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THE MINISTRY OUR AGE AND COUNTRY DEMAND.*

Members of the Board and Students of the Theological Seminary—
In accordance with established custom, it devolves upon me to address you upon this occasion, which is to me so solemn, and to all of us important and interesting. In the remarks which I am about to make, it is my purpose to endeavor to give some expression, however inadequate, to my conception of the work, which the Head of the Church, by the voice of her highest judicatory, has called upon me to perform.

All agree that to provide an earnest, pious and well furnished ministry, is the first and most important work of the church. This obligation rises above all others; this work ranks all others which she undertakes, for all efforts in other directions will be in vain if this is neglected—this must be done whatever else is left undone.

With a humbling sense of my own insufficiency, with fervent supplication to the God of all grace for the necessary endowments, but with the most profound conviction that it is the highest service to which the Master calls any of his servants, I enter to-night upon the toils, responsibilities and duties of a teacher in the Theological Seminary of our venerable and beloved church.

In accordance with these views, I have painfully torn myself away from an affectionate and attached people; a people endeared to me by the kindly intercourse of a pastorate of nearly thirteen years; a people whom I shall bear in my heart, and whose kindness I will never forget while the tide of life courses in my veins, to devote the remainder of my days and energies to the severe, but as I anticipate, pleasant duties of this school of the prophets.

My conceptions, however, of this entire subject, and the ends at which I shall aim in the discharge of the duties of the professorship,

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that privilege by their unchristian conduct. In the treatment of the two cases there is only a circumstantial difference. When those who have been admitted to the communion of the Church fall into scandalous sin, they are, by the exercise of discipline, cut off from the fellowship of the household of faith. But baptized youth who have not made a profession of the name of Christ, are not, in the full sense of the word, members of the church. And, therefore, their neglect of duty, or commission of sin, does not subject them to excommunication from the communion of the church to which they have never been admitted; but, by the exercise of her authority, the church denies them the enjoyment of a privilege of which they manifest themselves to be unworthy.

And while these two classes of individuals sustain substantially the same relation to the church, they should experience at her hands the same treatment. They are, it is true, erring children, but still they are children; and for them the church should cherish the feelings of an affectionate mother. Though the condition of these erring children is a perilous one, it should not be regarded as hopeless. Unceasing efforts should be put forth, with a view to reclaim the backsliding, and restore them to the paths of righteousness. And negligent youth, who practically undervalue the blessings of that covenant, the seal of which has been administered to them, should be instructed, and admonished, and warned, in the spirit of tenderness and love, for the purpose of prevailing upon them to come out from the world, to take up the cross and follow the Lord Jesus. And such efforts put forth, in humble dependence upon divine grace, will not be in vain. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

HOW TO BE A PASTOR.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

WE very much doubt if any man will ever attain much success in the pastoral work, if he does not love it; neither, as for that matter, will he ever be a successful preacher, if he does not love to preach the precious gospel more than he does to eat his dinner. He who goes reluctantly from house to house, under the lash of obligation, and not under the aspiration of affection, will never do any more to win the people he visits than the newspaper carrier who brings their daily journal. If a minister does not love pastoral visitation, he must keep at it till he does love it. Like tomatoes, it will be easier to swallow at every trial. And when he finds how much spiritual good he is achieving—both for himself and for his flock—he will conquer his prejudices or overcome his diffidence, and persevere in the attempt to see every member of his congregation at least once in every year.

The primary idea of the pastoral work is to "win souls." It gives the minister the grandest power in the world—*heart-power*. The ma-

majority of our congregations are reached not so much through the intellect as through the affections. This is a happy fact; for only one man in ten has the talent to be a great preacher; but all the other nine, if they love Jesus and the souls of men, can become great pastors. Nothing gives the pastor such heart-power as personal attention to his people—especially in the way of personal sympathy with them in their seasons of trial. Let a pastor be in the habit of dropping in familiarly to his people's houses; let him come often, and visit their sick-rooms or kneel beside their empty cradles and pray with them; let him go and see the business-men in his flock when they have met with reverses, and give them a word of cheer; let him recognize and speak kindly to their children—and he will have woven a cord about the people's hearts that will stand a tremendous pressure. He can then launch the most pungent and painful truths at them from the pulpit, and they will not take offence at him. For he will have won their hearts to himself, and that is a mighty step towards winning them to his Saviour.

