

# THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

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TO THE  
82 STUDENTS  
OF WYCLIFFE HALL, OXFORD,  
WITH WHOM IT WAS MY  
PRIVILEGE AND JOY TO BE ASSOCIATED,  
OCTOBER, 1905, TO AUGUST, 1910.





## PREFACE

**D**URING my five years at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, it fell to my lot to deal with the various aspects of ministerial life and service which are usually included in the term *Pastoralia*. This involved weekly addresses in Chapel on Saturday evenings, weekly lectures on Pastoral work, addresses at the openings of Terms, and occasional informal 'Conferences' on some of the more outstanding ministerial and pastoral problems.

This book embodies the substance of what was then given, and it is reproduced in the hope that those to whom it was originally delivered may like to have a record of what I have reason to know were occasions not without interest; and also that younger brethren in the ministry may find it of some service to compare their own experiences with what they see here as the result of a ministerial life extending (alas! now) over twenty-five years.

If some readers should feel surprise at observing that several aspects of ministerial life are not dealt with in these pages, they may perhaps be reminded that my opportunity for treating Pastoral life and work extended at most to only thirty weeks each year, and that therefore

with (as a rule) but one address and one lecture a week, it was impossible to cover more of the ground.

If, too, any brother in the ministry should be surprised at the comparative absence of reference to problems of Biblical Criticism and of scepticism, and to ways of meeting them, it ought to be said that these were dealt with in the Wycliffe Hall work by means of other courses of lectures.

Occasional repetitions may also provoke comment. The explanation is that the entire substance of the book was not given every year and, so, certain subjects were discussed under two or three different headings. But it is hoped that the prime importance of such topics as Prayer and the Bible will be a sufficient justification of any such repeated treatment.

One more word of personal explanation seems necessary. Some may think the various sections are unduly brief, but they have been kept so of set purpose. It was thought best to make the book as inclusive as possible, and considerations of space alone necessitated brevity. But far more than this: the book is intended primarily for clergy, and brevity with a view to the reader's own meditation, study, and elaboration appeared in every way best fitted to further the work of the ministry.

Ever since my thoughts were first turned in the direction of the ministry, now well over thirty years ago, I have felt a great attraction for all questions dealing with preaching, methods of ministerial work, and problems of teaching and service; and I have read as widely as

opportunity has permitted various volumes of Lectures on Preaching and Pastoral work. These chapters are therefore indebted directly and indirectly to very many writers whom it is now impossible to recall and name. But the Bibliography found at the end of this work and the references in certain chapters will serve to show something of the sources and extent of my indebtedness, and also to indicate what may be commended for consideration by brethren in the ministry.

The book is divided into three general sections. Part I. deals with the Man himself ; Part II. discusses his Work ; then in Part III. an endeavour is made, by way of personal application, to consider the Man in relation to his Work. It has been impossible to keep these sections rigidly separate, since the Bible and Prayer Book teaching about the Minister necessarily touches on his Ministry as well. But, speaking generally, Part I. is intended to represent the ideal ; Part II. is concerned with actual methods of work ; and Part III. with the bearing of the man on the work and of the work on the man.

It only remains for me to say with what joy (and I hope profit to myself) I have recalled in writing these pages the happy occasions on which I met the Students in the delivery of the addresses and lectures here recorded. The earnest attention of those Saturday evenings in Chapel, and the keen interest and animated discussions of the Friday evenings in the Library will never be forgotten by me, and will be cherished among the happiest times of my life at Wycliffe Hall. As I write

these words I realize that we are now scattered far and wide, over England, the Colonies, and the Mission Field ; and I hope if any of my former students should see these lines, they may be reminded of old days and be led to pray that both writer and readers may make ‘ full proof of their ministry.’

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*PART I*

THE MAN

(A) THE MINISTER IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

## THE MINISTER IN HOLY SCRIPTURE

St. Paul points out in one single chapter (Col. 1) that the ministry is related at once to Christ (*v.* 7) ; to the Gospel (*v.* 23) ; and to the Church (*v.* 25). To Christ as the Source, to the Gospel as the Message, and to the Church as the Sphere. All considerations of the Christian ministry must take account of these three aspects, and in the various parts of Holy Scripture where the ministry is dealt with, it will be seen that this threefold relationship in one or other of its phases is kept in view. For our present immediate purpose, the study of the Ministry in Scripture, it will be convenient to dwell mainly on the first and second of these aspects, leaving the third, the relationship to the Church, to be considered in connexion with the Prayer Book, the particular ministry associated with the Church of England. This method of treatment will have the advantage of enabling us to concentrate on the more definitely spiritual and personal aspects of ministry first of all, before taking the ecclesiastical and necessarily more controversial aspects.

The Biblical idea of the ministry may be considered in a number of ways. We will now look at it as suggested for us by the Old Testament Prophet, by the New Testament Apostle, by the personal experiences of St. Paul, and by the counsels he gave to one of his younger ministerial brethren.

## CHAPTER I

### THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET <sup>1</sup>

THERE is a close analogy between the Old Testament and the New Testament prophet. The Greek word *προφήτης* gives a very fair idea of the meaning of the Hebrew word *Nabi*.<sup>2</sup> The prophet is a 'spokesman,' one who represents another, and Exodus. vii. 1 is the best definition or description of what a prophet is, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament.

Modern scholarship has rendered great service to the cause of Biblical truth by making these prophets much more definite, clear, and intelligible to us. We can now see pretty clearly what they were and did.

#### SECTION 1. THE PROPHET'S CALL (*Isa.* vi).

The first thing that strikes us is that each had a call to the work. This came in different ways and was associated with a variety of circumstances, but the fact was the same in every case, and was essential and fundamental. Prophets and prophetic men like Abraham, Moses, Gideon, and many others were all 'called of God.' No man took this honour to himself. What this call meant may perhaps be best understood by giving attention to one of whom we know most and whom we may

<sup>1</sup> This section was suggested by, and is deeply indebted to, that valuable and suggestive book, *The Preacher and His Models*, by Dr. Stalker, one of the best of its kind for guidance in preaching and teaching.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*,

regard as essentially typical of all ; the prophet Isaiah (Ch. vi). Taking the story as it stands, we observe the four stages of his call, and in it the analogous experiences which should be true of every minister of the Gospel who is really called of God.

I. *A Consciousness of God followed by a Conviction of Sin (vv. 1-5).*

Isaiah had a vision of God in His Sovereignty, His Majesty, and His Holiness (vv. 1-4). This sight of God was at the foundation of all that he became. God as 'infinitely great,' 'infinitely high,' and 'infinitely holy' possessed and dominated the soul of the young Isaiah, and it is only by such a sight of God that any man can become a prophet.

This vision, this consciousness of God, at once led to the result intended by God in giving it ; conviction of sin. 'Then said I, Woe is me !' In God's light Isaiah saw light on himself, his life, his ways in the sight of the high and holy God. Conviction of sin based on a consciousness of God is fundamental to the life and work of a prophet of God, a minister of Christ.

II. *Confession of Sin followed by Cleansing from Sin (vv. 5-7).*

To be conscious was to confess, and Isaiah at once ('Then said I') poured out his soul in confession. He confessed his own and his people's sins. Uncleaness pressed on him, and especially uncleaness of lips. He was conscious of failure in himself and in his nation in regard to uncleaness of utterance, and the vision of God as 'the King, the Lord of Hosts' had brought this out as never before.

But to confess was to be cleansed ('Then flew'). Cleansing immediate, perfect, assured, was his experience. The Divine fire did its work at once and thoroughly, and with the Divine assurance of absolute cleansing the prophet entered into the second, and was ready for the third stage of his experience.

III. *The Call of God followed by Consecration to God (v. 8).*

The prophet thus convicted and cleansed was now spiritually fit for further revelations from God, and it was not long before the Divine voice inquired, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' There was work to be done. The national life was at a crisis (v. 1), and the sin of the people called for Divine action (v. 5). To the man conscious of God, cleansed from sin, and assured of blessing, comes, as it always does, this call to service. This, and this alone, is the type of man God can use. Only as we see God, see our sin, receive God's forgiveness and know it, can we realize and answer the call, and so with whole-hearted consecration came the response; 'Here am I; send me.' To the man for whom God had done so much, consecration was the necessary, prompt and thorough rejoinder, and the man whom God had so prepared was ready for service ('Then said I'). Before, it was, 'Then said I, Woe is me!' Now, it is, 'Then said I; Here am I.'

IV. *The Commission of God followed by Communion with God (vv. 9-11).*

The human readiness to be sent is quickly followed by the Divine authorization. 'Go, and tell.' The work to be done would mean plain speaking, and would need courage, persistence, and even severity of dealing. The ills of the people were not superficial and would not be met without drastic remedies. But when a man is conscious of a definite Divine commission: 'Go, and tell,' he can go because he knows that 'God's biddings are enablings.'

Not only so, but the prophet is now able to enter into fellowship with God, to seek to know more of His will, and to endeavour to understand His purposes. Faced with a difficult task, Isaiah approached God; 'Then said I, Lord, how long?' This is the privilege of the man who has seen God and received God's cleansing and commission. The Lord does not hide from such a man that which He will do. 'The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth



His secret unto His servants the prophets' (Amos iii. 7). And thus the prophet, called, cleansed, and commissioned, is enabled to enter into the secret of his Divine Lord's will. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will show them His covenant' (Psa. xxv. 14).

This call and consciousness of God is essential to a man at the outset of his ministry. Unless he has it, he had better not start out. The ministry is a vocation, not a profession. 'How wilt thou run, seeing thou hast no tidings ready?

But it is also essential when the man is actually at his work. The Church can only echo and authenticate the call, and unless the minister is ever conscious that he is where and what he is, because God has called, placed, and equipped him, his ministry must necessarily suffer in power and blessing.

And, not least of all, this consciousness of a Divine vocation is essential all through a minister's life. We must keep in touch with God. Only thus shall we preserve our freshness and not grow stale. Only thus shall we keep our glow and never become dull. Only thus shall we walk and not faint. People are quick to see both the presence and the absence of this Divine consciousness in their clergyman's life.

Some two years ago a well-known poet suddenly disappeared, and there seems no doubt that he committed suicide. He was the son of a minister, and he not only threw over his father's faith, but set himself with intense violence and virulence to overthrow Christianity. This is how *The Times* closed its review of his last work:—

'He had well nigh all that goes to make a great poet, except the upward-seeing vision that is fixed on the Eternal.'

'Except the upward-seeing vision that is fixed on the Eternal.' How true, how searching are these words when applied to the minister. We may have all else, education, capacity, opportunity, but the one thing needful is the 'upward-seeing vision.' As Dr. A. J. Gordon of Boston once said: 'It is the look that saves, but



it is the gaze that sanctifies.' It is only as we see God, keep our gaze fixed on the Eternal, that our life and service will bring glory to God, blessing to others, and restful satisfaction to our own souls.

## SECTION 2. THE PROPHET'S WORK (*Isa.* lxi. 1-3).

It has often been pointed out that there is a great and fundamental difference between the Old Testament prophet and the New Testament minister: the former addressed the community; the latter the individual. Dr. G. A. Smith argues with his own characteristic force that Isaiah had a message for the individual, based on his own individual experience and inspired by his personal ideal for Israel.<sup>1</sup> But probably most students of Old Testament prophecy will be inclined to agree with Dr. Stalker in making individuality and preaching to individuals essentially Christian ideas.<sup>2</sup> Yet this difference of opinion need not prevent us from endeavouring to discover what was the prophet's work, and to apply the truths to our own day and needs. We shall find that whenever we address individuals or communities the work of the prophet of the Old Testament has much to teach us.

### I. *The Prophet was a Messenger.*

He was sent from God, he declared the message of God, and he spoke for God. He has been well described as 'a citizen with a message.' This message was directed primarily against the evils of his own day, but it also included the announcement of that great Day to which the Jews and the Old Testament ever looked forward. To-day the minister is pre-eminently a Messenger of Redemption, and undoubtedly his primary message is and must be individual and personal. Whatever results may accrue to the community through the preaching of the Gospel, the needs of the soul in relation to God must come first. 'The soul of all improvement is the improvement

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, vol. i., p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Stalker, *The Preacher and His Models*, p. 62 f.

of the soul.' But this is no reason why we should not rigidly and fearlessly apply the principles of Redemption to the facts of our social life and endeavour to let people see that all such questions as Drink, Housing, Land, Unemployment, Gambling, have their moral aspects which can only be dealt with by the truths and grace of Christianity.

## II. *The Prophet was a Witness.*

He was a 'Truth-Teller.' 'Cry aloud, and spare not,' was his Divinely-given motto. In ordinary appearance he differed nothing from other citizens, but in attitude, bearing, conviction, he had the accent of one who had seen and therefore could speak. Coming from the presence of God, and judging all things in the light of Eternity, he could deal with such sins as idolatry, hypocrisy, selfishness, and oppression fearlessly and fully. For was he not the Divine witness against unrighteousness, and in favour of truth, equity, and purity? Even if the message is not heeded, the very presence in our parishes of a witness for God must and will tell.

## III. *The Prophet was a Pleader.*

We greatly err if we think of the Old Testament prophet simply as one who warned, denounced, and threatened. There was another side to his message. He also appealed, there was the 'wooing note' in his tone, and no one can read a passage like Isaiah lxi. 1-3, or study the life of Jeremiah without seeing how strong and constant was this note of pleading. This is one of the chief characteristics of a New Testament minister. He must plead, he must appeal, he must 'woo,' he must deal tenderly, and must never forget the apostolic tone which said 'We *pray* you in Christ's stead.'

