



MEMORIAL VOLUME

OF THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA.

COLUMBIA, S. C.

PRINTED AT THE PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1884.

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“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”—ACTS xx. 20, 21.

ALTHOUGH Paul, as an apostle, extended his labors to many churches and wide missionary fields, yet, in some instances, he remained a long time in one place. On the occasion of the text, he had just concluded a three years' residence at Ephesus, and from the summary he gave of his labors there, it appears that he acted as a pastor of that flock. This summary gives a very clear and comprehensive view of the functions of this important office, and was evidently intended to furnish a model to all succeeding pastors.

From this it appears—

First. That Paul's chief employment consisted in the instruction of the people. He describes this under two forms: “publicly and from house to house.” “Publicly,” in public places and to promiscuous congregations, whether large or small, teaching and exhorting all his hearers in the aggregate. “From house to house,” *privately*, not excluding the idea of small gatherings, often made necessary by the circumstances of the times, but clearly implying family visitation for the purpose of conveying instruction to separate households, and also of personal contact with individual cases, so as to bring the truth, as far as possible, home to each heart.

Second. That these pastoral services were all designed and suited to be profitable to the people. Edification, not mere gratification, was the rule. Whatever, in the whole compass of divine truth, was adapted to build them up in faith and holiness unto salvation, he was faithful to teach. He kept back none of it. This embraced the entire word of God; for, as he said to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profit-*

able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Third. That his labors embraced all the methods by which the truth could be impressed upon their minds. He describes his ministrations by three different expressions: "I have shewed you," literally, "conveyed as a message," giving them to understand that it came from God, was not his own invention nor the product of even his own best thoughts, but "the preaching that God bade him preach." "And have taught you." He instructed them as to the contents, meaning, and application of God's message; making it plain, and trying to rivet it on their minds. Again, "testifying." He was a witness of God's truth, not only as revealed to him in an extraordinary way as an apostle, but as learned by him from the Scriptures, as demonstrated to his view by its operation upon others, and as experienced by him in his own soul.

Fourth. That the substance of this instruction was "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" the grand essentials of the gospel system, both as to doctrine and practice. In Paul's view, *Christ* was the centre and the foundation of all saving and sanctifying truth. Faith in Christ, therefore, involves, at least implicitly, every doctrine of a saving Christianity. And since the practical requirements of the gospel are addressed to a sinful race, all obedience and all spiritual attainments must be begun and carried forward in the spirit of a genuine repentance, having constant reference to the character and claims of God. No preaching, therefore, is legitimate which is not virtually embraced in this terse but most complete compendium.

The context and the corresponding history and Epistles of Paul show plainly enough that all these pastoral labors were conducted by him with all prayerfulness, tender sympathy, fidelity, watchfulness, and the exercise of a true ministerial authority which is "not for destruction but for edification."

We may regard the words of the text, therefore, as presenting something like an exhaustive view of the whole office and func-

tions of the New Testament pastor; as these are also summed up in the theme which we are called upon to discuss, viz., "The Pulpit and the Pastorate." This brings before us the practical side of the ministerial office, for which this Seminary was founded to train the sons of the prophets in our branch of the Church.

In looking especially at this, we by no means disparage the other features of this training; which are all valuable and can no more safely be dispensed with than the building can dispense with its deep and broad foundations. For they all have reference to this as their practical outcome. Hence a clear and full conception of "the pulpit and the pastorate" must lead to the highest appreciation of the entire course of ministerial education, as well as show what it must embrace.

I remark, then, first and generally, in regard to this work, *that its chief function is to minister the word of God to the people.* The pulpit is not an altar for the offering of sacrifice; nor is the pastor a priest to mediate with God, to dispense sacramental grace, nor to preside at an imposing ceremonial. He, indeed, conducts the worship of the sanctuary, leads the prayers and regulates the praises of the congregation, and administers the simple sacraments of the gospel; but his grand function is to *speak in God's name*, teaching, expounding, and enforcing his truth. He is not a mere orator or lecturer, and has no commission to utter from the sacred desk even the grandest, the most beautiful, or the most touching of mere human thoughts. He is simply God's messenger. His teachings have no authority except as they come from God, and no real worth except as they repeat and expound the divine oracles. Hence he receives all the truth he teaches through the channel of the inspired Scriptures. The Bible is the pastor's text-book, from which he obtains all the true learning of his profession, the cyclopædia of his religious knowledge, the standard of his belief and teachings, the treasury from which he brings forth all the new as well as the old things which he distributes to his household, the armory where he finds all the weapons of his holy warfare.