Good pastoral work is as effectual in gathering and building up a congregation as good preaching. "A house-going minister," said Chalmers, "makes a church-going people." I see a constant illustration of this pithy saying in one of my New York brethren, who, though a very plain and simple preacher, has a crowded and most efficient church. He wins people to the sanctuary by personal visitations and kind words; when he gets them there, he wins them to Christ by plain, close, tender preaching of the gospel in its simplicity.

After all, what is the great end of a minister's office? Is it solely to prepare powerful or polished sermons? No; it is to win souls to Christ. It is to awaken the careless, to comfort the sad, to edify believers, to warn the endangered; in short, to make the bad good, and the good better. Preaching good sermons is one of the most effective means to this end. But it is not the only one. And, if the minister can prepare more *practical* sermons, and can lodge them more securely in the hearts of his auditors by constant and affectionate pastoral intercourse with them, then is he morally bound to keep up that intercourse. If the shepherd can only win the sheep by going after the sheep, then woe unto him if he neglect his duty. We are firmly persuaded that if many a minister would take part of the time which he now spends in elaborating and polishing away the edges of his discourses, and devote it to thorough pastoral visitation, he would have larger audiences and a far larger number of conversions to Christ. He would be a healthier man; for pastoral predestination is a capital exercise. He would be a readier speaker; for conversation tends to make a preacher fluent in his extempore efforts. He would be a much more tender, practical, and heart-moving ambassador of Jesus Christ.

"Granted that pastoral work is so indispensable, how shall I be a pastor?" To this we reply, *Resolve to become one*, cost what it may. If you are shy and reserved, conquer your diffidence. A man has no business to be a shepherd if he is afraid of the sheep. Go and talk to your people about *any* topic that comes uppermost, until you feel at ease with them; and then, if you have any love for Jesus in your own heart, you can certainly manage to say something to them about the

“one thing needful.” You can say as much as the blacksmith did to his skeptical neighbor: “My friend, I am exceedingly anxious about the salvation of your soul!” We do not believe that a pastor, in his visits, should talk always and only about affairs directly spiritual. Talk with them about their affairs; and try to lead them, as often as you can wisely, to converse with you about your great errand to them—their *soul's welfare*. Keep the idea ever before your mind, I must save this soul for Jesus! If you can only reach that soul by beginning a great way off, then begin far off, and work your way in. If you can only gain your point by going often, then go often. The time is not lost. One soul gained, gains others. These personal encounters with individuals train a man to be a close, suggestive, practical preacher. He gets materials for his sermons, too, as he goes.

In the next place, resolve to devote a portion of *every day* to pastoral duty. To visit a large congregation consumes a vast amount of time. But can it be spent more profitably elsewhere? The work of visitation need not interfere with sermon preparation, for a pastor can be thinking out his sermons as he goes from house to house. As for the study of the Bible and of books, he can do that in the morning when the mind is fresh; and the afternoon can be devoted to visiting and receiving calls. The evening too might be used, for lamps were not made to write sermons by. Morning is the time which God *gives* for study; and midnight is the time which the fool or the sluggard *steals*.

No pastor can plead that his flock is too large to be visited. Spurgeon may possibly be an exception, for he is doing ten men's work; but he sets his elders and assistants at the work of visitation. In my own church-edifice are over three hundred pews, all occupied; but I find no difficulty in reaching every pew-holder (whose residence I can discover) at least once a year. Some years I begin at one end, and go straight through, street by street. In the mean while, there will be a special call to visit some one or more persons in other districts almost every day. The afflicted and the awakened have always the first claim. It is often said “that you never can *satisfy* people, however often you visit them.” But, can you satisfy them any better by neglecting them entirely? We do not expect to satisfy every body by preaching the truth faithfully; but this is all the more a reason to do it. *Do your best*, and let the grumblers growl.

DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST.

LIVE in dependence upon Christ, in the exercise of faith upon God in Christ. Trust him in all, for all, with all. Trust him with all your concerns, for soul and body, for this life and eternity, for yourselves and for posterity. Have confidence in him. You can have no fellowship or intimacy with one in whom you have not confidence. So far as you have fears, doubts, suspicions, jealousy, distrust of him, so far you will be estranged from him. These will keep you off from him, as