## IV. *The Prophet was a Comforter.*

Not only a pleader; a comforter. There was constant need of comfort. The Jewish remnant, that faithful few among the faithless, needed all the cheer they could

obtain as they endeavoured to live for God amid the idolatry and iniquity of the nation. 'To comfort them that mourn' was therefore a prominent feature of the prophet's work, and the key-note of the entire section of Isaiah xl-lxvi. seems to be found in 'Comfort ye my people, saith your God,' addressed not to the people but to the prophets, as they set about their work for God.

To-day the need for comfort is equally great. There are few congregations and few lives which are not burdened with some sorrow or discouragement. If the preacher omits this 'note' from his preaching he will fail at a vital point, but if he takes care to 'comfort' in the old sense of encourage, strengthen, hearten, cheer, he will find his ministry blessed to many needy, burdened, thirsty souls.

#### V. *The Prophet was a Herald.*

This note was never long absent from the prophetic message. It was a message of Good News. A good time was coming, a great Day, and a glorious King, and these constituted the heart of the prophet's word. On the strength of this he bade them lift up their hearts and find cheer, strength, inspiration in the promise and hope of redemption. To-day the dominant note of all preaching must be the evangelical note. The Gospel is *Good News*, and this in no narrow sense, but in the fullest, widest acceptance of the term. Above all applications to social problems, and beyond all intellectual questions, the substance of the Gospel, the Good News must be proclaimed. 'I delivered unto you *first of all* that which I also received, how that Christ *died for our sins*.' 'What must I do to be saved?' is still the primary question, and the Good News of Redemption is still the primary answer.

Messenger, Witness, Pleader, Comforter, Herald. Such was the prophet; such, still more, is the Minister. 'Difficult,' do we say? Yes, of course it is, it has never been anything else and never will be. How can a man be all this to his fellows without realizing the difficulty? Everything of value in life is difficult. To be a painter is difficult, to be a musician is difficult, to be a scientist is

difficult. And to depict Christ, to bring out the music of the Gospel, to reveal truth for life must also be difficult. We need and must have the fulness of life both as to intellect and to experience. The fuller our experience of life and manhood the richer our life will ever be. 'As a preacher grows up intellectually he should grow down in simplicity and sympathy, like the weeping trees that rise with their stem but touch the ground with their branches, the strength never lessening the softness.' But though difficult it is *possible*. We have the same source of power as the prophet. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; He hath anointed me.' The Spirit is still ready, still available, still powerful, and in the presence of Christ, in fellowship with Him, we shall receive the anointing which teaches, which equips, which upholds, which uses, which blesses. Like Moses in the Mount, we shall learn the pattern and receive the power and then do the work God has for us to do. A well-known Methodist minister not long ago put all this in the following forceful way :—

'The preaching that our time needs, the preaching that will relieve doubt and lead men to Christ, must be more than positive, it must be authoritative, in a good sense, the authority rooted in personal conviction of the preacher, and appealing with unflinching courage and unerring aim to the moral consciousness of the hearer. The school where this method is learned and the Master Who taught it we know; in homiletics as in theology the word of our time is "back to Christ." He did not argue—He shone; He uttered truths of the utmost daring and originality as though they had been the merest commonplaces and axioms of the world's thought ever since. It is given to the servant to be as his Master even here; we may learn His method and practise His art if we dwell as He dwelt in the unclouded light of the Father's love. "Abide in Me and I in you." The preacher for our times needs to live so near his fellow men, to enter so deeply into their soul trouble, and to know so well the conditions that affect them, that they shall say of him, even when no word of doubt or debate has been whispered, "That man knows all that I have gone through, he has read my heart and speaks home to me."

'He needs to live so near to God that when he speaks he shall be felt to speak out of the light in which there is no darkness

at all ; not in presumption of human knowledge, but in simplicity of heart and clearness of vision. 'To that height few of us have attained ; yet the mount of vision and of power rises above us, not to create despair, but to kindle desire, and we are brethren and comrades of the upward way.'

'Six little words lay claim on me  
Each passing day—  
I ought, I must, I can, I will,  
I dare, I may.'

### SECTION 3. THE PROPHET'S POWER.

The great instrument of the prophet's work was the Word of God. A 'Word !' Only a Word ! How light, how slight, and yet how mighty ! Words have always had great influence and power in history. 'Where the word of a king is, there is power.' But the Word of God is the greatest power in the universe. 'He spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast.' All through Scripture the Word of the Lord stands out prominently as the greatest force in the world, and at all times His word through His servants has been the one supreme power over men. 'He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword' (Isa. xlix. 2). The power of the Word in the prophet's own personal life needs careful consideration.

#### I. *The Word Commissioning* (Jer. i. 4, 9).

One phrase marks the prophetic commission. 'The Word of the Lord came' (Jer. i. 4, 9). From the first occurrence of this term in connexion with Abraham (Gen. xv. i) to the last occurrence in connexion with the greatest of all the prophets (John the Baptist, Luke iii. 2), it stands out as the basis of all proper and authorized service for God.

1. It meant first of all a *personal commission*. It meant a definite call to work and constituted the man to whom it came a genuine, authoritative servant of his Lord and God. What a strength and inspiration it gave a man to know and feel that 'the word of the Lord came' to him. So it is, so it must be still. If in a very real way the word



does not 'come' to a man for ministry, he had better not set out, for it will be embarking on a hopeless enterprise. But if he is assured of the 'Word of the Lord' commissioning him, how strong, how safe, how satisfied he is.

2. For it meant, also, a *personal communication*. Not only a definite call but a definite message, and the latter indicated and proved the former. By the message the call was demonstrated, by the communication the commission. This too, has a direct application to the ministry to-day, for in a very real sense we must get our texts from God; our message must be from Him if we are to speak in demonstration of the Spirit and power.

## II. *The Word Communing* (Jer. xv. 16).

The Word which calls and commissions must be that by which the soul of the prophet continues to keep in touch with his Divine Lord. So it was with Jeremiah. 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy Name, O Lord God of Hosts.'

1. The Word must be received. 'I did eat.' The Word as food is a suggestion often found in Scripture. Job says, 'I have esteemed Thy Word more than my necessary food' (ch. xxiii. 12). Ezekiel was commanded to 'eat' the book God gave him (ch. iii. 1). The Psalmist rejoices in God's Word as sweet to his taste, and sweeter than the honeycomb (Psa. xxi. 10; cxix. 103). The Apostle urges the young converts to desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. ii. 2), and the truth of God is more than once mentioned as the strong meat for the spiritually mature (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12). The Word is indeed food. What food is to the body God's truth is to the soul. It satisfies the cravings of hunger; it invigorates the soul; it builds up the life. Meditation is the spiritual analogue of that process of appropriation, digestion and assimilation by means of which food becomes the nourishment of our bodily life. We must 'read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.' 'He that eateth Me (τρώγω).'

2. The Word must be experienced. 'A joy and the rejoicing.' The joy of the Word in the prophet's life is a suggestive and striking fact. Jeremiah is not usually thought of as a man of joy, and yet here he expresses his joy in God's Word in no measured terms. There will always be joy in every true ministry in proportion as God's Word is 'found' and 'eaten.' The knowledge of the truth brings joy; the experience of its power causes joy; and the consciousness of possessing a definite message from God is a never-ending source of rejoicing. This is much more than a mere intellectual understanding of the contents of the Word. It is the transfusion of it into our emotional life, the influence of it on our spiritual life, and the inspiration of it on our will for consecration and service.

### III. *The Word Constraining* (Jer. xx. 9).

The next step in the prophet's inner life in relation to the Word naturally follows from the two preceding. The Word that commissions and communicates begins to constrain.

1. There is the consciousness of a great temptation. 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name.' It is an encouragement to find that the prophets were men like ourselves. They were tempted to desist from speaking, to be silent and never again to testify for God. How often this temptation comes to a minister. The strain of work is great; physical, mental, and spiritual! The results of work are so slow, so few, so disappointing! So he is tempted to silence. 'I will not make mention of Him.'

2. But there is the consciousness of a great power. If I say 'I will not . . . then there is in my heart a burning fire.' The Word in the prophet's heart as a fire kindles afresh the strong convictions of his relation to God and his duty. And so to-day the minister, when tempted to desist, to give up, to be silent, finds the pressure of the Word within like a fire stirring him to renewed consecration. Like St. Paul, he becomes conscious once

again of his profound spiritual debt, of his ministerial commission, of his duty of service, of the world's need, and of the unique power of the Gospel, and there comes again into his heart 'as it were a burning fire.'

3. And then there is the consciousness of great results. 'I cannot contain.' The fire begins to work and the prophet *must* speak. Like Peter, he says, I 'cannot but speak' (Acts iv. 20). The pressure of the Word overcomes all hostility, all danger, all difficulty, all distrust of self, all fear, all cowardice, all unwillingness.

'Thy Word have I hid in my heart.' The 'heart' in Scripture means the centre of the moral being, and includes intellect, feeling, and will. So that the Word in the heart, means in the mind for thought, in the emotion for feeling, and in the will for action. This is the prime essential in the inner life of the prophet; the Word of God. The Word convicting; the Word commissioning; the Word communing; and the Word constraining. And if only the minister will take care to get alone with God and His Bible, and seek the light and grace of Him Who inspired that Word, the spiritual results in the soul will be great, blessed, and powerful. The Word will so transform, energize, and inspire him in his inner life that when he comes forth to his people it will be quite evident that he has seen a vision (Luke i.), that God has spoken to him, and that he is indeed the prophet of the Lord, the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

#### SECTION 4. THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE (*Jer. xxiii. 28f.*).

The Word thus received into the heart is intended to be reproduced in life and work. After Commission, Communion, and Constraint by the Word, comes the Communication of it to others.

##### I. *The Word Possessed.*

'He that hath My Word, let him speak that word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?' God's



word is the expression of His mind and is therefore wheat not chaff, and the prophet is here described as the man that 'hath' it, that possesses it. This is essential to all service, the definite possession of the Word of God. As St. Paul says, 'We have the mind of Christ,' and more than once he speaks of 'my gospel,' rejoicing in the conscious possession of a message from God. No ministry can ever be of service to men which does not start here, in the definite, conscious, blessed possession of the Word of God.

## II. *The Word Proclaimed.*

'Let him proclaim My word faithfully.' The Word is possessed in order to be proclaimed, and the proclamation must be in exact proportion to the possession. Nothing that is not possessed can be proclaimed, everything that is possessed is to be proclaimed, and nothing can be proclaimed if it is not possessed. 'Faithfully.' We must beware lest we mix the chaff with the wheat. There are constant and serious temptations to unfaithfulness. Some men are tempted to indulge in mere eloquence without much regard to the substance of the message; others are tempted to prophesy 'smooth' or 'pleasant' things in order to attract their people; others are tempted to be content and to keep their people content with a low standard of life and deprecate being righteous over-much; others are tempted to take up themes of passing interest of a popular and even sensational type in order to 'draw.' But all such preaching will be as 'chaff' to the 'wheat,' and if yielded to will bring their own terrible Nemesis to minister and people.

The Rev. J. R. Wood, a well-known Baptist minister in London, once told of a Congregational minister who said he had been long enough at his church, because his people knew all that he could tell them. 'How long have you been there?' asked Mr. Wood. 'Eight years.' 'What kind of sermons do you preach? Topical sermons?' 'Yes.' 'You mean you have come to the end of your topics?' 'Yes.' 'Do you do much in

your Greek Testament ? ' inquired Mr. Wood. ' No, not much.' ' Well,' said Mr. Wood, ' go into your study and spend an hour with your Greek Testament every morning, and then take to your people on Sunday what you get out of your Greek Testament during the week, and you will never want for subjects.'

### III. *The Word Powerful.*

' Is not My word like a fire . . . and like a hammer ? ' When the Word possessed is faithfully proclaimed it always has the effect suggested by the figures of ' fire ' and ' hammer.' The Word, as fire, does its threefold work of burning, warming, and cheering. It consumes the things to be consumed, and for this there is no power to compare with the Word in its destructive influence. It warms the coldness of hearts and lives and makes them glow with life and love. It cheers the despondent, the sorrowful, the weary, and inspires with joy and courage. The Word, as a hammer, does its twofold work of breaking down and building up. The resistance of the sinful heart is met by the power of the Divine Word. The truth of God is concentrated on the life of man, and by the blessing of the Spirit hard hearts are broken, rebellious hearts are softened, resisting hearts are led to yield. ' Is not My word like a hammer ? '

But the hammer is used to build up as well. Its work is constructive as well as destructive. The carpenter's hammer is in constant use for building up the materials at hand. So is it with the divine Word ; it builds up, it edifies, it produces character, strengthens and holds together the elements of human life as they are fastened together by Divine Grace.

These are the results that should be seen in the ministry. The Word is to be mighty in hearts and lives, mighty to the pulling down of sinful strongholds, mighty to the erection of spiritual structures, mighty to the transformation of character and the inspiration of conduct.

To accomplish this we must *make much* of the Word.

We must honour it, believe in it, and show in our proclamation of it that it is to us the very word of the living God.

And to make much of it we must *be much with it*. We must live in it. The Apostles said, 'We will give ourselves to the ministry of the Word' (προσκαρτερήσομεν); i.e., adhere closely keep ourselves firmly fixed, and never allow anything to divert us from putting this Word in the foremost place of our life. A well-known worker has truly said :—

'There are three things, and only three, that are absolutely essential to spiritual health and strength and growth. These three things are: constant Bible study, constant prayer, and constant effort for the salvation of others. Where these three things are there will be spiritual health, spiritual growth, spiritual strength. When any one of these three things is lacking, there will be spiritual deterioration, spiritual disease, spiritual weakness, spiritual death.'