Hence, the importance which we attach to a most scholarly and thorough acquaintance with this Book; not only in its Eng-

lish form, though this is by no means to be slighted or undervalued, but especially in its original languages, as indited by the Holy Spirit. The pastor must know his Bible thus *thoroughly* that he may expound it with certainty and confidence; thus *accurately*, that he may avoid even minor mistakes; and thus *fully*, that he may bring out the otherwise hidden treasures of this word. And hence, too, he must be acquainted with the principles of a sound Biblical Criticism, as well as the formal rules of interpretation, so that he may be able to detect and expose learned error under the specious guise of advanced scholarship; and also, without at all exhibiting the tools and technicalities of his art, give to his people the rich fruits of his faithful investigations.

But most especially should the pastor so learn his Bible as to be able to follow its wonderfully wise and skilful methods of instruction, of introducing and unfolding doctrine, inculcating precepts, applying tests of character, and ministering warning, rebuke, and consolation. The Bible is God, through his servants, dealing with the hearts and consciences of living men and women, and applying his truth to all their actual wants, characters, and circumstances, and not merely discussing topics in didactic essays. It is, therefore, the pastor's hand-book, in the pulpit, in the household, and in the treatment of individual cases.

I proceed now to consider, in the second place, what the *pastor has to do with Theology as a science*. With the Bible in his hand, has he any need for it, and does it not lead away from the Bible and really supplant it? I am only repeating a wide-spread popular notion. I have nothing to say of false systems; but what is a *true theology* but *formulated Scripture*? It is a science, but not a mere science. As to its *substance*, it is God's own truth, revealed by him alone, originating in his mind, shaped by his wisdom, and based on his authority. As to its *form*, it is that same divine truth, methodised, classified, and expressed in propositions conveying its true meaning, clearly distinguishing it from error, and unfolding its manifold and harmonious relations and its logical applications. It is just as legitimate as preaching or expounding the Scriptures. It is *one mode* of preaching, and it is

an all-important aid to the preacher. The pastor must be a theologian, and *is* one inevitably; the question is, whether he be a mere superficial tyro in theology, or be thoroughly grounded in the true principles of this grandest of all the sciences.

But let me not be understood as meaning that the pastor is to preach scientific theology; but I do mean that he cannot be thoroughly furnished for his great work without a clear and familiar acquaintance with it. He must know the Scriptures; but in order to expound them clearly, truly, and in an edifying manner, their contents must assume, in his mind, the shape of a well defined, connected, and harmonious *system*. He learns that system in the Seminary and in his study; but when he goes before his people, he puts the various truths of that system in forms which are adapted to popular edification. He simplifies them by explanation, amplification, and illustration, bringing them down to the comprehension of all classes. He teaches them in their application to the experience of men, their trials, wants, duties, interests, and sins. He uses them to show the way of salvation, to guide and stimulate to holy action, to promote spiritual growth, and to comfort troubled hearts. This is what we understand by *Pastoral Theology*. It is theology in all its depth and grandeur, but in the hands of the loving, sympathising, considerate pastor laboring for the spiritual good of all classes of his flock. The doctrines are the very same which it required intense wrestlings of thought as well as prayer and faith to learn; and yet he now breaks these loaves into fragments and distributes them to his hungry hearers. This is what Jesus, the great Teacher, did, and what Paul and John and James and Peter did.

