particular subject matter to be taught. And it must be something a great many people can use together.

3. Both these qualities we find in our Bible. It is a book which introduces us to the subject matter we wish to teach. And it is a book which is accessible to the people to whom we wish to teach it.

This combination of qualities gives the Bible its great significance for the minister. The Bible is the text book of the Christian religion. It gathers into convenient compass and attractive form the main body of facts which need to be imparted. Three things it tells us about the Christian religion: first, what it is; secondly, how it arose; thirdly, what needs it answers.

It tells us what the Christian religion is. The Bible is the book to which we go to learn what is unique and distinctive in the Christian religion. It is the book all Christians read and to which all go for inspiration and guidance. It is the point of departure for all later variation. It is the standard by which all profess to judge their beliefs and practices.

It tells us further how the Christian religion arose. It brings us face to face with Jesus, the founder of Christianity, and the first disciples who gained their impulse and inspiration from

Him. It shows us the preparation for His teaching in the religion of Israel and unfolds the story of the progressive self-revelation of God from its first beginnings in the blind groping of a group of wandering nomads, to the full disclosures of the great prophets and Psalmists who so nearly anticipated the universalism of Jesus.

It shows us the beginnings of the missionary activity of the nascent church, makes us Paul's companions on his journey to the world's capital and shows how Christianity, child of Judaism, broke with the mother religion and became an independent and world conquering faith.

It tells us finally of the needs to which the Christian religion answers. It shows us men like ourselves, facing situations such as we face, asking themselves the questions we ask about life and death, sin and suffering, sacrifice and failure, duty and destiny. It makes us confidants of the world's great spirits as they have wrestled with the Spirit of God for forgiveness and peace. In spite of all that is strange and unfamiliar of outward habit and custom, forms of speech and the thought that speech expresses, we are conscious that we are touching men like ourselves in situations not unlike our own.

Recent contacts have taught us much that we did not know of the nature of other religions. We have learned not only wherein they differ from our own, but what they have in common with Christianity. And this knowledge has but served to set in clearer light the unique significance and immeasurable value of our Bible.

For the Bible is not merely the text book of the Christian religion. It is in a very real sense a compendium of the religious history of man. It shows us all the stages through which man has passed in his quest of the true religion. It illustrates all the types in which religion manifests itself today. It is a great mistake to think of the Bible as giving us Christianity in the form of set precept and doctrine, a set of rules to be taken over unchanged and purposes to be followed without discrimination. It is something far more dynamic and original than this. It is the revelation of an expanding life. It gives us pictures of the growing apprehension of God's loving purpose and its transforming effects in the experience of changing men. The differences which we see among men today we find anticipated there; the needs that make them one it illustrates and satisfies.

This rapid survey justifies the historic position which Protestantism has given to the Bible as the text book of the Christian religion. It is the Book, I repeat, which tells the story of God's progressive self-revelation to men through the contact of human spirit with human spirit under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

This emphasis by Protestantism upon the Bible as the sufficient and adequate text book of Christianity has been much misunderstood. It does not mean that there is nothing to be learned from other books about religion. It does not mean that the Christian is indifferent to the teachings of the ethnic faiths, or depreciates the experience which their sacred books record. It does not mean that he looks upon God's book of revelation as closed, or is blind to the lessons which God's Spirit is teaching mankind today, but it does mean that the central experiences of the religious life and the permanent convictions to which they give rise are so clearly set forth in the Bible, and withal in such simple and persuasive form that it lends itself to the use which has been assigned it by the church of serving as the world's great text book of the Christian religion.

For a text book, we repeat, must not only give us knowledge of the subject matter to be taught, but in a form which is accessible to the pupils. It must be a book which commends itself to many different tastes, meets the needs of men of very different capacity and shows a lasting quality which justifies its widest circulation and ensures its intelligent use. All these qualities, as a matter of fact, we find in our Bible. It is the one book as to whose importance and serviceableness all Christians agree.

3. *Teaching as Contact of Spirit with Spirit.*

Furnished with such a text book, then, the teacher must impart the knowledge of the Christian religion. But he can do so effectively only through the contact of his personality with the personality of his pupils. This brings us to the next point in our definition, which concerns the relation of personality to knowledge. It has two aspects: as it affects the personality of the teacher, and as it affects the personality of his pupil.