Another great teacher of to-day tells the following :—

'There was a great physician in America that had an interview with a patient who was subject to terrific nervous prostration. He said, "Madam, I want you to go home and study your Bible an hour a day," and he bowed her out without further ceremony. She said, "After all, this prescription does not cost me anything. Suppose I try it." She went home, and she held communion with God for an hour a day, and at the end of a month she was entirely cured. Then she went back to her doctor and said, "I was angry with you, doctor." "Yes," he remarked, "I supposed you would be," and taking down his own Bible from the shelf he said, "Do you see this? I read it before every operation, and go to work in the light of God's Word. I read it before visiting my patients, and it is the only thing that keeps me in the strain of my profession and from darkness and disorder. I knew that you needed it, and that it was the only remedy that would meet your case.'

Nothing can make up for this devotion to the Bible in our ministerial life. It is the secret, the source, and the spring of everything that is vital, useful, blessed, and powerful in Christian character and service.

## SECTION 5. THE PROPHET'S PERIL.

There is one fact in the account of the Old Testament prophet which startles and even shocks us. It is the presence and even prominence given to the false prophet almost all through the history. At nearly every stage the curious phenomena are in evidence. The false prophet was arrayed against the true, and it is probably correct to say that the greatest conflict the true prophet had to wage was against the false prophet, and not even against the irreligious element in Israel. The lessons are many, serious, and searching, because *corruptio optimi pessima*. Let us heed them as we contemplate our own ministry.

I. *Who the False Prophets were.*

There seem to have been two classes of them. One consisted of counterfeit prophets (1 Kings xxii.), men who for one reason or another found it useful to imitate a good thing. The other class evidently consisted of backsliders (1 Kings xiii.), men who had been genuine prophets and had fallen away from their high estate.

We may well hope and believe that not many (one would like to say with certainty not any) of the former class are to be found in the ministry to-day. It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of men entering the ministry who are 'counterfeit,' who find it serviceable to imitate the real minister. But we pass from these by simply admitting the possibility of their existence. The other class is, we fear, much more likely to be found in the ranks of the clergy, men who started well, with high hopes, earnest spirit, and full determination, but whose fires have gone down, whose ideals have perished, and whose ministry is but a name. The awful, hideous possibility, and even probability, must assuredly be faced. 'Ye did run well; what doth hinder you?'

II. *What the False Prophets did.*

Several charges are made against them. They prophesied 'smooth things' rather than 'right things'.

(Isa. xxx. 10). They yielded to the temptation of saying only what the people liked and desired to hear. They cried 'Peace' when there was no peace, and their work was like that of building a wall with untempered mortar (Ezek. xiii. 10-16). Thus they pandered to the prejudices of their hearers instead of proclaiming the truth of God without fear or favour. They prophesied falsely because the people 'loved to have it so' (Jer. v. 31). Further than this, they indulged in flattery and pleased their hearers with personal praise which tended only to self-deceit (Ezek. xii. 24). Deepest degradation of all, they did not hesitate to speak falsehood. It is a short and easy step from the preaching of pleasant things to flattery, and from flattery to falsehood. The flatterer is essentially a 'liar,' and the terrible charge is made against these false prophets that they spoke lies in the Name of the Lord (Zech. xiii. 3).

The temptation is a real one to the minister to speak 'pleasant things,' to pander to the prejudices of his people, whether rich or poor. It is as possible to do it to one class as to the other, for both poor and rich naturally like to have their own particular ideas emphasized and their partialities approved. But from the moment a minister allows himself to depart from the strict line of truth, he is in danger of ending where the false prophets ended. The awfulness of conscious, and still more of unconscious hypocrisy and unreality in the ministry is unspeakable.

### III. *What the False Prophets were.*

Since work is but the expression of life, and conduct the outcome of character, it is a natural and necessary question as to what these prophets really were. Can anything be known of their character and disposition? Several significant hints are found. In some cases they were men given to drink (Isa. xxviii. 7). In other cases they were impure (Jer. xxiii. 11). In still others, covetous (Isa. lvi. 10, 12; Mic. iii. 11). Yet again, some were light and trivial (Zeph. iii. 4), while others were insincere



and guilty of what we should call plagiarism ; ‘ that steal my words from his neighbour ’ (Jer. xxiii. 30).

This catalogue is serious and solemn. Drunkenness, Impurity, Covetousness, Triviality, Insincerity. But are they impossible in the ministry to-day ? Have we not known, or at any rate heard, of men of whom some of these things are true. Character inevitably expresses itself in conduct and service, and if our work is wrong our life must be wrong also.

#### IV. *Why the False Prophets were what they were.*

The explanation was as simple as it was searching. It was due to one cause only ; ‘ That prophesy out of their own hearts ’ (Ezek. xiii. 2). This, and this only, was the reason, their vision came from within, not from above ; from themselves, not from God ; from their own heart, not from the mind of God. And when once they began to ‘ prophesy out of their own hearts,’ the time of the end was not far off. So is it always, and herein lies our greatest danger. Our messages must not be self-made, but God-made ; must come from above, not from within ; must be the result of listening to the Lord and not to the people. *Vox populi* is not always and necessarily *vox Dei*, and certainly if the Word of God is not pre-eminent in our ministerial life, there will always be the danger of proclaiming that which comes from below instead of above. The Word is at once the substance of our message and the standard of our own life, and the man who keeps in touch with it will never lack something to say, or want power and guidance in saying it. But we must go one step further and deeper, and ask—

#### V. *How did the False Prophets become what they were ?*

Is it possible to trace the line, or lines, of aberration ? Authorities generally tend to trace their declension to the condition and life of the schools of the prophets. They became formal, conventional, accustomed to sacred things and words,<sup>f</sup> and thus became spiritually deteriorated,

until at length disaster accrued. This may, or may not be the actual explanation, but it certainly indicates a possibility, if not a strong probability. It has been a proverb that 'the shoemaker's wife is the worst shod,' and every one knows the danger of the deadening influence of constant association with religious and spiritual things. If the schools of the prophets were the main cause of the decay and deadness of the life of these men, it points with unerring and forceful meaning to the necessity of the greatest and most prayerful thought in connexion with Theological Colleges, and all similar places where types of ministry are decided. It should never be forgotten that the tone of a Theological College is largely set by the men themselves. Discipline may be good and strong and the influence of the authorities may help generally, but in the last resort the result depends on the men themselves. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and a Theological College will never be much higher than the tone of the men in it. If, therefore, a man is living an inconsistent life he ought to feel uncomfortable and even miserable in a Theological College, and ought not to enter the ministry unless he changes his way and determines to live aright. Theological Colleges are not for white-washing, but for the strengthening of convictions, the deepening of impressions, the clarifying of visions, the purifying of desires, the raising of ideals, and the intensifying of determination to live and labour aright in the ministry.

But the same dangers face us all through our ministry. Constant use of Bible and Prayer Book words, constant association with religious people, constant service in Church affairs tend to spiritual formality, dryness, and even deadness which must assuredly affect the spiritual quality of our ministry if not at once and wholly altered. And herein lies the solemnity for students and clergymen of the Psalmist's words which call us to face these issues with ourselves, and never to rest until we can look up to God and feel perfectly sure that we are not among the false prophets, or even in danger of travelling on the

way thither. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24).

#### SECTION 6. THE PROPHET'S LIFE.

There is one title frequently used of the prophet and probably of no one else : 'Man of God.' Eight are mentioned by name to whom this is given. Moses, Samuel, David, Shemaiah, Elijah, Elisha (thirteen passages), Igdaliah (Jer. xxxv.), Timothy. Once an angel is called by this name, and several men unnamed are described by it. 'Man of God.' What does it mean? Just two things. Manliness and Godliness.

##### I. *Manliness.*

The prophet was a man of ordinary appearance. He had no special garb to distinguish him from his fellows, no frenzy to mark his attitude and his work. He was just an ordinary man, one among his fellow-citizens, not of a separate caste, but raised up of God for the special work (Deut. xviii. 18). The chief points which marked him were two. (a) He was a man with a message. When God gave him this he delivered it faithfully (1 Sam. ix. 6 ; 1 Kings xiii. 1) and fearlessly. Nothing was allowed to hinder the complete and courageous delivery of the Divine Word. With absolute boldness he witnessed to God and His truth. (b) He was a man with a blessing. Not merely a man of words, but deeds. Moses, the Man of God, was able to bless as well as teach (Deut. xxxiii. 1), and in like manner Elijah and Elisha carried blessing wherever they went. It is the greatest honour in a man's life that people come to him in their difficulties and trials because they feel that his character is stronger than theirs, his experience riper as a Man of God.

From all this it is clear that a manly man is the truest channel of communication between man and God. It was the uniqueness of Israel as a religion that it exalted



manhood in the truest sense of that idea of exaltation. And so to-day true Christianity conserves and uses the truest, purest, and best in human nature. People will not respect the 'cloth' unless there is a man in it, nor the office unless a man fills it. There is no incompatibility, but, quite the contrary, the most perfect congruity between manliness and the ministry. A layman once said that of three ministers he had known, the first was a man, not a minister; the second a minister, not a man; the third was neither man nor minister.<sup>1</sup> A real minister will be honoured and loved for his manliness and will therefore be surrounded by troops of friends in his congregation who will value, trust, love, and follow him.

## II. *Godliness.*

This is the real foundation of all true manliness, the power of a godly life (1 Tim. vi. 11). Such a life will convince of sin (1 Kings xvii. 18), and convince of the truth (1 Kings xvii. 24). People will soon find out whether we are in earnest. We cannot deceive them for long. If we are hypocrites they will know it; they may not tell anybody, they may not even grumble or complain, but they will use us less, come to us less, and value us less in the things of God. As Emerson says, 'I cannot hear what you say; what you are thunders so loud.' Character is all-powerful.

What is its secret? Very simple, but very searching. (a) It means a true relation to God's Word (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17). 'That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' No one will ever be a Man of God unless he 'continues in those things he has learned.' (b) It means a true relation to obedience. The Man of God must practise what he preaches. Disobedience is fatal (1 Kings xiii. 26). (c) it means a true relation to prayer. The Man of God will be a man of prayer (Psa. xc. title). Elijah was a Man of God, and prayer was the prevailing characteristic of his life (1 Kings xviii. 36, 37). Prayer brings us into that fellowship with God (1 Kings xvii. 1) from which all character springs. Character is

<sup>1</sup> Stalker, p. 165.

power, character is everything. Character makes the man, and as Christ makes the character, the minister as a Man of God is the prime fundamental secret of service. It is only as he is a Man of God that he can have power with men and become a blessing (Gen. xxxii. 28).

And thus 'Man of God' is the highest title, the noblest description, the finest testimony. Manly and Godly. Manly because godly, and Godliness expressing itself in Manliness. Given these two elements, the life and work of the ministry glorifies God and blesses Man.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE

THERE were three great aspects of our Lord's earthly ministry : His Teaching, His Miracles, and His Training of the Twelve Apostles. Of these the last was in some respects the most important, because it had special reference to the future and to the permanent life and work of the Church of Christ. Indeed, we may almost say that His Teaching and His Miracles had their primary and fundamental value in the influence they made on the Twelve. At least they formed no small part of the training of the Apostles for their work in the Church. The best part of three years was given to this, and we can see how, as the public ministry became less and less fruitful, this work occupied more and more of our Lord's attention. Among the many aspects of the subject the following portions of the Gospel story will enable us to realize some characteristics of the ministry, as seen in our Lord's relation to the Twelve.

#### SECTION 1. THE CHOICE (MARK iii. 13-15 ; LUKE vi. 12f.).

Out of the larger number of His disciples it was necessary for our Lord to select some to be His especial followers and ministers. The occasion and circumstances of His choice of the Twelve are significantly brought before us in the Gospels.

##### I. *When the Choice was made.*

It was after a time of fellowship with God that Christ made the selection of the Twelve. On the mountain top,

away from all earthly influences ; at a time when all was still ; and after prayer expressive of His constant fellowship with His Father, this important and far-reaching action was taken. His decision, as always, was the result of consultation with the Father, and of oneness with the Father's Will. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself,' and the time and circumstances of the choice of the Twelve show clearly the importance attached to it by our Lord and by the writers of the Gospels.

## II. *How the Choice was made.*

It was a *personal* choice. 'He' appointed. He Himself made the selection as the result of prayer and thought, and as the outcome of His earlier relations with and knowledge of the men. Selection for the ministry must always come from Christ Himself, and must be due to His personal relation to the soul. It is only as this association is real, that any genuine choice can be made.

And it was a *definite* choice. 'He ordained.' He gave authority and ability (ἐξουσία, δύναμις). Christ never calls without equipping, never commissions without providing, never authorizes without empowering. 'God's biddings are enablings.' The man whom Christ ordains can always depend on grace sufficient.

## III. *Why the Choice was made.*

The primary reason was *Fellowship* ; 'that they might be with Him.' This is, and must be first. 'With' comes before 'for.' 'They dwelt *with* the King *for* his work' (1 Chron. iv. 23). Labour never rises higher than life, faithfulness never higher than fellowship, conduct never higher than character. What we are, conditions what we do, and to be what we ought to be we must abide in and with Christ. And all through their ministry the Twelve had this as their choicest privilege, they were 'with Him,' including all that this meant of wonderful instruction, holy influence and constant inspiration.

Instruction, Influence, Inspiration ; these ever come as the result of being 'with Christ.'