It is a false and mischievous idea that Christian theology belongs to the cloister or study alone; that it is a lifeless skeleton of dry bones, having no connexion and no sympathy with living men and throbbing hearts; and is of no value to the actual experiences, especially of the masses; and hence that men ignorant of it may be competent spiritual guides. The prevalence and workings of this error account for not a little of the flabby piety of the day. It lacks the strength which strong truth alone can give.

The fact is, all the great doctrines of our faith are proper and

needful material for true pastoral work. Does the pastor need to explain to the inquiring sinner the way of salvation? His true answer must embody the most profound doctrines of Christianity—the nature of sin, its guilt, man's full accountability for it, and its fearful desert; God's character, his sovereignty, power, wisdom, justice, holiness, and grace, and the harmony of all these in the plan of salvation; the trinity of the Godhead; the deity of Christ, his incarnation, his whole character as the God-man Saviour; the covenant of redemption; the nature of the atonement, its efficacy, its adaptation to all cases, and the freeness of its offer of eternal life; the principles involved in justification; the nature of faith as the instrument of justification, and its relation to repentance and good works; the doctrine of regeneration, including the agency of the Spirit, the entire dependence of the sinner, and yet his full responsibility while dead in sin.

It is common with some to speak of the simple and elementary truths of the gospel, as capable of being handled by untrained spiritual guides. They *are* simple, as they come to the knowledge and experience of the converted soul; and yet they certainly rank with the profoundest of all truths; and when they have to be ministered to the dark and perplexed minds of inquiring sinners, each one peculiar in its cast of thought and subject to the innumerable perversions of human error and satanic delusion, what but the most thorough and extensive knowledge of these great doctrines can qualify the pastor to meet these various and often difficult cases, and lead them out safely into the light?

Nor is this knowledge of theology any the less important to the pastor in the work of *training the adopted sons and daughters* of the Lord Almighty, for duty, for trial, and for glory. He must understand well the great and by no means simple doctrine of sanctification; the sources, methods, capabilities, means, and hindrances of Christian growth. There is no doctrine which is more grossly perverted, in our day, even to the extent of fanaticism and licentiousness; beguiling not only unstable, but earnest, souls; and hence none which needs to be more thoroughly understood by the shepherds of Christ's flock.

So, likewise, in ministering comfort to the afflicted, so impor-

tant a part of pastoral labor, so often called for, and so valued by the people; how inadequate is the fitness of the untrained, superficial minister! The sources and grounds of true Christian consolation are not found near the surface, but deep down in the most fundamental and grandest truths of religion, viz., in the divine character and in the terms and securities of the everlasting covenant; those pertaining to God's sovereign, wise, holy, and gracious purposes, where ignorance is lost and confounded, but on which an intelligent faith reposes with confidence and peace, converting darkness into light, grief into submission and even joy, and gloomy despair into cheerful and at times rapturous hope.

But a necessary part of pastoral work is *instruction, incitement, and training in the duties of religion*. Mere *knowledge*, however thorough and accurate, will not suffice. The people must be trained to the practice of good *works*. This is necessary to their salvation and their highest development, as well as to the honor of God. But how vain is the attempt to detach practical from doctrinal preaching, and how unreasonable to contrast it, as more important! Practical preaching has no true meaning and no real force and efficacy except as it is based on doctrine. Christian ethics is not a mere code. It is founded on truth, on the principles which are laid down in God's word, and forms part of the Christian's creed. That pastor, then, guides his flock most truly who traces back all duties to these principles, teaching all obligations in the light of sound doctrine, and teaching all doctrine with a practical end in view, especially as supplying the only adequate motives and encouragements.

Again, *the true Christian pastor is an experimental preacher of the gospel*. He is not a mere theologian nor a mere lecturer. As all his instructions are intended to reach the hearts of his people, they must come living and warm from his own heart. This can be the case only when he has had a genuine experience of those truths. He cannot learn the real nature, power, and excellency of the gospel in any other way. He may have explored all the fields of philosophic and speculative theology, and understand the history, principles, and rules of biblical criticism in their application to both the original and cognate languages of

the Bible, and yet remain a mere sciolist in genuine religious knowledge, because of his lack of that spiritual experience which is an essential commentary on both the Scriptures and systematic divinity. He is still out in the court of the Gentiles and has never entered the holy place, much less the holy of holies—has had no real intercourse with God, cannot lead his people near, and has no authentic message to them.