1. First of all, as it affects the personality of the teacher. The knowledge he would impart, as we have seen, he must first have made his own. But what does it mean to make any fact or truth one's own? It does not mean simply to accept it as a fact. It is not enough to lay it up on some shelf of the mind from which it may be taken down at convenient intervals when it may chance to be needed. It means to relate it to the living interests which make up the teacher's life as an individual and the interests of the lives which he touches. *It means to find out what it signifies for the purposes he sets himself and the duties to which he is committed.*

We may illustrate what this means by the study of history. Of all subjects of human study history would seem to be the most objective and unchanging. What has happened has hap-

pened. What has been done cannot be undone or done over again in a different way. And yet history never stays written. The old story has to be told over and over again, and each new writer tells it in a different way. Why? Because the facts change or the writer, unwilling to accept them, willfully alters or distorts them? By no means. Because a new interest has arisen which puts the old facts in a new perspective. When Mommsen wrote the history of Rome political interests were dominant and his treatment was affected accordingly. But when Ferrero wrote, economic interests were in the foreground and his pages present a very different picture. It is the same men of whom he writes, and they did the things of which Mommsen has told us. But they did other things too, and these other things Ferrero has told us. And the things of which he tells us are things in which we are interested today because we, too, are doing, or trying to do, things of the same kind; and the experiences of these predecessors of ours are full of interest to us for they warn us of possible dangers and point out pitfalls into which we may stumble unawares.

So men are constantly writing new commentaries on the Bible, not because the old commentaries do not tell the truth, but because they do not tell it all, or that part of it in which we are most interested, or at least in the setting in which it must be put if it is adequately to meet our present need.

All this bears upon the minister's task. As teacher of the Bible he must be his own commentator. He must take the old facts and turn them so that they will face present interests, first his own, and then those of his pupils. He must come to the Bible out of the life he is living now, asking what it has to teach in the things that matter most to him.

2. And what he does for himself, he must do for his pupils. He must see the bearing of the facts he imparts upon the lives he desires to influence. As he has made them a part of his own life, he must make them a part of his pupils' life, so that they become partners with him in a common enterprise.

This is what our modern pedagogues mean in their emphasis upon the teacher as an educator, a drawer out of that which is implicit in the pupil, either of insight or of power. This is indeed a most important part of the teacher's work, so much so that it is not strange that it should be regarded as all important. The true teacher is not simply one who imparts knowledge. He is one who fits his pupil to acquire knowledge; gives him the tools to do his own thinking; sets him to writing his own commentary.

Important in every phase of the teacher's work, this respect for the pupil's individuality is essential in the teacher of religion.

For religion is something which cannot be had vicariously. Each man must do his own experiencing. Each man must approach God for himself.

This, at least, is our Protestant conviction. Protestantism restored faith to its central place in religion and faith is only another name for the open mind. It is receptivity of spirit—the will to make one's own the object which the mind reveals and to test its validity in the crucible of experience.

We find here another point of contact with modern educational theory. This is constantly insisting upon the place of practice in the acquisition of knowledge. We know only what we do, it tells us. Physical science has achieved such triumphs because it uses the laboratory. If the humanities are to maintain their place in the modern educational system they must find some substitute for this method of trial and test.

Such a method religion offers. It lives by experience. We know only what we believe. And belief in religion means, as we have seen, not blind credulity, but such assent of the will to the invitation of the mind as makes possible verification in experience. The minister is of all men best qualified to be a teacher of religion because it is his office to inspire men to the practice of religion. If his pulpit is platform, his parish is laboratory, and he can test the result of the Sunday sermon by the lives men are living through the week.

Only let us be sure that we stage our experiment correctly. This man to whom religious knowledge is to be imparted is, as we have been reminded over and over again, not an isolated individual. He is the man of whom we have been speaking, a social being with many-sided contacts and relations, at once member of the congregation, of the community, of the church at large, of humanity as a whole. He can develop his own personality, he can practice the lessons he has learned only as he sees himself in all these different relationships and acts accordingly.

4. *Teaching as the Perpetuation of the Gains of the Past.*

1. This leads to the second and final part of our definition of teaching. It is not merely impartation of knowledge from person to person. It is impartation for a purpose. And this purpose in turn is two-fold, partly concerning the past, partly concerning the future. There are gains won in the past to be preserved for the present. There are insights to be won in the present which may enrich the future.

