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MOURNING FOR THE PAST.

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But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.—EZRA iii., 12.

IT was a time of great rejoicing in Jerusalem, and of rejoicing well founded. After seventy years of captivity in Babylon, a large number of the Jews had been sent back to their own land by King Cyrus with most liberal gifts and promises. In some way, the great king had become fearful of Jehovah. He may have heard of the prophecies of punishment upon those who afflicted the chosen people, and of the assured return of Israel after seventy years. He may have seen signs and wonders wrought by the priests or prophets, of which we are not told. He may have had some terrible and irresistible vision telling him of God's will, according to which, he said, "He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah." He may, like his successor Artaxerxes, have feared the anger of the being whom he confessed to be "the God," and have thought, "why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?" Which ever means were used, in some way the Lord made him to act as He had prophesied through Isaiah when He said of Cyrus: "he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure," even saying to Jerusalem: "Thou shalt be built;" and to the temple: "Thy foun-

years ago. It was at this time that that famous circumstance took place of Saul consulting with the witch of Endor (xxviii., 5-25). (3) The battle was eventually fought between Israel and the Philistines on Mount Gilboa and here Saul and Jonathan and his other sons were slain. (4) It ought to be observed that King Saul did not have so honorable a death as that of being slain on the field of battle. He committed suicide (v. 5). A sad life was his, and a sad end did he come to. (5) The one thing that ruined Saul was his pride of heart. This stands out in his death. He was too proud to die by the hands of the uncircumcised, hence he used his own sword to end his ignoble career. Miserable man! (6) He led others

to death, even the young man, Jonathan, who is one of the finest characters of ancient history. If our evil were a single cord and not a drag-net, it would not be so bad. O how wicked men sweep others with them to ruin and death. Had it not been for this proud, self-willed father, the young man, Jonathan would have, no doubt, lived long, and been an ornament to Israel. How the saplings are crushed, broken and ruined by the falling of the old trees, that may have stood, rotten and useless, for many years. O that men would think of the consequences before they rebel against God, not only as to themselves, but to others mysteriously involved in their conduct.

❖➔ HELPS IN PASTORAL WORK ➔❖

How to Have a Working Church.

By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

Mr. Spurgeon is not only the most effective preacher of the simple gospel in modern times; he is also a most admirable administrator of church activities. He preaches to five or six thousand souls on the Sabbath, lectures to a crowd on Thursday evenings, edits his "Sword and Trowel," controls his Pastor's College, orphanage, etc., and keeps a sharp eye on all the interests of a church of over 4,000 communicants! Henry Ward Beecher, with all his electric eloquence, used to lament that he had no taste for pastoral duties and no executive ability for church management. Dr. Joseph Parker's eminence is in the pulpit. The Rev. Newman Hall's great skill in the driving of church machinery has been one secret of his success during the thirty years of his London ministry. A minister may be an eloquent pulpiteer, and yet have an inactive church. Of some very plain preachers it may be said, as Dr. James W. Alexander once said to me of Dr. S., "I envy Dr. S. more than any pastor in New York, for he has the art of keeping all his people at work." How is that to be acquired? A few hints may be of value to young beginners in the ministry.

1. Let me say to every such young brother—if you expect to have an active church, you must be a wide awake, industrious man yourself. An idle pastor makes an idle church. If you are caught smoking a cigar on your lounge and dawdling over magazines; if you are seen oftener out driving for pleasure, or loafing in book stores and picture galleries, than you are in visiting your flock, then your people will soon hold you cheap, and conclude they have a lazy minister. They will come to the same conclusion if you put into your pulpit every man who comes along in a black coat. Never cheapen your pulpit. Go to it as often as possible, even if by unavoidable circumstances you have been hindered from preparing a "finished discourse." An imperfect sermon, soaked with prayer and sent home with fervor, may do great execution. Rest and recreate with easy occupations on Monday, get at your sermon on Tuesday (the minister's best day), and never commit the idiotic crime of writing a sermon on Saturday evening. Make the most of your hours when your mind works like a trip-hammer, and put on paper your best thoughts—whether you ever take the paper into the pulpit or not. Use the forenoons for study and your afternoons for thorough pastoral visita-

tion, and your evenings for meetings and reading and social purpose. Sleep all night if you want to keep your people wide awake all Sabbath, and when you sleep, as Paddy said, "pay attention to it."

More ministers break down from want of sleep than from want of brains. Know the geography of your parish thoroughly, and, if possible, know every member of every family—especially the poorer and humbler families. Don't have any running places or favorite resorts, and don't let anybody in the congregation own you. Show an interest in whatever your people are doing. Discuss the affairs and activities of your church with all your families; commend those who are most prompt at prayer meeting and most alert in service for the Master, and kindly chide those who are delinquent. If you win your people's hearts they will bear any reproof kindly; scolding is as useless out of the pulpit as in it.