How can he warn, exhort, and invite sinners to Christ unless he has felt the plague of his own sins, the sorrows of a personal repentance, the desolation of a conscious helplessness, the fitness, power, and preciousness of Christ as his own Saviour, and the peace of God shed abroad in his own soul?

So must he have experienced the elements of a spiritual warfare in his own renewed but partially sanctified heart, the burden and grief of indwelling sin, the deceitfulness of sin in that heart, and the wiles and depths of Satan; and on the other hand the presence and workings of grace ever flowing from Christ his Head, ere he can teach others how to grapple with the arch-tempter, and to mortify and crucify their own lusts. He must himself have enjoyed the consolations of God's presence, the efficacy of prayer, the preciousness of the promises and all the various sources and means of spiritual support, in order that he may know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, to uphold the weak, and to console the tried and afflicted.

This characteristic of the public ministrations of the pastor naturally leads us to consider those which are more private, but scarcely less important. He preaches not only publicly, but "*from house to house.*" This part of his work brings him and his message into the closest contact with his people; face to face, heart to heart. It is a most valuable and even necessary supplement to the pulpit. In the privacy of their homes he can introduce many instructions that are more or less impracticable in general discourse, and bring home his public teachings with more of explanation and more direct application than is possible in the pulpit. Here he treats really concrete cases, meets individual difficulties, and applies the truth in methods adapted to each particular state of mind. Here he reminds his people that he preaches

in the pulpit *to them*, and does not merely deliver a thesis or discuss a general abstract topic. In family visitation and personal conversation he follows up his pulpit exercises, learns their practical effect on his hearers, ascertains their spiritual condition severally, and secures an opportunity to give to each one his due portion, whether of instruction, warning, encouragement, or appeal. Happy is that pastor whose preaching awakens in his people a spirit of investigation and inquiry, even though it be attended with some questionings and perplexing difficulties. Nothing is more encouraging than to teach earnest minds, meet honest difficulties, and guide sincere seekers after truth.

The pastoral office is one side of a *relationship*. He has a flock and he is their shepherd. Mutual knowledge, confidence, sympathy, and love, are all implied. It is a close and endearing relationship. Hence, permanency is always contemplated, so as to give full opportunity for this relation to become what it was intended to be. A covenant is entered into between the parties and before God. They are made one by a tie even more sacred than the nuptial bond, though not for life as that is. It is a confidential relationship, warranting the utmost freedom of communication in all the affairs of the soul, and yet at the farthest remove from the espionage, impertinence, and tyranny of the confessional. It is a tender relationship, in which a loving devotion to the entire flock is the animating and guiding impulse, and the affection of that flock is a powerful encouragement and an ample reward. And it is a most responsible relationship; for he labors, watches, and prays for his people as one that must give account, and they on their part must also do the same, as to the fulfilment of their obligations.

The faithful pastor knows his flock, just as the Oriental shepherd knows his sheep, each and every one, calling them by their true names, understanding the religious history, the peculiarities, the trials, the frailties, and the excellences of them all. He maintains a strict watch over them; not the strictness of a spy or of a tyrannous lord over God's heritage, but of a loving, careful father over his children, following them with his eye, warning them against danger, and ever ready to defend, assist, guide,

restrain, comfort, and encourage them in the way of the Lord; and especially caring for the *lambs*, whether the children of the Church or “the little ones” of Jesus. Like Paul, he is “gentle among them as a nurse cherisheth her children.” Yea, he shows

“A father’s tenderness, a shepherd’s care,
 A leader’s courage which the cross can bear,
 A ruler’s awe, a watchman’s wakeful eye,
 A pilot’s skill the helm in storms to ply,
 A fisher’s patience and a laborer’s toil,
 A guide’s dexterity to disembroil,
 A prophet’s inspiration from above,
 A teacher’s knowledge and a Saviour’s love.”