This wide outlook gives dignity to the minister's work. He contemplates life as a whole and sees the men and women whom he touches in their double relation to the past from which they

have come and to the future to which they look forward. This is true of all great teaching. It is not science simply, concerned with the parts, but philosophy dealing with the whole. It is impartation of facts to be sure, but even more, interpretation of meanings and of relationships.

What is true of teaching in general is true supremely of the teacher of religion. For religion is of all human interests the most inclusive. All other studies deal with parts of man's life. Religion visualizes the whole. Its subject is personality, human and divine. It deals with humanity as a whole and with each man in it in its relation to all other men who have lived or shall live.

This is why knowledge of the past is so important. It is part of the whole of life without which no other part can be understood. The past is not dead. On the contrary, it is instinct with life. It is working upon us now. Nay more, it is working in us. It has not only made us, it is making us and may make us more and better still if we will let it. We do not know what we are until we know whence we have come, and still less do we know what we are to be. We study history, I repeat, not because it deals with the past, but because it concerns the present and the future; because through it we have fellowship with the creative spirits of our race, the men who live in the lives they are making for the better future which lies ahead.

2. We touch here the most sacred and inspiring work of the teacher, the work of making friends. It is his privilege to introduce his pupils to the great men whom he has come to know and trust and love, that knowing them, they too may trust and love them. Above all he must make them acquainted with Jesus, and the men and women whom He has satisfied and inspired.

First of all Jesus. If we were to sum up the Christian experience in a single word, could we do it better than in that one word which Jesus, Himself, chose to describe the relation between Himself and His disciples—friendship? We begin as disciples, learners; we end as comrades, confidants. "Henceforth I call you not servants," said Jesus, "but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." What would we not give if we could have heard those words spoken to us? But they were spoken to us if we had ears to hear them. What Jesus said to those first disciples He said not to themselves alone, but to all who should come after. He taught them that they might become teachers, and made them friends that they should share His friendship with all those who should believe on Him through their word.

It is the office of the Christian teacher to make men realize this. He is to introduce them to Jesus by making them acquainted with the men and women who have known Jesus and whose lives have been remade by His Spirit. For the wonderful thing about Jesus is that He did not want servile worship. He did not care to hear men say, "Lord, Lord." He wanted to free men to be their true and better selves. He wanted to see them doing the things He had done, the things He could not do. From any other lips than His own we should have thought the words profane, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do, and greater things than these shall he do because I go to my Father."

The New Testament shows us this process going on. It shows us Jesus remaking men by introducing them to Himself:—trusting them first in a little, then in more, finally leaving in their untried hands the mighty task to which he had consecrated Himself of making the world a home and society a brotherhood. We see them addressing themselves to this task, sometimes timorously, sometimes exultingly trying experiments, making mistakes, needing to go back and begin over again, but through it all growing into bigger, more self-reliant, more responsible men and women.

For we too are to be makers of men, and must use such material as comes to our hand. And for us too there is but one way—the contact of spirit with spirit, as we work side by side at our common task. Responsibility is the great moulder of character, and there is no training for responsibility comparable to intimacy with those who have carried it before us.

We study history, therefore, to become acquainted with Jesus and the men whom He has inspired, Paul and Augustine, and Francis, and Savanarola, and Luther and Wesley, and all the long list down to the last missionary to India and China or the last convert of the Salvation Army; the men who have learned that life is not receiving simply, but giving; not passive obedience, but creative activity; not acceptance of the thing that is, but resolute anticipation of the thing that is to be.

3. This great gift, then, the past gives us—friendship with the heroic spirits who have won life out of death and victory from defeat. But it gives us something else besides. It gives us the setting that is necessary to understand the significance of their achievement. It shows us the needs which have inspired their endeavor, the longings of which the Gospel is the satisfaction.