The second reason for the choice was *Apostleship* ; 'and send them forth.' After 'with Christ' comes 'for Christ ;' after privilege, service ; after position, action. An Apostle is one 'sent forth,' and all through their ministry this was their privilege, duty, and responsibility. Mission ! What a thought ! 'Sent' by Christ, as He was sent by the Father (John xx. 21). Mission always implies Commission. It is the Master's Commission that gives our Mission its blessing and guarantees its success. Every true minister is an 'Apostle,' one who is sent forth. 'Ministers of His to do His pleasure.'

The third reason of the choice was *Stewardship* ; 'To preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.' The stewardship of preaching is the first function of the ministry. The minister is a 'herald,' one who proclaims the Gospel, i.e. the Good News. And this the Gospel always is, not good advice but good news, or rather, good advice as the outcome of Good News. 'Any news ?' said Tennyson to an old woman friend of his in Lincolnshire. 'No news, Mr. Tennyson, except that Christ died on the Cross !' 'Well,' replied the poet, 'that is old news, and new news, and good news.'

The Stewardship of healing is included. We may not now have power to heal bodily sickness, but we are nevertheless to be healers in a very real sense, lifting burdens of soul, lightening pain of heart, and leading men into the presence of the Great Healer.

The stewardship of deliverance is also always our work. We have to cast out the demons of sin, of sorrow, of doubt, of despair, by the marvellous expulsive power of the new affection of the Gospel of Christ.

This constitutes true ministry ; Fellowship, Apostleship, Stewardship. To this Christ calls us ; for this He chooses and equips us. And amid the multifarious duties that crowd into our life, and tend to distract our thought, and dissipate our energies, we must never forget these primary functions of ministry. Fellowship, Apostle-

ship, Stewardship. Nothing must rob us of our position 'with' Christ. Nothing must hinder us from exercising our Apostolic 'Mission.' Nothing must divert us from the stewardship of preaching, of healing, of deliverances. Then only shall we realize Christ's purpose in selecting us and sending us into His vineyard.

## SECTION 2. THE PREPARATION (LUKE v. 1-11).

Character is a most important study, whether in the pages of a biography, or in the life of any one with whom we may be brought in contact. To discover in a child or youth the characteristics of his nature, to notice his weakness and strength, to watch the gradual growth and expansion even amid slips and falls, and to see the character deepen and ripen until at length it reaches the vigour, balance, and mellowness of maturity ; all this is at once extremely interesting and very valuable.

Among the many lives which are available for study in this way, few lend themselves more readily to consideration and scrutiny than that of the Apostle Peter, for from the first notice of him in the New Testament he is seen to be a man of clearly marked individuality, and almost every reference to him enables us to note some salient feature in his character. The incident associated with the text was a most important step in his life, and one largely instrumental in making him what he afterwards became. It is essential to remember that this was not the first occasion on which our Lord met Simon. The fact of Christ's entrance unforbidden into the boat seems to imply familiarity. The story in St. John (Ch. i.) is the record of the enrolment of Simon as a disciple with the promise and prophecy of something different and higher in the future. What that was, how and when it was to be realized, were not then mentioned, but we can see the development by comparing the passage with our present one. 'Thou shalt be *called*' (John i. 42). 'Thou shalt *catch*' (Luke v. 10). The former suggested his future



character, the latter his future work ; and we see that this incident in St. Luke is the second link in the chain of our Lord's purpose with Simon. It is the call to Apostleship from Discipleship, and when we consider it in this light, as a preparatory call to higher office and more definite work, we find in it distinct though connected steps, by which the disciple was led up to Apostleship.

### *I. The Revelation of the Master to the Disciple.*

Before Simon could be and do what Christ desired, he must know more of his Master, and so we have a revelation with two clearly marked characteristics.

The gradualness of the revelation is very evident from the Greek and the Revised Version. At first Jesus said, ' *Put out* a little from the land ' in order that He might preach to the multitude from the boat. But this was not all, it was but secondary, for when He had finished speaking, He added, ' *Put out* into the deep.' Now we begin to see the object of the Master, Who at once adds, ' And let down your nets for a draught.' This Peter does, though not before telling Him of their night of fruitless toil.

We now see the second characteristic of this revelation ; it was definite. The immediate result of the letting down of the net was the miraculous draught of fishes, and by that miracle Simon Peter realized that Jesus was some one out of the ordinary run of mankind, some one unique. This was our Lord's object ; Peter was to see that His Messiahship involved His Divinity. The man's view of the Messiah was to a great extent the formal Jewish conception, and before he could become an Apostle he must have this erroneous idea removed. If our Lord was to gather round Him a band of disciples through whom He could work, it was necessary that they should first be quite assured concerning their Master Himself. They must know Him not simply as a Teacher, they must know Him in Himself as the Son of God, and this was His object in performing the miracle. For the moment

Simon could only wonder in astonishment, but by means of that wonder Christ entered more fully into and possessed more of His disciple's heart. This was the first revelation, that of the Master to the disciple ; and it at once led to another.

## II. *The Revelation of the Disciple to Himself.*

The next requirement of the Lord Jesus was with reference to Peter himself, and we must see how it was brought about. For this purpose let us consider the immediate cause of the revelation. Peter saw the miracle and cried out, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' Now let us inquire carefully what there was in the miracle that should make Simon realize his *sin*. What was the connexion between the miraculous draught of *fishes* and *sin* ? How is it we do not hear of any such connexion with regard to other miracles ? This question deserves very careful notice. It is generally supposed that somehow or other the disciple realized our Lord's marvellous holiness contrasted with his own lack of holiness, but is this certain ? Why holiness in particular ? On another occasion, very similar to this, as recorded in the last chapter of St. John, we read of Peter *hurrying to meet* our Lord immediately on recognizing Him after another miraculous draught of fishes, and yet at that time our Lord was none the less holy and Peter none the less sinful. Indeed, coming so closely after the denial, one would have imagined the very opposite of Peter's eagerness to meet Christ. We must therefore seek the cause elsewhere, namely, in Simon's first reply to Jesus, 'Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing, nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.' Are we quite sure we rightly understand the meaning of this answer ? Is it possible that we do not catch the real tone of it ? Very frequently it is put forward as a beautiful answer of reverent obedience, but is it so ? The men had been toiling all the night in the most suitable time for fishing, and the idea of telling fishermen to go and try again

in the morning was almost too much for Peter, and his reply seems to say, 'I will do what you say, but I am sure it will not be of any use.' This may be seen more clearly in another fact not always considered. Our Lord said, 'Let down your nets' (plural); Peter replied, 'I will let down the net' (singular) as though feeling quite certain it would be of no avail and that it was unnecessary to let down more than one net.<sup>1</sup> The answer, therefore, was an untrustful yielding to Christ, and indicated a partial obedience only, as if to say, 'I know more than you do.' Then came the marvellous success and with it the vivid realization of the unworthy and sinful spirit he had been indulging. He now saw that Jesus knew better than he himself did, experienced fisherman though he was, and feeling how wrong he had been he cried out, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' Thus he saw himself as he really was, and the disciple was revealed to himself.

Now we can understand the real object of this revelation, for it was part of our Lord's purpose for Peter, and was of the utmost importance in relation to his life-work. With erroneous views of the Messiah among the Jews had come erroneous views of sin, its reality and enormity, and to have his sin brought home to him was the 'one thing needful' for Simon Peter. He would thereby realize that the Messiahship had to do with hearts and consciences and not with national glory and power, that the rule of the Messiah was spiritual and not temporal, not earthly but Divine. The consciousness of his own sinfulness, this humiliation of self, would also be a necessary and important preparation for his future work. Knowledge of self is one of the main elements of power in seeking to bless others, and we can see this throughout the Scriptures. Whenever God has work for men to do He first causes them to feel their own nothingness and sinfulness. The history of Moses, of Gideon, of Isaiah, and of many others shows this clearly.

<sup>1</sup> The text of the A.V. seems more intrinsically probable, even apart from the interpretation now suggested.

Thus Peter, while he saw the power of Christ, had at the same time a vision of himself such as he had never had before. This is the second revelation, that of the disciple to himself.

Now we can understand the meaning of the text and appreciate the third revelation.

### III. *The Revelation of the Master's Purpose concerning His Disciple.*

'Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' Notice the assuring call: 'Fear not.' Thus our Lord encouraged the sin-stricken disciple. 'Depart'? Surely not; his sin was the very reason why Jesus should stay. 'Depart'? Surely not; the Lord could see the man through the sin. Not only was the Master not to depart, but the disciple should henceforth have a very different work. He was no longer to catch fish, he should 'catch men,' should 'take them alive' (R.V. margin). And so the disciple learned the purpose of his Master and gained an insight into the reason of that wonderful change of name. Thereby he experienced that which would very effectively tend towards the change of nature and of work, the rock-like character and the Christian Apostleship.

Then we have the prompt response. 'They left all and followed Him.' No more returning to their boats; now they were to be Apostles as well as disciples, from henceforth the intimate friends and trusted followers of their Lord, to be taught, guided, strengthened, blessed, and used by Him for His glory in the manifestation and realization of His Divine purpose and love.

Such were the three revelations whereby Peter was called to the Apostleship, and now it is only right to consider what these truths have to do with us. We may see this by retracing our steps by way of application.

1. Christ has a purpose with every disciple. To become an 'Apostle,' one *sent forth* by Him to others. Not, of course, in the unique sense of the Twelve, but nevertheless

to become with a very real meaning, 'fishers of men.' This is the supreme object of our Christian life and discipleship, to bless others. We are saved in order to serve, healed to help, redeemed to restore, delivered to declare. And to accomplish this Christ tests us, coming to us in ordinary every-day life to prove our capacity for higher service. There is a sad possibility of failure in partial obedience like Peter's, against which we need to be on our guard.

2. To fulfil this purpose we must know ourselves. We are sent to men who are sinners by nature and by practice, who show their sin in many different ways and degrees. It is only by a knowledge of the human heart and conscience, mind and will, that we shall be able to deal with them. Just as the fisherman needs knowledge, tact and experience in his work, so do we in our dealings with others on behalf of Christ, and these are only possible through a knowledge of our heart and its plague.

3. To know ourselves we must know Christ. Not by mere introspection and self-examination shall we see ourselves; we can only truly see ourselves by looking at Christ. In Him we see ourselves as in a mirror, and in His light of perfect holiness we really and truly see our own need of holiness. Thus by 'looking off unto Jesus' we gain a true knowledge of ourselves, and a true knowledge of Him. There will be a lower idea of self and a higher conception of Him (cf. *v.* 5, 'Master'; *v.* 8, 'Lord'). In the possession of Him as our Saviour, in the surrender to Him as our Lord, and in the occupation of minds and hearts with Him as our Friend, we shall derive, as Peter did, the self-knowledge necessary for our effectual work for Him, and not only so, but 'beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord we shall be changed into the same image' by the power of His Holy Spirit.

Let us then receive Him into our heart and life, and He will enter and bless us to others. Just as He used Peter's boat from which to preach to the people, so He will make a pulpit of our earthly life and work from which to manifest Himself to men. Our lives shall show that 'Christ



liveth in us,' we shall 'preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord,' and our daily existence will be one blessed unfolding of His grace and blessing. Men seeing 'Christ in us,' and being 'convinced that God is in us of a truth,' shall themselves come to Him and go forth in turn to bless others. So shall the blessings of true Christian discipleship and true Christian apostleship extend from heart to heart, and from individual to individual; so shall the heart of Christ rejoice in the ever-increasing growth of His kingdom, the ever-widening influence of His power, and the ever-deepening blessing of His grace, until at length His purpose in sending men forth shall be accomplished, the last one shall have been gathered in, the last one 'caught,' and our Lord shall 'see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.'

### SECTION 3. THE PRINCIPLES (*John* vi. 1-14).

The miracle of the five thousand is in all four Gospels, the only one found in all. There must be some good reason for this prominence. The moment was critical, pivotal in our Lord's ministry. The feelings of the people for Him were such that as the immediate result of this miracle they endeavoured to make him a King. But He escaped out of their power, and on His reappearance next day delivered those discourses in Capernaum which so startled and shocked His hearers that His popularity suddenly began to wane, and for the rest of His Ministry He was virtually left alone with the Twelve, for the special work He had come to do. The miracle was therefore at once a crisis and a symbol of our Lord's higher spiritual work. He had not come to be King, but to give himself as the Bread of Life, the Bread of God for the world.

But the miracle can also be taken symbolically in another way; it may be regarded as a parable for workers. Christ and His disciples here indicate what Christ still desires to do through His workers, and the miracle reveals several of the deepest principles of Christian service.

### I. *Co-workers with Christ.*

He took counsel with them ; ' Whence ' : and associated them with Himself ; ' We.' This is what He always desires to do. ' Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do ' ? (Gen. xviii. 17). ' The Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants (Amos iii. 7). ' We, then, as workers together with Him ' (2 Cor. vi. 1). This is the joy, the honour, the inspiration of all service ; our association with Christ, our fellowship with Him in the accomplishment of His purposes for the world. He might have done the work without us, but He has been pleased to permit us to be His ministers, carrying His Bread to the world.

### II. *An Apparently Impossible Task.*

What a startling call ! ' Give ye them to eat.' How could they ? They had nothing, or what was practically nothing. And yet the Master said, ' They need not depart.' The strong confidence of this word is evident. What does it mean ? This, that Christians have what the world needs. The Master's word rings out : ' They need not go ; you provide,' and in saying this He called His disciples to a task apparently impossible, but really practicable, because He Himself was behind every word He said.