2. It is vitally important for you, in the next place, to develop the activity of your members and to direct them into fields of usefulness. There is a vast amount of latent power in most of our congregations; and in large churches there is a tendency to say, "Oh you have enough to do the work without me." As small farms are usually the best tilled, so small churches are often the best worked. There must be leaders in every church; but don't try to push into prominence conceited people who happen to have large purses, or social conspicuousness. The best workers are often those of humblest social rank; and no man or woman should be prominent unless they have earned their position by consecration to the Master's service. Try to discover what a man is best fitted for, and then set him at it. When a new member comes into your church—either by conversion or by transmission from another church—do not let him settle down into a mere "passenger." Endeavor to enlist him at once into some line of usefulness. There will be some conceited and presumptuous folk who thrust themselves into positions for which they have no capacity; but such very soon find their level. I have gener-

ally found the ardent, zealous christians' even when sometimes indiscreet, accomplish a great deal more than the over-prudent phlegmatic sort. Good Dr. Brainard used to say, "I whip up the fast horses, for there are plenty that don't pull a pound."

3. Keep your eye on all the operations of the church, not to do the trustee's work or the elder's work or the Sabbath-school superintendent's work, but to see that they do it. A meddling minister may be as mischievous as an idle one; yet oversight and wise counsel are your prerogative. Always attend your prayer-meetings, both for your own spiritual profit and also to put honor on the most vital service, next to the preaching of the Word. As long as you have elders or competent laymen who can lead the meeting, commit the leadership of the service to them; this will develop them, and relieve you of "overmuch speaking." Ministers may talk too often; and if a pastor is especially gifted, there is danger that the church may become a one-man power machine. Mr. Beecher used to complain that his people were too slow to take part in his prayer-meetings; and one cause of this was that he took so large a part in them himself. No church can ever be strong unless the strain is put on their own sinews; there is a place for the Aquilas and Priscillas, as for Paul. A timely word from the pastor may help a prayer-meeting, but it is the people's service not his.

4. Drive every wheel in your machinery to its utmost power, but don't have more wheels than power. Widen your activities as fast as you have men and money to propel them. Organize your young people into an association, with a weekly meeting for prayer and training in christian work. Organize your women into missionary societies and other benevolent labors. Have a total abstinence society, not as a political annex, but to fight the devil of strong drink with God's weapons. Do not overwork any one department to the sacrifice of them, or run your own hobbies to death. Feed your people with the solid meat of the Word if you want them to be strong for the work; and then

fire them by constantly pointing them to Jesus and praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Keep Christ in the foreground. Come to your flock every Sabbath with Jesus in your heart and Jesus on your tongue. The only permanent power that can propel any church is the power on high; and that church which is mighty in prayer is the one that is always mighty in work.—*The Interior.*

Ministerial Ability.

Ministers of the Gospel must have three kinds of ability—natural, acquired, and supernatural. Where either one of these is lacking, you have an imperfectly equipped man, who is to that extent bound to be a failure in the greatest and most delicate work ever committed to a mortal. And we have seen cases where actually all three kinds were more or less wanting. Such men have mistaken their calling, and are unfit for anything but manual labor or secular employment, and are not likely to turn the world upside down in any capacity.

Natural endowments are the substratum of a minister's equipment, without which little can be accomplished. There must be some respectable degree of intellectual capacity and balance. There must be common sense. There must be mental vigor. In short, a minister must have natural talent. Where this is lacking the case is hopeless. Nothing can take its place. Education will be a failure. There must be something to educate. As for acquisition, there must be power to acquire. A weak intellect, is weak chiefly in lack of capacity to acquire knowledge and profit by its efforts at self-cultivation. Nor can even supernatural endowment accomplish its best results unless the subjective mind be a capable one. We insist upon it that we need talented men for the ministry. Only the best are good enough. Men who would declare the mysteries of grace in such a way that souls will be won from sin to holiness, must possess mental power to grasp great thoughts and move the minds and hearts of other men.

Further, we must have acquired abilities. An uncultivated intellect is like an

untrained horse upon the plain. A great mind without culture is a useless, if not a dangerous force. Intellectual culture is becoming more and more necessary, as the culture of the masses advances. A public teacher of a cultured audience must, in the nature of the case, be in advance of those whom he presumes to instruct and edify. An educated ministry will be still more necessary in the near future than at present even, in all but the most primitive localities. And even the prairies and hamlets of the distant West are being peopled with the graduates of high schools, seminaries and colleges, so that even there men of education become a necessity. By proper education the natural ability is vastly increased. Memory, judgment, perception, the powers of induction, and all other intellectual faculties are vastly increased. Let it be remembered that by an educated mind, we do not mean a mind merely crammed with objective information on various subjects, but a mind whose faculties have been developed, and whose powers have been trained by independent, but well-directed study, so that the power to study and to learn and the power to use what has been learned, has been acquired.

But all this will not make a preacher according to the Gospel standard. A man may be very able by nature, and have acquired the highest degree of mental cultivation, and yet his preaching may be but a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. *He must have the supernatural element, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the Pentecostal endowment of power.* This completes his equipment. Indeed, even with ordinary talent and incomplete acquirements, a man full of the Holy Ghost may become effective. But the greatest talent and the finest acquirements are useless without supernatural endowment. A man may be able to reason logically and speak learnedly and eloquently, but he cannot have accompanying his preaching, the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, unless the Holy Ghost be upon *him*. *He must have the "power, from on high."* And a man of talent and culture, filled with the Holy Ghost, can do more than