And this, too, is necessary if we are to understand our present problems and justly estimate the different proposals which

are made for their solution. We hear much about the new age and its new needs. And it is true that the age is different from all the ages which have preceded it and that it has needs which are peculiarly its own. But after all they are not as novel as they seem. In principle at least, if not in the details of their application, they have been anticipated by multitudes who before us have faced man's old enemies, sin and suffering, doubt and fear, selfish ambition and the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick. A dozen years ago Jeremiah seemed a strange book, but to those of us who have lived through the great war it has become more modern than Ibanez or Hugh Walpole. There is nothing that we have experienced since that fateful day when the German armies first set foot in Belgium that men and women like ourselves have not experienced before us. And we cannot understand the Gospel or rightly appraise its value for our age until we have seen what it has done for the men and women who in other ages have faced what we face and experienced what we suffer. "There were weeks," wrote a friend of mine, a Swiss professor living within the sound of the guns that were pouring forth their ceaseless fire just across the frontier, "there were weeks when I could not sleep; when I could not eat. It seemed to me that life had lost its meaning and that I could no longer exist in such a world. And then I turned to the prophets and I found that they had been through it all before and had won through to confidence and peace. Through them I found my way back to life."

That is what history can do for the man who studies it aright. It is the great steadier; the great revealer; the great reassurer. There are some lessons that have been learned, some things that have been proved, and history tells us what they are. Experience may confirm, but it will not alter them. It can only help us to make them our own.

It is the great significance of the Christian church that it is custodian of this store of past experience. It is the transmitter to the present of the gains of the past. In an age so conscious of the novelty of its experience that it is tempted to cut loose from its antecedents and go it alone, it is a witness to the continuity of history. It believes in progress, but in progress toward a goal. It makes place for change, but it is change according to law. It looks forward to better days which are to come, but it believes that the future will be better only as it conserves the good of the past. It is persuaded that God has revealed some things which will last as long as man, and conceives itself as a trustee to future ages of the contents of this past revelation.

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance for the world's future of this steadying influence. Creation is never *ex nihilo*.

It always uses materials that it finds ready to hand. God Himself, we are told in Genesis, formed the world out of pre-existing chaos, and He did it step by step, each building on what had gone before. So it is with human creation. The sure way to rule out originality is to declare that you will have none of the past.

We have a striking object lesson in contemporary Russia. Lenine and Trotsky tell us that they are going to make a brand new beginning, to have done once and forever with the tyranny and corruption of the bourgeois state. And behold! What they give us is the old autocracy of the Czar under another name. The really forward looking men in Russia, the men of originality and resource, who want the new but are wise enough to know that it must grow out of the old, are the men whom of all others these new Napoleons cannot tolerate. For Jesus' word to his disciples, if they were honest, they would substitute another. "No longer do we call you comrades, but slaves, for we have no message to impart that has come to us from a common Father. If you would live in our state you must submit your will to ours, for we, and we alone, know what is good for the people of whom you are a part."

How often this has happened in human history. Men who have tried to ignore the past have found by sad experience that they have sacrificed the future also. For past and future belong together. "He that would mow down everything," said Turgeneff, in this a wiser philosopher than Lenine, "must not spare his own legs."

4. All that this means we cannot here unfold. It is a theme not for a lecture, but for a lifetime of teaching—The Fatherhood of God, the Saviourhood of Christ, the communion of the Holy Spirit, the infinite value of the human soul, the meaning of the Cross, the transforming power of sacrificial love, the promise of a redeemed society: such truths as these one can catalogue in a dozen sentences, but what they mean we are forever learning and shall never completely master. All that the church can do is to put us in touch with those who have been studying these great matters before us, and so put into our hands the materials which will enable us more and more to understand them for ourselves.

This gives a new significance to the study of doctrine. Doctrine, we have seen, is our way of formulating the answer of Christianity to the permanent human needs, the need of guidance, the need of inspiration, the need of inward harmony and peace. But we do not rightly estimate the significance of this answer till we realize that it sums up for us generations of human experience. It is not philosophy only but witness, and a wise lawyer knows too much to discredit the testimony of a witness be-

cause his language is uncouth, and the world of ideas in which his thoughts move unfamiliar.

Take that old doctrine of original sin which has so largely dropped out of the consciousness of our generation. How preposterous it seems that the whole race should be doomed to misery and corruption for our ancestors' sin. Yet is it not a reminder of the fact that stares us in the face, try as hard to forget it as we will, that in our moral life as in all other parts of our existence, we are members of one another. It is not enough to repent of our individual sins. We sin as members of our nation, of our class, of the whole social order in which we live, of which we are so indissolubly a part, that we cannot completely free ourselves from its standards and valuations even if we would. Politicians may try to persuade us that America may leave Europe to its fate and be saved alone. But the experience of mankind gives the false promise the lie, and the church in her teaching of the solidarity of the race in sin, preserves the memory of this experience.