### III. *The Use of Natural Means.*

To feed the multitude Christ utilized the five loaves and two fishes as the foundation of the supply. He might and could have done without them, but He used them as far as they would go. Herein lies one of the deepest principles of the Bible and of God's method. He uses means. The miracles of the Old and New Testaments are usually wrought with existing agencies. Natural means are employed to the full extent of their possibility, and then supernatural power is added to them. There was no new creation, but simply the use of what was



available as the means or channel of manifesting Divine supernatural power. In a similar way Christ uses the natural characteristics of His disciples as far as they will go and makes them of service in His vineyard. He takes us as we are and utilizes what we have, for His Glory.

#### IV. *The Secret of Blessing.*

The disciples were commanded to bring what they possessed to the Master, and then He blessed them and made them sufficient for the need of the multitude. The same principle obtains to-day. 'Bring to Me.' Let us bring to Him whatever we have, for 'Loaves unblessed are loaves unmultiplied.' We must have His blessing if we are to be of service to others.

#### V. *The Divine Employment of Moderate Means.*

Through the blessing of Christ on the five loaves and two fishes the men, women, and children were 'filled,' and through the blessing of Christ on our lives, poor and insignificant though they are, the multitudes will be 'filled.' Moses was commanded to cast down his rod, and it became a serpent. His rod was just the ordinary shepherd's crook of his daily calling, and yet by the power of God it could become transformed. Our ordinary life, sinful though it be ; our natural capacities, few though they be, can be employed by God and produce wonderful results in His service. It is a great fundamental and well known principle that size never determines power. When Zinzendorf was at school he founded the 'Guild of the Grain of Mustard Seed,' and we know the result in the Moravian Church. Be it ours, therefore, to surrender everything to Christ, to trust Him with everything, to obey Him in everything, and then He will send us forth to fill and satisfy hungry, fainting souls ; blessed to be a blessing.

Only one talent small,  
Scarce worthy to be named,

Truly He hath no need of this.—

O ! art thou not ashamed ?

He gave that talent first,

Then use it in His strength,

Thereby, thou know'st not, He may work

A miracle at length.

Many the starving souls,

Now waiting to be fed,

Needing, though knowing not their need

Of Christ the Living Bread.

If thou hast known this love,

To others make it known,

Receiving blessings, others bless ;

No seed abides alone.

And when thine eyes shall see

The holy ransomed throng,

In heavenly fields, by living streams,

By Jesus led along.

Unspeakable thy joy,

And glorious thy reward,

If by thy barley loaves, one soul

Has been brought home to God.

#### SECTION 4. THE SECRET (*Matt.* xiv. 18 ; xvii. 17).

As the Christian life is not complex, but simple ; so also it is with Christian service. It can be reduced to a few great but simple truths. It really means nothing more, as it can mean nothing less, than the full and constant contact of the soul with Christ. In these two passages now before us we find the disciples in the one case face to face with a great work, and in the other with a great failure. The lesson in both was the need of personal contact with Christ ; ‘Bring to Me.’

##### I. *Work.*

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, as we have seen, may be also regarded as a parable of Christian service. There are three great pictures.

1. The perishing world. The people were in great need. Hunger had produced want and weakness.

2. The powerless disciples. Their store was small, limited, insufficient, and in face of the multitude they were powerless. 'Whence?'

3. The Perfect Saviour. 'He Himself knew what He would do,' and when once the disciples had brought their little He blessed, and gave, and fed the crowds.

To-day's *task* is great, almost beyond compare. The world is in need of Christ, whether it knows it or not. Sin ever produces want and weakness. The hunger of the soul is seen everywhere to-day.

To-day's *means* are also scanty. The Church knows not what to do. 'Whence?' The multitudes at home, in palace, castle, house and slum; the heathen abroad in China, Japan, India, Africa, all tell of apparent powerlessness on the part of the Church to cope with the situation.

But, thank God, to-day's *secret* is the same as of yore. 'Bring.' As Bushnell in one of his spiritual paradoxes says, 'Duty is not measured by our ability.' Duty is measured by His ability, and 'responsibility' is really *our* response to *His* ability. So, for work let us ever remember the secret of perpetual sufficiency. 'Bring.'

But it is to the other passage that we specially desire to turn.

## II. *Failure* (Matt. xvii. 17).

The circumstances of the healing of the demoniac boy are full of spiritual meaning for workers. Again there are three pictures.

1. The People. At the foot of the hill the crowd waited, surrounding the disciples and feeling disappointed and distressed. The youth had been brought with high hopes of a perfect cure, and the result had been failure. The disciples could not cast out the evil spirit.

2. The Disciples. What a humiliation for them! The failure was as complete as it was unwarranted. They had received the power, and yet they had not cast out the demon.

3. The Master. When He learnt what it was He at once took the matter in hand and dealt with it satisfactorily. He overruled the error, told them to bring the youth to Him, and soon the boy and his father were rejoicing in complete deliverance. When the disciples asked Him privately the secret of their failure He told them frankly that it was due to their lack of prayer (and fasting).

To-day's *task* is equally great. There are demons to be cast out and spiritual maladies to be healed.

To-day's *means* are equally ample. Christ never commands us to 'Go,' without first assuring us that He has all power (Matt. xxviii. 18). There is grace sufficient in Christ to meet every need, and we need not, ought not to fail.

To-day's *secret* is equally clear. It lies in faithfulness to Christ, the faithful use of the power He gives, faithful obedience to the truth He teaches.

Our great danger to-day as workers is spiritual leakage. There is no need of failure, for Christ has all power and has provided grace. As Dr. Jowett says: 'We do not get close enough to men because we do not get near enough to God. (1) We are drawn away by the gravitation of the world; its manner, thought, feeling, purposes. (2) By the fascination of the glittering; the praise of men, not honour of God. (3) By the stupefying influences of our office.'<sup>1</sup> And the result is utter, disastrous, heart-breaking failure.

How then is this danger to be avoided? In a very simple way. We must maintain an attitude of constant dependence on God. 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' We retain the word 'fasting' here, in spite of the reading of the R.V., because of its essential truthfulness. Prayer and Fasting represent the two sides, the positive and negative, of the one attitude of the soul. Prayer is the *attachment* of the soul to God. Fasting is the *detachment* of the soul from the world.

<sup>1</sup> Notes of an address to ministers at Northfield, Mass., U.S.A., reported in the *Christian Workers' Magazine* (Chicago), 1909.

There are two methods of progress to-day in connexion with motors and tram-cars. The one is by the storage principle, by means of which so much petrol or electricity is provided and used, and then a fresh supply given. The other is by the contact principle, by which the car keeps in touch with the electric power above it or below it, and moves or stands still as it is, or is not, in contact. There are many Christians who seem to think that the storage principle is the true way of living, but it is not. God does not give so much grace for use until exhausted. He requires us to keep in touch with Himself and find therein our sole and our sufficient means of supply.

We lose power and blessing because we do not realize the profound truth that Christ does not give *inherent* ability to any worker. He does not expect grace to be used apart from Himself and then to be replenished when exhausted. Grace is nothing so material as this. Grace is relationship, and its power depends on the maintenance of that relationship by a constant attitude of faith and obedience. Discontinue the attitude, and grace fails to work. Maintain the attitude, keep up the contact, and grace works in and through us to will and to do of God's pleasure.

How may this contact be maintained? By prayer, by the Word, by the Spirit. 'Bring to Me.' Keep 'in touch' with Christ, the Source of prayer. By prayer we speak to God; by the Bible God speaks to us, and when these two are made real by the Spirit Who is 'the Spirit of grace and supplication,' we find the contact maintained, and the life kept, blessed, energized, used to the glory of God.

#### SECTION 5. THE TEST (*Matt.* xvi. 13-19).

The Galilean ministry was over. The Master and His disciples had withdrawn to Caesarea to prepare for the end. They had been with Him some time now, and in view of the future it was essential to know what had been the results of the teaching and fellowship they had enjoyed.



After a period of training and teaching comes the examination, and now the Twelve were to undergo an inquiry as to the precise spiritual value of their experience of their Master.

### I. *The Inquiry.*

The Lord's first question was: 'Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?' i.e. 'What do men say of Me?' This in itself is of small account and involved no spiritual insight on their part. It was probably only asked to lead up to the next question: 'But you, what do you say of Me?' The final question was their own personal view of Christ. As Professor W. M. Clow aptly says, there is a world of difference between a verdict and a confession. The former question involved the verdict of their contemporaries; the latter demanded a personal acknowledgment from themselves. The one thing essential was a true personal attitude to Christ, and then right ideas of Christ. The Master's first message was, 'Follow Me,' and they had done so. Now it is, 'What *think* ye of Me?' Right ideas arise, and always will arise, out of a right attitude to Christ. It is only the follower who thinks rightly.

Herein lies the final question of the ministry. What is our attitude to Jesus Christ? Everything depends on this. Failure here means failure everywhere.

### II. *The Confession.*

Peter's reply expressed what he and they had come to think concerning Christ. 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' His Messiahship and His Divinity; these two were everything. In relation to the Old Testament hopes he was 'the Christ,' the Anointed One. In relation to God, 'the Son of the living God.'

The Divinity of Christ! Or, rather, as we are compelled to put it to-day, the Deity of Christ. This constitutes the fundamental confession because the final need of every soul. And of course it must ever be a life, and not merely a Creed. The confession of Peter was the

result of personal contact with Christ. They had 'compared with Him,' and the experience of those hallowed, unforgettable days had created and deepened in them the conviction that their Master was none other than the Anointed One, the Son of the Living God. This, and nothing less, is still the foundation of all ministry. For salvation, for sanctification, for service, we must have an Anointed One, a Divine Saviour and Lord. As Bishop Moule says: 'A Saviour *not quite God* is a bridge broken at the farther end.'

### III. *The Acknowledgment.*

The disciple was pronounced 'blessed' for making so definite a confession. It is always so. The possession and confession of a living Divine Lord always and necessarily brings 'blessing.'

And the source of it is spiritual discernment: 'For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.' From fellowship had come faith; from experience, conviction. Personal experience is essential to all true service. We must have seen and heard and felt in order to be able to speak, and a ministry that is not based on personal conviction and personal experience will be useless and even dangerous. Flesh and blood cannot reveal the secrets of ministerial spiritual blessing; they must come from the Father in heaven.

### IV. *The Assurance.*

To such a confession was added a twofold revelation of assurance. A new character was declared to be his. In the old days (John i. 42) at the outset the word was, 'Thou *art* Simon . . . thou *shalt be called*.' Now the 'shalt be called' is changed into the 'art,' the future into the present. He was now the Rock-like man as the outcome of personal experience of Christ.

And a new work was given. Christ would build His Church on Peter thus confessing Him. Not on the man alone; that would be too weak. Not on the confession



alone ; that would be too abstract. But on both man and confession together, on the man confessing.<sup>1</sup> It is as though the Master said, ' Give Me a man who believes as the outcome of personal confession, and My Church shall stand on that as on a sure foundation.' And the man is to hold and use the keys. He is given authority and his work shall be that of opening and shutting the gates of the Kingdom (not the Church). Such a man with such an experience is alone qualified to wield his authority. Gehazi may be nominally in the service of Elisha, but the personal power had long gone. The man was an undeveloped hypocrite before the *dénouement* came. It is personal experience that gives authority to word and deed, and personal experience is the only basis of service.

Thus the Master tested His disciples, put them through their examination, and subjected them to the severest possible proof. The question remains for us : What is our attitude to Him ? Have these months, or years, wrought in us a personal experience of Him ? If they have, we are blessed, and we cannot help being useful in His vineyard. If they have not, then whatever else we may have and know, we shall be of no service in the ministry, for the ministry is absolutely dependent on men who by personal contact with Christ have arrived at a personal experience, and can tell out that experience by lip and life, and thus witness and win for the Master.

#### SECTION 6. THE WORK (*Luke* x. 1-24).

Two Missions were sent forth by Christ during His earthly ministry ; that of the Twelve (*Mark* iii. 13, 14), and that of the Seventy (*Luke* x. 1). The record of our Lord's instructions reveals both similarities and differences, but they are both alike in being concerned with principles of work. So after looking at some of the aspects of ministerial character it is necessary and appropriate to consider some of the elements of ministerial service.

<sup>1</sup> Lindsay, *The Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries*, p. 25 ff.

Our Lord's words embody principles for guidance in doing His work.

I. *Preparation* (vv. 1-4).

The true minister will be Divinely appointed (v. 1): 'The Lord appointed.' This must ever be the foundation of all work. 'How shall they preach, except they be sent' (Rom. x. 15).

The true minister will be Divinely encouraged (v. 2). What a picture our Lord draws of broad fields, abundant crops, ripened grain, and few labourers. What is the meaning of this reference to the abundant harvest? It is not the only time He alluded to it (John iv. 35). Are we quite sure we have grasped the true and full import of the term 'harvest'? The Lord did not speak of the opportunities for seed-sowing, but for *harvest*. He thought that men were ready to be *reaped*. Would it not be well now if we thought less of the seed sowing and more of the harvest, less of the future and more of the present? We expect that some day we, or some one else, will reap what now we sow. But the Lord speaks of a present *harvest*. When Paul was in Corinth the Lord told him He had *much people there* when as yet only a handful were gathered (Acts xviii. 10). And in every congregation many are just waiting to be gathered and garnered. Let this be our encouragement and let us endeavour to reap as well as sow.