What a blessed ministry is this! How grateful to every thoughtful and appreciative mind! How does it exhibit the wisdom of Jesus and his great love to his Church—“He gave them pastors.” How does it embody the loving care of the Great Shepherd of the sheep! How admirably suited to the actual circumstances of his people in this world! And then how does it react upon the pastor himself, in rich benefits to his own soul and helps to his ministry!

His intercourse with his people in their varied and often striking experiences develops to his view innumerable applications of divine truth, which are often new and surprising, showing the many-sidedness of that truth and its marvellous fitness to meet the actual wants of men. It reveals the work of the Holy Spirit as *he* takes the things of Christ and shows them to the soul. Thus he *learns* from those whom he *teaches*; not only the intelligent, but the unlettered. He often finds his best human teachers in the homes of Christian poverty, at the bedside of sickness, in the dying chamber, and in the house of bereavement. He learns from the growing Christian, flourishing in the courts of the Lord; from the aged soldier of the cross, who has struggled long with sin, Satan, and the world; from the young convert in the glow of his first love; from the tempted, tried, and wounded believer—yea, even from the backslider. Religious experience is a large volume; it has many chapters and numerous graphic illustrations; and it is the diligent and faithful pastor who sees most of it, and learns its lessons most fully.

All this experimental knowledge thus acquired he carries back with him to his study and his closet, subjecting it to the crucible of his own thoughts. With God's word in his hands and with these various cases borne on his heart to the throne, he seems to get a new message from on high, and then carries that message into the pulpit, prepared to preach with unwonted appropriateness to their real necessities. He is no longer a mere sign-board. He is a guide, who goes along with them, and shows them the very way they must travel.

Thus do the several aspects of the pastorate, doctrinal, experimental, and practical preaching, in the pulpit, in the family, and to the individual; its oversight and care; its tender and consoling ministrations; its confidential relationships, and its parental discipline, all combine to make one whole, complete, harmonious, beneficent, and strong; worthy, indeed, to be one of the ascension gifts of our triumphant Redeemer, and worthy to be cherished and maintained in all his churches by all his people. It was chiefly designed for them, and they realise its highest value. Hence it is we have dwelt mainly upon pastoral work, even in the pulpit. The pulpit has, indeed, a much wider sphere and a more general value; *e. g.* as the strong bulwark of a pure Christianity against the assaults of infidelity and superstition, as the great educator of the people, as the true palladium of social order and political liberty, of human life, property, and happiness, and as "the most important and effectual guard, support, and ornament of virtue's cause." But its highest glory is that it is God's instrument in the deliverance of men from sin and eternal death, and that though the visible, audible agent is a mere man, his simple words are made the power of God unto salvation.

"For letting down the golden chain from high,
He draws his audience upward to the sky."

In conclusion, then, it is a matter for profound thankfulness that this beloved Seminary, in the fifty years of its noble history, has never been conducted as a mere school of learning, rhetoric, or philosophy, or even as a mere theological institute, but has ever given the conspicuous place to the spiritual and practical aspects of the ministerial work; and it is our devout prayer that

it may, in the long years of the future, be preëminently God's chosen instrument for giving to his Church many "pastors according to his own heart, who shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding." To this end let us give our labors and our influence in the effort to rebuild this institution on deep and broad foundations, and in proportions exceeding even all its former glory. We aim at no *progress* in its standards of doctrine, either as to the faith, the order, or the worship of the Church; for these we regard as based upon the complete and unchangeable teachings of God's inspired word. What we long to see is, that the most ample means shall be provided for the inculcation of these great principles upon the largest number of students consecrated to the ministry of truth—men who will hold up these standards with unswerving fidelity amidst prevailing defections; who will combine the most thorough scholarship with humble and ardent piety, and who will labor to spread these sacred principles with evangelic zeal in our own broad land and amongst the nations of the earth. It is not merely to an institution of learning that we renewedly dedicate our efforts on this occasion. but to the cause of divine truth, to the salvation of souls, the interests of holiness, the upbuilding and comfort of the Church, and above and through all these, to the glory of Christ.