Or take that other doctrine of atonement that seemed so strange a half dozen short years ago, and yet which has so strikingly regained its hold upon the imagination of our generation,—the doctrine that the innocent suffer in and with the guilty, and that their sacrifice cheerfully accepted and unflinchingly borne has redemptive significance. This is not a dogma devised by the theologians. It is a fact to which the experience of the race is witness. What Jesus did on Calvary was not the great exception, but the universal law. Belgian widows and children have been reminding us of it, and our own boys in the trenches. There is a price to be paid for past wrong doing which cannot be paid completely by him who did the wrong. And whether the price paid shall issue in redemption or simply in the heaping up of added suffering depends upon the spirit in which it is paid.

So of that most puzzling and yet most persistent of Christian doctrines—the doctrine of the twofold nature of Christ. It, too, is the formulation, in scholastic and unfamiliar form, I grant you, of the findings of experience. It brings before us in the central figure of human history that fact of which all history is the illustration, that we are living in two worlds—the world of the human and the world of the divine, and that these two are indissolubly united. You cannot say of any phase of human experience, "Here man alone is at work." You cannot say in any hour of mystic exaltation, "Here God alone is present." God and man, the human and the divine—both are present everywhere and always, and he only understands the world in which he lives and is able to find his way into its mysteries who recognizes each to the full.

I was talking recently to a distinguished scholar of another faith, the head of an Ethical Culture Society, and he said to me, "I regret that the reading of the old dogmatic theologians has so largely dropped out of fashion. I cannot accept the doctrines which they teach, but I have found no one of them—even the most repellent and uncouth—but is a reminder of a fact of experience which our generation will forget at its peril."

This store of past experience the church preserves for the benefit of the generations that come after. If it reminds us of the past it is not for the past's sake, but for the sake of the future to which the past is giving birth.

5. *Teaching as Inspiration to New Insights for the Future.*

1. For it is the future in which we are interested. If we study the past, it is not that we may reproduce but that we may transcend it. So we come back again to that phase of the teacher's work to which we have already so often referred, its forward looking and creative aspect. We wish to share our knowledge with other persons, not simply or chiefly that we may conserve the gains of the past, but that we may win new insights that will enrich the future.

What a vista this opens before us! Christianity, we have been told again and again, has not failed, because it has never been tried. But why has it never been tried—tried, I mean, on the world scale which the critics have in mind in the criticism? In part at least, because it has never been adequately taught. It has been conceived as a set of precepts and doctrines to be handed down unchanged and the result has been the Roman Catholic Church. It has been conceived as a message of salvation to individual souls and the result has been the pluralism of Protestantism. But Christianity is more than these. It is the progressive establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world through the Christianization of all the relationships of the men and women in it. This cannot be done by merely looking backward. No reproduction of past achievement, however splendid, will suffice. It calls for new experiment in cooperative enterprise. It requires faith in men's ability and willingness to work together for ends beyond self. But it requires also the invention of instruments through which this faith can express itself and these ends be realized.

2. We may find a helpful analogy in the observation of contemporary politics. Everywhere men are lamenting the failure of the democratic state to realize its own ideals. We talk of liberty and equality and the pursuit of happiness, and of the state as the agent through which these goods are to be realized for all the people. And we see the state used by politicians for their

own selfish purposes and the great issues that clamor for settlement ignored or perverted to partisan ends. And men tell us that democracy is a failure and the state has broken down.

But the trouble is not in our ideals, or in the resources in our hands to realize them, but in our lack of ingenuity in devising ways to use them aright. Miss Follett has been reminding us, in her suggestive book on the new state,¹ that we have not yet discovered the way in which the real will of the people, I will not say can be expressed, but can be *formed* as a preliminary to expression. For the state is not a group of unrelated individuals whose common will can be determined by a majority vote, but a group of groups, and each of these groups is itself creative personality, an experiment station through which opinion is being formed and transformed. We need to recognize these groups for what they are, to apply to them our democratic principles and to use them as our agents in realizing that larger state which shall at once express and foster the common life of all.

What is true of the state is true, as we have seen, of the church. It, too, is not a collection of unrelated individuals, but of personalities who realize themselves through contact with others in manifold relationships. It is a group of groups and each of these groups too is creative personality—an experiment station through which the principles of Christianity are to be applied to specific problems and new insights won which shall be valuable for the church of the future. It is for us to recognize this fact and to shape our policy accordingly. We must remodel our existing machinery to correspond to our present needs and use the insights of the past as helps to new insight in the present and for the future.