The true minister will be Divinely instructed (v. 24). *Prayer* is the first element of instruction. 'Pray ye.' Prayer must always be a powerful feature in every true ministry. Intercessory prayer prepares the way for our message, and the more we pray the more successful our labours will be. Action must follow prayer: 'Go.' They must work as well as pray. They were to go confidently: 'I send you forth.' They were to go unencumbered: 'Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes'; and unanxious: 'Salute no man by the way.' Time was fleeting. There was no opportunity for the elaborate politeness of the Eastern salutation. So is it ever. In

spite of the dangers, we may go without fear, and our soul must be in earnest as we drop what might be an encumbrance, or set aside what might be a hindrance to our work. Time presses, souls are passing from us, we must have our eye on the clock of opportunity, and while courteous, kind, and thoughtful, we must spend no time or strength on things that are meaningless and empty. Consecration must be seen in Concentration if our ministry is to be what God desires.

## II. *Plans (vv. 5-11).*

The salutation to be given is noteworthy (*v. 5f.*). The opening word was characteristic of their message: 'Peace.' The Gospel of Peace is the essential characteristic of the message of Redemption. So also the God of Peace is the most frequently found title of God in the New Testament. Peace on earth was the angels' song. 'Preaching peace by Jesus Christ' was the Apostolic message. 'Be ye reconciled to God' is our call to-day, for 'He is our peace.' No one will ever preach the Gospel aright who does not make very prominent, perhaps predominant, this message of Peace. Peace between God and man through Redemption; and then peace between man and man; peace between the elements of man's own nature as the result of peace with God, for 'being justified by faith we have peace.'

Their ministration followed their salutation (*vv. 7-9*). Their behaviour is first of all indicated (*v. 7f.*). It is our life that tells. It must ever be Christ, not self. We must accept what we find in the spirit of these instructions. Their work was to be healing (*v. 9*), and their testimony the nearness and imminence of the Kingdom of God (*v. 9*). If they were not received they were to leave and bear witness, rebuking them in the name of their God (*v. 10f.*). Along these lines we have still to travel, labouring, preaching, witnessing, warning, and rebuking. He is the true minister who lives and works according to these plans.

### III. *Protection* (vv. 12-16).

But there is another side. They are not to go alone, or at their own charges. He Who sends, supplies; He Who commands, controls; He Who commissions, keeps.

Their opponents are to be condemned (vv. 12-15). Those who will not heed shall be brought into judgment. We need have no fear if after faithful preaching there are no results. Results are God's; processes ours; and if we fulfil our part we can leave the rest to Him.

Their hearers are to be honoured (v. 16). What a privilege, an unspeakable privilege, to be assured that 'He that heareth you, heareth Me.' Could anything be more inspiring and encouraging to the faithful preacher?

Their rejectors are to be dishonoured; 'He that despiseth you despiseth Me.' This is also true. If our message is God's, not our own, the rejection of it is a rejection of Him, not of us. This, too, however sad in consequences, should encourage the preacher amid difficulties.

### IV. *Proofs* (vv. 17-24).

The joyful return resulted (v. 17). The men set out according to the instructions given and in due course returned with joy, bearing witness to the effects (v. 17). It is always so. God's Word never returns void, and the man who proclaims it will have results which will afford him what is perhaps the most exquisite joy on earth, the joy of soul-winning.

The wise warning followed (vv. 18-20). The Master told them that He had been noting their work ('I saw,' v. 18). He also explained the success as due to His own gift (v. 19). And He bade them guard against spiritual pride, lest they fell into the snare of the devil (v. 20). How necessary these words are for all earnest soul-winners, experience abundantly shows. The successful minister is tempted to think that his success is due to his own powers, and he 'burns incense' to his own net. Spurgeon

said a wise word when he remarked that the reason why God does not allow us to see more fruit from our labours is that on the top of the harvest load we should probably feel giddy and fall down. Everywhere and always when success crowns our efforts we must sing our *Non nobis, Domine*; 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us' (Psalm cxv. 1).

The Divine satisfaction, however, could not be withheld (vv. 21-24). The Master's joy in the disciples' success is evident (v. 21), and His testimony to their faithfulness on this account is all the more striking. He saw that a work of Divine grace was going on in these hearts, crude, elementary, and unspiritual as they were, and for this He praised God. And then He turned to His disciples and gave them the heartiest and highest possible encouragement, as He contrasted their lot with that of their forefathers, and the superior spiritual privileges they enjoyed (vv. 23, 24). Bruce suggests that evangelistic efforts were probably distasteful to the fastidious classes of society, and that herein lies the explanation of our Lord's satisfaction. Popular religious movements are usually objectionable to polite society. Foster's Essay suggests this in its very title, on 'The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion.' Making every allowance, and taking every precaution, this will probably always be the case. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' Meanwhile the Master's work must go on by means of the Master's disciples, in the Master's way, and for the Master's glory. Then will come the Master's satisfaction and the Master's praise—and if the Master praises, 'what are men?'

And so we find in this varied work three great aspects of ministry.

1. The Call to Service. It comes from Christ as 'Lord of the Harvest.' It is due to the great need, 'fields white'; and it is pointed by the sad fact that there are so very few to engage on it; 'the labourers are few.'

2. The Character of the Worker. Summing up all that we find here we observe the elements of Simplicity, Earnestness, Winsomeness, and Faithfulness: Let us ever test ourselves by these.

3. The Consequence of Labour. We see what the Lord told His disciples to expect ; Blessing, Knowledge, Fellowship, Satisfaction.

The ministry is therefore at once arduous and glorious ; the noblest and the most difficult of tasks ; the highest and the holiest of enterprises.



## CHAPTER III

### THE MINISTRY OF ST. PAUL

THERE is one Epistle in which more than in any other St. Paul lays bare his heart and soul. It is 2 Corinthians, which is his Apologia in the face of opposition, animosity, and calumny. Stung to the quick by the charges, taunts, and actions of his enemies, he reveals himself as he does nowhere else, and in so doing he lets us see some of the outstanding qualifications of all true ministry. A few of these, out of the many references to his life and work, call for special meditation.

SECTION 1. SINCERITY (2 *Cor.* i. 12 ; ii. 17 ; iv. 2).

#### I. *The Apostle's Statements.*

1. He had evidently been charged with insincerity, especially in writing (*v.* 13), and he replies by challenging attention to the boasting of which he was never tired. 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.'

(a) First, he speaks of his life in the world, and especially in relation to them. It was 'a walk up and down' (*ἀναστροφή*) and was as public as it could well be as they in particular knew (*περισσοτέρως δὲ πρὸς ὑμᾶς*). How fearless was the challenge!

(b) Next, he names the positive elements of his life. 'In holiness (or 'singleness,' A. V.), and godly sincerity.'

(c) Then, he mentions the secret of it all: 'Not in



fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.' It was this complete and utter fearlessness of conscience that could make him freely ask their prayers (*v.* 11), especially as his letters (*v.* 13), and also his life, had been unambiguous, straight, and true.

2. But his work as well as his character had been questioned (*ch.* ii. 17), and to this he now turns his attention. He repels the charge with scorn and makes it recoil on the head of his enemies.

(a) 'We are not as the many corrupting the Word of God.' The word 'corrupting' is vivid and arresting. It refers to the huckster who gave bad measure, and to the dishonest tavern-keeper who adulterated his goods. We, says the great Apostle, are not men of this sort, 'making merchandise of the Word of God.'

(b) On the contrary, 'as of sincerity,' yea more 'as of God,' 'in God's presence' and 'in Christ' he spoke his Master's message. It is a terrible thing for a man to qualify or modify the Gospel in any way, tempering its severity, compromising its righteousness, or lowering its standard. To insert our own ideas is to 'play the huckster' with the Word of the living God.

3. Once again St. Paul refers to his sincerity (*ch.* iv. 2). 'But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.' Another charge had probably been made, this time of deceit and cunning. It is an awful thing to impute motives, for of necessity it tends to destroy confidence.

(a) He had 'foresworn the hidden things of baseness.'

(b) He was not walking in craft or unprincipled trickery.

(c) He had not proclaimed the Word with guile or deceit.

(d) But by manifestation of the truth he was continually recommending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The one and only end and object of preaching is to pro-

claim and manifest the truth in such a way as that it shall have its due effect on human hearts in the sight of God, and the preacher must take special care that no hindrance to the full manifestation comes from himself. As Denney finely says :

‘ One great hindrance to its manifestation may easily be its treatment by the preacher himself. If he wishes to do anything else at the same time, the manifestation will not take effect. If he wishes, in the very act of preaching, to conciliate a class, or an interest, to create an opinion in favour of his own learning, ability or eloquence ; to enlist sympathy for a cause or an institution which is only accidentally connected with the Gospel—the truth will not be seen, and it will not tell.’ <sup>1</sup>

And this is only possible as the preacher applies the truth to his own conscience (ch. i. 12), and commends it to the consciences of others (ch. iv. 2) To quote Denney again :—

‘ Conscience is not the abstract logical faculty in man, and the preacher’s business is therefore not to prove, but to proclaim, the Gospel. All he has to do is to let it be seen, and the more nakedly visible it is the better. His object is not to frame an irrefragable argument, but to produce an irresistible impression. There is no such thing as an argument to which it is impossible for a wilful man to make objections. . . . But there is such a thing as an irresistible impression—an impression made upon the moral nature against which it is vain to attempt any protest ; an impression which subdues and holds the soul for ever.’ <sup>2</sup>

## II. *The Present Application.*

As we ponder the Apostle’s hot, burning repudiation, what do we learn for the ministry ?

1. Sincerity of Motive. If we are seeking the ministry, or if we are exercising our ministry for anything short of the highest motives, we shall fail and suffer untold trouble. Simplicity *versus* duplicity is the prime essential, no *arrière pensée*, but a single eye to the glory of God. The word rendered ‘ sincerity ’ in chapter ii. 17, is said by Trench

<sup>1</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *The Expositor’s Bible*, p. 147.

to mean transparency, that which is judged in the sunlight, and found to be free from speck, or spot, or stain.

2. Sincerity of Speech. This is as important as sincerity of motive. There must be no exaggerations, no flattery, no withholding of the truth, but absolute frankness in declaring the message, whether men hear or whether they forbear.

3. Sincerity of Action. The possibilities of danger here are various. Sometimes avarice is the temptation ; at others the desire for popularity at the expense of faithfulness ; at others, again, the use of unlawful means to bring about spiritual results ; and, yet again, the personal ambition which thinks of self only in the ministry.

This solemn question of 'adulterating' the Word of God needs the most careful attention from all who are, or intend to be, ministers of the Gospel. Adulteration is practised in trade for various reasons. (a) To increase the bulk of the goods, and thereby to increase the seller's gain. (b) To cater to particular tastes. (c) To beat competitors. But the results invariably are to (a) depreciate the real value of food ; (b) degrade the business ; (c) deceive the customer, and (d) deprave the seller.

The application of this to the ministry is as evident as it is searching.

'There are two separable ideas here. One is that of men qualifying the Gospel, infiltrating their own ideas into the Word of God, tempering its severity, or perhaps its goodness, veiling its inexorableness, dealing in compromise. The other is that all such proceedings are faithless and dishonest, because some private interest underlies them. It need not be avarice, though it is as likely to be this as anything else. A man corrupts the Word of God, makes it the stock-in-trade of a paltry business of his own in many other ways than by subordinating it to the need of a livelihood. When he exercises his calling as a minister for the gratification of his vanity, he does so. When he preaches not that awful message in which life and death are bound up, but himself, his cleverness, his learning, his humour, his fine voice even, or fine gestures, he does so. He makes the Word minister to him, instead of being a minister of the Word ; and that is the essence of the sin. It is the same if ambition be his motive, if he preaches to win disciples to himself, to gain an

ascendency over souls, to become the head of a party which will bear the impress of his mind. There was something of this at Corinth ; and not only there, but wherever it is found, such a spirit and such interests will change the character of the Gospel. It will not be preserved in that integrity, in that simple, uncompromising, absolute character which it has as revealed in Christ. Have another interest in it than that of God, and that interest will inevitably colour it. You will make it what it was not, and the virtue will depart from it.' <sup>1</sup>

Bishop Moule tells of a Cambridge clergyman who had an empty church, but even men who seldom attended would have sent for him if they were dying. Men inevitably detect the spurious and the genuine in the long run. The majority may not, but the spiritual few will, for 'he that is spiritual discerneth all things.' And woe be to the minister who has been 'found out' by the spiritually-minded among his people.

Thus a man must be right all round ; right with his message, right with himself, right with his Master. Nothing can make up for simple sincerity in the ministry.

### III. *The Simple Secret.*

How is this to be accomplished ? How is so high an ideal to be realized ? As everything else in the Christian life, in a very simple way.

1. Live in the searchlight of truth. Listen to the Apostle ; 'before God,' 'of God,' 'in Christ.' He lived 'under the Great Task-Master's eye,' and in that scrutiny he had no fear of man's words or deeds. 'They say. What do they say ? Let them say.' The man who prays 'Search me, O God,' will add, 'Thou hast searched me,' and the result will be satisfaction unspeakable even amid slanders otherwise unbearable.

2. Live in the safeguard of prayer. 'If,' says the Psalmist, 'I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' but when iniquity is not regarded and the soul is uplifted to God in prayer, the evil of insincerity not only cannot enter, but is effectually displaced by that

<sup>1</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 97 f.

spirit of sincerity which is one of the essential features of a ministry of power and blessing. He is thereby united to Christ and is enabled to speak and live 'in Christ,' safe, secure, and satisfied in the exercise of his calling.

## SECTION 2. CERTITUDE (2 *Cor.* 1. 19).

Among the charges laid against the Apostle was that of vacillation (see *vv.* 15–20), and he replies and vindicates himself. But in so doing he characteristically goes much farther than a mere reference to himself. He brings in his Master and his message, and says that his message to them had not been unstable (*v.* 18), because it concerned the Son of God Who was by no means vacillating and unstable (*v.* 19). The text is abrupt and expressive of the Apostle's intense feeling, but the general meaning is clear. Weymouth's Version brings out the ideas very forcibly and suggestively.

'Did I display any vacillation or caprice in this? Or the purposes which I form—do I form them on worldly principles, now crying, "Yes, yes," and now, "No, no?" As certainly as God is faithful, our language to you is not now "Yes" and now "No." For Jesus Christ the Son of God—He Who was proclaimed among you by us, that is by Silas and Timothy and myself—did not show Himself a waverer between "Yes" and "No," but it was and always is "Yes" with Him.'

This is man's deepest need, certitude. Carlyle's 'Everlasting Yea' is expressive of an universal yearning.

### I. *Certitude in Christ.*

The Gospel of Christ is 'a mighty affirmation,' it has no ambiguities.

1. There is the 'Yea' of a Divine Assurance. The Gospel is the 'Good News' of God's love. In the Person of His Son God's love is assured to the whole world. There is nothing hesitating or vacillating in this; it has all the power of a Divine fact.

2. There is the 'Yea' of a Divine Welcome. God is



ready to receive all who will respond to His love. His welcome is at once hearty and lasting, and nothing is more certain than the assurance that 'God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

3. There is the 'Yea' of a Divine Security. One of the great foundation words of the Bible is the word 'Covenant,' as expressive of God's relations to man, and it is 'an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.' This Covenant is expressed in the Atonement, the Blood of the new Covenant, and manifested in the grace of God. The Covenant of Grace is the great foundation fact which assures men of every security in Christ.

So that Christ is not an Uncertainty but a Certainty, not a mere Ideal, but a Redeemer, and this assurance is absolute, decisive, complete, and unchangeable.

## II. *Certitude in the Preacher.*

If the message is certain surely the messenger ought to be, and can be.

'It is in this positive, definite, unmistakable character that the strength of the Gospel lies. What a man cannot know, cannot seize, cannot tell, he cannot preach.'<sup>1</sup>

1. The Need of Certitude is great and constant. The underlying thought is that life and character are determined by the interest that predominates in them, that occupation reacts on the spiritual life and fashions it. Paul's life was permeated and influenced by the Gospel he preached. As there was nothing shifting in that, so there was nothing shifty in him. Our message should be definite, positive, and unchanging. The unrest to-day has affected so many that as Dr. Forsyth has aptly said, instead of crying out, as of old 'Here am I,' they ask 'Where am I?' It must not be 'Yes' and 'Nay,' now one thing and now another, it must come from the deep convictions of one who can say 'I know.' If we do not

<sup>1</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 41.

know we cannot preach, for there is no real message apart from convictions, as people only too easily see and feel. Dr. Forsyth said some time ago :—

‘The difficulty that caused most of the ills that afflicted them in their Churches at the present moment was not that men were wrong, but that they were in a cloud and did not know where they were. The thing most necessary and the thing they must lay their foundations on was that men should be turned out, not knowing a whole theology, but at least knowing the trend which theology should follow, and which would give them a foothold from which they would not be removed, however widely their vision might be enlarged.’

2. The Elements of Certitude are obvious. We must preach a threefold Christ. Christ as a Saviour for Pardon ; Christ as Sanctification for Power ; Christ as Satisfaction for Peace. These are the deepest and most constant needs, Pardon ; Power ; Peace, and the man who proclaims them positively, definitely and whole-heartedly will never lack hearers or blessing.

3. The Secret of Certitude is not far to seek. It means that our own soul should be at anchorage in union and communion with Christ. The anchorage of trust ; relying on, and receiving from Him. The anchorage of fellowship ; through prayer and the Bible. The anchorage of testimony ; telling out our experience and thereby confirming it. If only we live in the abundant wealth of Scripture we shall never have a poor or faltering message. Spirituality is our greatest guarantee of certitude, as secularity is our greatest foe. The man to whom Christ is real, vital, precious, is the man who speaks with unfaltering tongue because he ‘ knows Whom he has believed ’ (2 Tim. i. 12.)

### SECTION 3. LIMITATIONS (2 Cor. i. 24).

The Apostle has been defending himself against the charge of fickleness, and here he digresses to say a word about his ministry. Denney says that, like Plato’s, Paul’s digressions are sometimes more attractive than



arguments. He tells the Corinthians that it was to spare them he had not come, and that if he really wished to lord it over them he would have come sooner. And if after verse 23 they should be tempted to say, 'And who, pray, is he who speaks like this?' the answer is given by anticipation in verse 24. 'Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.' Like Peter, he would not 'lord it over God's heritage' (1 Pet. v. 3), and as he himself said to Roman Christians, he is just as ready to receive as to give a blessing (Rom. i. 11). So we have here St. Paul's plain statement about the limitations of a spiritual ministry exercised through human agency.

### I. *What the Ministry is not.*

'Not for that we have dominion over your faith.'

1. The realm of personal faith is a realm between the soul and God into which the ministry cannot enter. A minister cannot create faith in God in another. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,' and all the minister can do is to provide the materials and opportunity for faith by the proclamation of the Gospel. Nor can the minister compel or coerce faith; the most he can do is to persuade to it. Above all, the minister cannot kill faith. If faith dies it will be by suicide, not by murder. What the minister can do is either to strengthen or to shake faith. He can confirm it, or cause it to waver. A serious position enough, but that is as far as he can go.

2. When this is realized it is at once evident that the minister is not a Director. We must beware lest the ministry ever becomes a Directorate of the soul. This is the *esse* of the Roman Catholic view of the ministry, and it can easily become the *esse* of many a Protestant ministry. But it is futile and fatal in both. In the Roman Catholic the Minister as a Director is really a source of spiritual weakness rather than of strength. It is not possible for any but the morbid to tell everything thor-

oughly to a human being. As some one says, speaking from personal experience :—

‘Confession at the fullest is only partial, and the unconfessed sins vastly outnumber the confessed, leaving the very uncomfortable result of a work imperfectly done. The only escape for the sinner is in coming face to face with the Cross. It is just at this point where confession breaks down.’<sup>1</sup>

And a Roman Catholic priest of wide experience not long ago said that during his many years of experience in the confessional he had never once received a confession of the sin of covetousness. And yet perhaps there is no sin so prevalent as covetousness in its various forms. The same thing is true of anything like a Protestant Ministerial Directorate. It weakens the individuality, tends to lead the soul to use the minister as a crutch, keeps the soul an invalid instead of sending it forth to walk in newness of life. Whether therefore in its Roman Catholic or in its Protestant form, “Clericalism is the enemy.” We must carefully distinguish between ministerial *direction* and ministerial *guidance*. By all means let us teach, and lead, and guide, but never, never let us control. The ministry is a medium, not a mediation. Faith is a personal matter between the soul and God, and is intended to grow towards maturity, and grow it will, if it is not interfered with.

## II. *What the Ministry is.*

‘Helpers of your joy.’

1. Helpers. What a fine, suggestive, and satisfying idea of ministry! Nothing could be more inspiring. A Helper. What more could man wish to be? Teaching with authority is not dictating to the conscience, or forcing your personality on another, or compelling another to reproduce you. A helper of others will endeavour to develop their personality and make them as far as possible independent of himself. It is sometimes charged

<sup>1</sup> Cauldwell, *The Cross in Dark Places*, p. 110.

against Theological Colleges that they tend to make men into machines, all of one pattern, echoes of their teachers, and unable to deviate from certain lines of action. I am not so sure from my own experience whether this is actually the case or not, but we can at least heed the warning and follow the counsel given by the Lambeth Conference to Theological Colleges to encourage men to think for themselves and to form their own conclusions. We must beware of accepting without testing, of assimilating without verifying. We must collect facts, grasp principles, and then draw deductions for ourselves, and in proportion as we are thus truly individualistic ourselves we shall be "helpers" to our people to become the same.

2. But in particular we are to be 'Helpers of Joy.' Joy is the ideal of the Christian life. 'Rejoice in the Lord always.' Is this so to-day in ourselves and in our Churches? Pensiveness is not a New Testament note; wistfulness finds no place in the Christian life of the New Testament. Joy is the supreme fact and factor of the Gospel of Christianity. The joy of Salvation, of Truth, of Holiness, of Fellowship, of Service, of Hope. 'Joy unspeakable and full of glory.' And it is the minister's duty to help this joy in every possible way. How? By possessing it himself, by preaching it, and by living it. There is nothing so inspiring, uplifting, strengthening as Christian joy. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.' Suffering often hardens; joy never does. Suffering often saddens; joy always gladdens, and as 'good news' is the essence of the Gospel, so 'glad tidings' should be the substance of the preacher's message.

### III. *What the Ministry requires.*

If this work is to be done two things are needed.

1. We must cultivate our own individuality. This is the fundamental requirement of all who would lead and guide their fellows. What a fine testimony Mr. Asquith gave to his old Head Master, Dr. Abbott, of the City of London School. After praising his scholarship and its

effect on his pupils in 'those stimulating and vivifying lessons,' the Prime Minister said :—

'But, my old schoolfellows, *behind and beyond all that there was something more.* There was the force, the influence, the personality of a man cultured, disinterested, austere, but, at the same time, with a vivid interest in the affairs of mankind, and in everything that concerned the boys who came under his charge, I am perfectly certain there is not a full-grown man here who in those days—the days of the '60's and the '70's—was under Dr. Abbott's tuition and guidance who will not agree with me that the most precious possession we took away with us from the City of London School, whether to Oxford or Cambridge, or to the works of business and to the avocations of life, was the sense of that strong, self-sufficing, but, at the same time, widespread, vivifying, many-sided personality to which many of us have looked back in the stress and strain of life as the best example and the best influence.'

So must it be with the true minister. His must be a wholehearted, manly personality if he is to instruct and inspire his people.

2. And the minister must also cultivate self-effacement. This is no contradiction of the foregoing, but the most perfect complement. Individuality and yet self-effacement, and the greater the personality the more thorough the self-effacement. We must ever guard against the danger of the strong will dominating the weak ; we must ever watch against forgetfulness of our limitations. Like the Baptist, while we must take care to be a voice, that is, a real sound and not a mere echo, we must also take care to be only a voice, that is, the expression of a personality which is summed up in the words, 'Not I, but Christ.'

And the one secret of all this is to make Christ real in our own experiences. Only thereby shall we avoid the dangers and fulfil the duties of the ministry. If like the Baptist we say, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' we shall find to our joy that souls will be helped and blessed by our ministry, led to Christ, kept near to Him, growing up in Him, used by Him in His service and for His glory. And this is the end of all ministry.

## SECTION 4. RESPONSIBILITY (2 Cor. ii. 14, 15).

We have here a characteristic outburst of the Apostle. He had been narrating purely personal matters (*vv.* 12, 13), and especially his suspense through the absence of Titus. When he could bear it no longer he went forth to meet him in Macedonia. He met him and received a full account of Church matters at Corinth (*ch.* vii. 5, 6), but his heart is so full that he cannot stay to say anything further of these personal concerns; he bursts out into thanksgiving at the thought of his ministry. Let us ponder what he says.

I. *The Splendour of the Ministry.*

1. It was a Triumph. 'Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' How are we to read this? With the A.V., 'which always causeth us to triumph?' Or with the R.V., 'which always leadeth us in triumph?' Etymological considerations alone would lead to the rendering of the R.V., especially in the light of the same word in Colossians ii. 15. But the idea of the context is not that of God's triumph in Paul, but of Paul's triumph through the Gospel. The thought of Paul as a 'conquered enemy' is not in the passage, and the word should probably be rendered quite generally as meaning to make a show, or spectacle, indicating glory not disgrace.<sup>1</sup> Even those who, like Denney, adhere to the etymology, and render with the R.V., are compelled to admit 'a certain air of irrelevance' in the interpretation (*p.* 87), and seem unable to give a satisfying meaning in the light of the context. And so without hesitation we retain the A.V., and render it so as to refer to Paul's own triumph in Christ. The Corinthians, or a

<sup>1</sup> So that acute scholar, Dr. Field, in his *Notes on the Translation of the New Testament* (*p.* 181). Cf. Denney, *2 Corinthians* (*p.* 86). Schmeidel, Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity* (*p.* 79), and McClellan, *Expositor*, Series 6, vol. x. *p.* 192, are ample authorities for preferring the A.V.



section of them, had been bitterly opposing him and his Gospel, but the good tidings received from Titus showed that the devil had not been allowed to have the victory. God had enabled His servant to triumph in Christ, and this was his invariable experience, for 'God *always* causeth us to triumph.'

2. It was also a Testimony. 'And maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.' Wherever he went God used him to reveal His will, His grace, His love, Himself. The 'fragrance' of God was evidently everywhere through the Apostle's testimony. The triumph was granted for the sole purpose of making known the Gospel of Divine Grace. It was God's will that His Gospel should be victorious, and this was actually brought about by the instrumentality of the Apostle. Wherever he went the self-righteous, the despairing, the hard-hearted, the indifferent were led to Christ, and to the knowledge and acceptance of His Gospel. This was the glory, the splendour of the ministry. So it is always, the triumph and testimony of the Gospel of Grace and Peace.

## II. *The Solemnity of the Ministry.*

But there is another side to be noticed and emphasized. Although there were triumphs, there were also rejections of the Gospel. God does not compel assent and insist on adhesion. And so, while in them that were being saved St. Paul could say that he was 'a sweet savour of Christ to God,' it is not at first easy to realize how he could say that he was the same 'in them that were perishing.' What can this mean? It should be carefully noted that in both cases the recipient of the fragrance is God, not man. 'We are unto God.' It is not that the sweet savour is received by the hearers of the Gospel of both classes, but that in both cases the incense ascends to God, the 'sweet savour' of grace in one case and of justice in the other. It means that God is glorified in the saved and vindicated in the lost, and that if a minister does his duty, God regards his work with satisfaction whatever be the



outcome. Even if there are no results God is pleased with a faithful ministry. How solemn and searching this is, no words are needed to point out.