3. This opens out new and exciting possibilities for the parish minister. The new church for which we look forward—the church that shall be really comprehensive and Christian—will not be the creation of the leaders alone, necessary and indispensable as their work may be. What they can do is limited by what the churches will let them do. And what the churches will let them do is determined in the last analysis by their own experience, as they have tried, each in its own community, to make earnest with the ideals of the Gospel, and to find some way to make these ideals function effectively under the conditions of modern life. When individual Christians in a community are determined to come together to express their common Christianity in the spirit of our Lord's highpriestly prayer, neither Bishop, nor Convention, nor General Assembly can keep them apart.

¹ *The New State. Group organization, the Solution of Popular Government.* Longmans, Green and Co., 1920.

In this field of creative experiment the parish minister finds his supreme opportunity. I have said he is to be a maker of men. But greater vistas still open before him. He is to be a maker of the church which is to make men, that together they may remake the world. Here surely is a task great enough for the boldest spirit if only one have vision to see, and courage to dare. We have preached salvation by faith long enough. It is time to add that equally Pauline—but all too neglected—doctrine of salvation by hope.

This mood of expectancy the minister must foster; his face must be turned toward the future; his faith in the possibilities which it holds must know no limits. He must help his pupils to know the past indeed, but that they may transcend the past. Just because they have new and greater things to do they cannot afford to waste their time in repeating the mistakes of the past. They must avoid what has been done ill lest they leave the world no farther advanced than when they found it. They must use what has been done well as a help to doing better.

6. *The Question of Technique.*

1. We have finished our outline of the minister's task as teacher. We have asked ourselves what he is to teach, and to whom and how. He is to teach the Christian religion, its nature and its message to the individual and to society. He is to teach it primarily to his own congregation and to all others whom he can reach through them. He is to teach it by personal contact. What he himself has learned he must pass on to them to the end that the gains of the past may be preserved for the present and new insights won which shall enrich the future. We go back to the question which we have already more than once raised—how is he to do this? He is to teach others; how is he to teach himself? In the few moments that remain only a hint can be given.

Of course he must have a technique, but into this complicated field I do not propose to enter here. You will find advice ready to your hand in the books on the subject, and much of it is excellent. Especially on the subject of the Sunday School you will find a large and rapidly increasing literature to which I can only commend you. What can be said in the way of practical help in this most important field of the minister's teaching you will find said there. Only be sure to use what you read as servant, and not as master. Take what the books give in the spirit in which it is given as a group of helpful suggestions to be used as far as they work, not as a set of rules to be obeyed without question. After all, what is technique but the classified ex-

perience of the race as it comes to us through those who pass on to us that particular part of it which they themselves have found useful? Let us be as free as our teachers and use so much of what they give us as we find helpful and no more. Let us remember that we must make our own tests and try our own experiments. No single man's method will do for another. Each of us must work out his own technique for himself in the laboratory of experience.

Some things lie upon the surface. If you are to teach successfully you must have the teacher's ideal. You must consciously make it your aim to know your subject that you may share your knowledge with others. You must set apart a definite time for study and guard it jealously from interruption, however persuasive or insistent may be the knock upon your study door. You must have some special theme on which to keep at work, apart from your immediate daily duties,—something which ministers to your own growth and helps you to prepare for day after tomorrow.

These things, I repeat, lie on the surface. You have heard them said many times by others, and all that they say is true. But what I have in mind here is something more and other than this—something less easy to define but infinitely more important. It is a certain habit of mind, a way of thinking about things. It is what we may call the philosophical point of view—the habit of thinking of things in their relations and in their proportions, of asking not only what they are but why they are and where they belong, the habit of looking past the surface of things at their values and meanings, even as Jesus Christ taught men to look past the surface of His own face to the unseen Father whose Spirit He expressed and interpreted.

It will help you in this if you choose for your special subject of private work some theme which makes demands upon just such qualities of mind and heart; something that forces you to take large views of life and see things in their wider perspective, yet at the same time which bears directly upon your daily work,—such a theme, for example, as the originality of Jesus, or the Protestant conception of the church. What is it exactly that Jesus has brought into the world that is new? How is it that men who believe like our forefathers in freedom of conscience and the direct access of the soul to God can best give social expression to their religion? You cannot take up such questions as these without finding yourself sooner or later brought face to face with all the many-sided interests and problems which have engaged our attention during these lectures. You cannot honestly try to think your way through them without finding yourself

from year to year stronger, wiser, richer personalities than you were before.

But whether you adopt this suggestion or not matters little provided you acquire the habit of mind of which I have been speaking,—the habit of seeing things in the large and as a whole. What the world needs supremely today is men of international mind. And where shall we look for such men if not among the ministers of religion?

2. All this is only another way of saying that you should be a student of theology. For theology is just the schoolman's way of describing the habit of thinking about life in its largest aspects and seeing all that it contains in the clear light that shines from the face of God.

I know that theology has come to have a very different meaning. I know that to many ministers it is a synonym for all that is most provincial, not to say parochial. And it is not hard to understand why this should be so. As the church has been made little by the ecclesiastics who have taken the part for the whole, so theology has been made little by the dogmatists and for the same reason. They have taken the particular aspects of truth which appealed to them for the moment and tried to make them the standard for other people and for other ages. They have made of God's revelation a matter of measure and quantity, not realizing that measure and quantity are helps to our understanding of that which in its nature transcends all limits.

But the way out is forward, not back. As the remedy for a bad institution is a good institution, so the remedy for bad theology is good theology. If our predecessors have made of theology a little thing, then let us take a hand, for we know better. What is theology, I repeat, but seeing life through the eyes of God and gathering up into clear and ordered form that which we have seen of beauty and truth and wisdom and goodness and comfort and power, that we may share it with those for whom it was meant. Surely there is nothing the world needs more than this, no service which it would be better worth while to render. And it is this service to which you are called.

I congratulate you then, my fellow teachers, on the prospect which opens before you. You are called, I verily believe, to the most momentous and the most inspiring work that is open to a living man today. You are to be the makers of the church of the future, and the church under God is to be his agent in the building of the Kingdom of God.

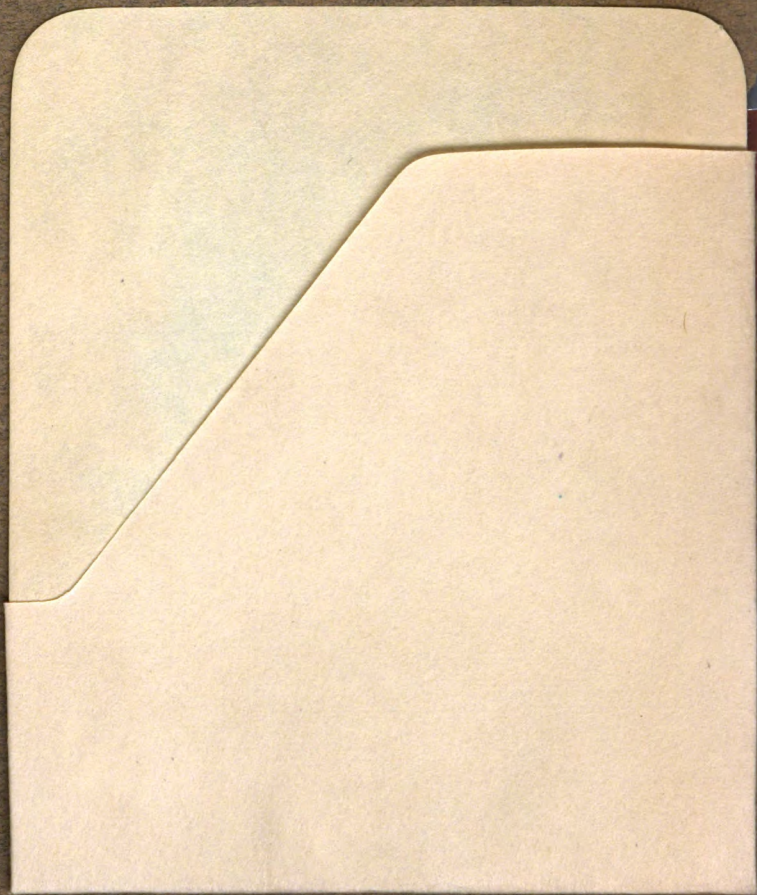


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