### III. *The Satisfaction of the Ministry.*

1. The Apostle's outburst of thanksgiving shows that his heart rejoiced at the results of the ministry. To be 'a fragrance of Christ,' and that 'to God,' was the highest possible joy of his life, and he could not but express his joy in thankfulness. Wherever he went he had more or less of success, but beyond this, in all cases, among saved and perishing alike, a fragrance of Christ was ever ascending to God, though not of the same nature; and it was in this view of all the consequences that the Apostle breaks forth in a strain of praise.

2. But he was not unconscious of the awful seriousness of the other side. His ministry was 'a savour of death unto death' to those who were unwilling to receive Christ, and that the Apostle keenly felt this is evident from his concluding words, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' The minister has to realize and preach these alternatives; the greater the mercy, the greater the condemnation. Susceptibility decreases in proportion to resistance, and moral sufficiency increases as men become conscious of opportunities lost.

'It remains finally inexplicable that the Gospel, which appeals to some with winning irresistible power, subduing and leading them in triumph, should excite in others a passion of antipathy which nothing else could provoke. This remains inexplicable, because it is irrational. Nothing that can be pointed to in the universe is the least like a bad heart closing itself against the love of Christ, like a bad man's will stiffening into absolute rigidity against the will of God. The preaching of the Gospel may be the occasion of such awful results, but it is not their cause. . . . When we match our self-will against the gracious saving will of God, our pride, our passions, our mere sloth, against the soul-constraining love of Christ; when we prevail in the war which God's mercy wages with our wickedness—then the Gospel itself may be said to have ministered to our ruin; it was ordained to life, and we have made it a sentence of death. Yet even so,

it is the joy and glory of God ; it is a sweet savour to Him, fragrant of Christ and His love.' <sup>1</sup>

And so there are only two classes of men, and the ministry is either the *cause* of good, or the *occasion* of evil. If men are saved, it is by Divine Grace ; if they are lost, it is by their own sin and in spite of Divine Grace. The Gospel becomes hidden from those who are unwilling to look at it (ch. iv. 3f). ' But now they are hid from thine eyes ' (Luke xix. 42). It is God's will for all to be saved, but He never compels, and if men ' will not come,' they cannot receive and enjoy the blessings He has prepared in Christ for them. The Gospel in itself is good, and nothing but good, but it has the most diverse effects among men. The same sun that melts ice hardens clay, and the Gospel, while accepted by some is rejected by others, and becomes ' death unto death ' to those who set themselves to reject it. God is not mocked, and whether in salvation or rejection He will be vindicated and His servants justified.

Well may St. Paul cry out, ' Who is sufficient for these things ? ' The Christian ministry is not to be taken up lightly, or prosecuted without the profoundest thought, the deepest feeling, and the tenderest sympathies for the wandering, the lost, and the perishing.

#### SECTION 5. ASPECTS (2 *Cor.* ii. 17 ; iv. 5 ; v. 11 ; v. 20).

The ministry, as exercised by St. Paul, had several aspects according to the work required, and the various words used by him to describe what he did are full of suggestion for the ministry to-day.

##### I. *Speaking* (ch. ii. 17).

1. The message was God's Word and nothing else. A word from God. And to be delivered intact, unadulterated. And to be declared ' as of sincerity ; ' ' as of God ; ' ' in the sight of God ; ' ' in Christ ! '

2. The manner of delivery was simply ' speaking ; '

<sup>1</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 94.

natural, ordinary conversation, talking. 'Talk ye of all His wondrous works' (1 Chron. xvi. 9). 'Let the redeemed of the Lord say so' (Psa. cvii. 2). The earliest extension of Christianity to the Gentiles went along this natural line. Certain men came to Antioch and 'spake' to the Greeks (Acts xi. 20). We should cultivate this ordinary, natural way of declaring God's truth. While there is of course necessary and ample place for the more set and elaborate discourse, there is equal call, perhaps a greater call, for simple, natural testimony to God and His Word in our ordinary speech. Our message should not be far away at any time, with perfect naturalness we should be ready to give it in ordinary speech and conversation.

## II. *Heralding* (ch. iv. 5).

1. The Manner here is noteworthy. 'We herald.' This is an important aspect of the Christian ministry. There is no 'bated breath and whispered humbleness' about the announcement of a herald. The attitude and tone indicate confidence and fearlessness. He knows his Master, his Master's position, authority, and power, and he declares his message accordingly. What an illustration of the Christian minister as he declares his message.

2. The Message. 'We herald not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' Not ourselves, but Him. Observe the force of the three titles: *Christ, Jesus, Lord*. His threefold relation (a) to God (Christ), (b) to the sinner (Jesus), (c) to the believer (Lord). This is the substance of our message; the proclamation of a personal, Divine, redeeming Lord. Not ourselves, but Him. A friend of mine, himself a notable preacher, went once to hear two very great preachers, and when I asked him his impressions, he said, 'In the one case I could not see the man for the Master. In the other I could not see the Master for the man.' 'Not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.' And yet, 'ourselves as your slaves for the sake of Jesus.'

‘Not I, but Christ, be honoured, loved, exalted.’ This is a theme worthy of all the heralding we can give to it.

### III. *Persuading* (ch. v. 11).

1. The method is to be carefully noted. ‘We persuade.’ We impel, though we cannot compel. Persuasion is the one element of Christian preaching which keeps a sermon from being a mere essay. The truth is to be applied and acted on, not merely to be placed before people. It is for acceptance as well as consideration. We do not simply preach *before* men, we preach *to* them with a view to immediate and definite action. No sermon is worthy of the name that does not contain this essential element of persuasion.

2. The reason of such a method is seen in the Apostle’s words. ‘Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord.’ It is this element of fear that constitutes the supreme reason for persuasion. Fear [is a note far too seldom heard to-day in preaching and teaching. By an apparently inevitable rebound we have gone to the other extreme of dwelling on the element of love to the omission of fear. But we must find room for both if we would be true to the New Testament revelation. Modern teaching about the universal Fatherhood of God tends to rob the Gospel of its solemn and even severe element. God is regarded as a benign, gentle Father, Who will not be too severe with His wayward children. But the New Testament idea of Fatherhood always includes the elements of righteousness and fear. ‘If ye call on the *Father*, Who without respect of persons *judgeth* according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear’ (1 Pet. i. 17). It is a serious and fatal error to omit the note of fear from our preaching. There is reason for Dr. Dale’s remark to a friend; ‘No one fears God nowadays.’ But there are signs of return to a better mind. Men are finding out that the moral and spiritual results of preaching love and avoiding fear are not satisfactory, and as a consequence the old note of fear is coming once again

into the messages. A well known Cambridge scholar, Dr. Bethune Baker, has voiced this need in a little work in which he pleads for the return of the element of fear in preaching.

'We have almost ceased to teach what has been called "the Gospel of Fear." . . . We have quietly dropped the word "damned" altogether. A new school of theology arose that made the Incarnation and the Love of God the Gospel, in place of the Atonement and the Fear of God. . . . But surely the reaction has gone too far. . . . And surely the Love of God—the Everlasting Arms ever open to receive His children—is not the whole of the Gospel. . . . But did He not also hate evil, were He not wounded by every failure and lapse of His child, were He not also Judge to "make inquisition for sin"—the less were He Love and Father. We must preach this part of the Gospel too. Welcome always awaiting the prodigal; but he must set his face homewards first. Healing for every transgression; but we must first turn away from it unto the Lord.' <sup>1</sup>

#### IV. *Representing* (ch. v. 20).

1. The Christian minister is an ambassador on behalf of Christ, and his message as such is noteworthy and striking. It is nothing less than the announcement that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,' and that based on this, it is the work of the minister to beseech men to be reconciled to God (v. 21). This is the very heart of the Christian Gospel, the message of Reconciliation. Estrangement in St. Paul's teaching is two-sided, not one-sided only (Denney, p. 211). Something in God as well as in man had to be dealt with if there was to be reconciliation, and it is this 'something' which constitutes the centre and core of the Christian message.

'"Reconciliation" in the New Testament sense is not something which *we accomplish* when we lay aside our enmity to God; it is something which *God accomplished* when in the death of Christ He put away everything that on His side meant estrangement, so that He might come and preach peace.' <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Old Faith and the New Learning*, pp. 48–51.

<sup>2</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 212.



Canon Simpson well says that 'Luther was only stating in the form of a brilliant paradox the very essence of the Pauline doctrine of Justification when he exclaimed, *Ego sum tuum peccatum, tu es justitia mea.*'<sup>1</sup> The fuller quotation from the great Reformer is worthy of reproduction :—

'Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art my Righteousness, I am Thy sin. Thou hast taken what was mine, and hast given me what was Thine. What Thou wast not Thou dost become, that I might become what I was not.'

And this is pre-eminently the message of the Gospel.

'When St. Paul says that God has given him the ministry of reconciliation, he means that he is a preacher of this peace. He ministers reconciliation to the world. His work has no doubt a hortatory side, as we shall see, but that side is secondary. It is not the main part of his vocation to tell men to make their peace with God, but to tell them that God has made peace with the world. At bottom, the Gospel is not good advice, but good news. All the good advice it gives is summed up in this—Receive the good news. But if the good news be taken away ; if we cannot say, God has made peace, God has dealt seriously [with His condemnation of sin, so that it no longer stands in the way of your return to Him ; if we cannot say, Here *is* the reconciliation, receive it, then for man's actual state we have no Gospel at all.'<sup>2</sup>

The man who knows this by blessed, personal experience is the man who alone can properly perform the functions of an ambassador for Christ.

2. But the methods of the ambassador must not be overlooked. 'As though God were entreating you by us ; we beseech' (v. 20). 'And . . . we entreat you also' (ch. vi. 1). The ambassador 'exhorting' and 'beseeching' is a striking contrast. He comes in his Master's Name and begs the acceptance of the Divine reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup> Simpson, *Fact and Faith*, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 213.



'Most expositors notice the amazing contrast between *πρεσβεύομεν* ("we are ambassadors") and *δεόμεθα* ("we beseech you"). The ambassador, as a rule, stands upon his dignity; he maintains the greatness of the person whom he represents. But Paul in this lowly passionate entreaty is not false to his Master; he is preaching the Gospel in the spirit of the Gospel; he shows that he has really learned of Christ; the very conception of the ambassador descending to entreaty is, as Calvin says, an incomparable commendation of the grace of Christ . . . in his dignity as Christ's ambassador and as the mouthpiece of God, in his humility, in his passionate earnestness, in the urgency and directness of his appeal, St. Paul is the supreme type and example of the Christian minister.'

As we review these four aspects of the Christian ministry do we not see something of its greatness, its grandeur, its intensity, its applicability? Be it ours to enter into these elements and realize them in our service in the power of the Spirit of God.

#### SECTION 6. THE FOUNDATION (2 *Cor.* vi. 3f.).

The highest aspect of the Christian minister is that of an ambassador with the ministry of reconciliation (*ch.* v. 19–21). The chief requirement of the minister is character, and without this all ideas of office or work go for naught.

##### I. *The Possible Evil.*

1. The minister must not give any occasion of stumbling, lest the ministry be blamed. Our Lord laid great stress on the possibility and danger of occasions of stumbling (*σκανδάλα*), and of the consequent need of watchful caution. The application of this to the ministry is particularly pressing, for some people seem to be only too ready to use anything as an excuse against a clergyman.

2. This danger may take various forms. A minister may be marked by ignorance and shallowness while

<sup>1</sup> Denney, *The Expositor's Bible*, 2 Corinthians, p. 216.

occupied with the highest possible themes. He may be full of conceit and pride while proclaiming humility. He may be actuated by worldliness and self-advantage while warning against ambition. He may be dominated by indolence and ease while urging self-sacrifice. He may be influenced by selfishness and avarice while extolling liberality. He may be guilty of unspirituality while insisting on the highest spirituality. There is no greater danger, no more serious peril, than that of a gulf between word and deed, between message and character, between preaching and practice.

3. This peril comes to the minister by various channels, as to which he needs to be on guard. Sometimes it is due to bodily strain. The pressure upon body and nerves leads to a breakdown which reflects on consistency and character. At other times the intellectual demands of the ministry may lead to the same sad result. The pressure upon his intellectual life to provide material for his people may easily lead him to forget the application to himself. He may preach an ideal which he not only does not realize, but shows no sign of doing so. And he will fail to 'lure to brighter worlds' unless he himself 'leads the way.' Again, trying circumstances may lead to failure in Christian living. People are exacting, irritating, annoying, and in his impatience he gives way to some outbreak of peevishness, or perhaps even of temper, which at once spoils his ministry and leads people to reflect on the difference between his preaching and his practice. And so, whatever be the cause, we lose by our life what we say by our lips, and the ministry is blamed because we have given occasion of stumbling.

## II. *The Definite Duty.*

1. We must 'commend' the ministry by our life (v. 4). 'In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.' In chapter iv. 2, St. Paul had spoken similarly of 'commending ourselves to every man's conscience in

the sight of God.' There is no contradiction here to the apparent contrasts in chapter iii. 1 and chapter v. 12, where he deprecates 'commending himself,' for the motive and purpose of the 'commendation' are quite different. The minister commends himself as a minister, as a servant of God, and as representing his Master.

2. But how is this to be done? St. Paul tells us of several ways.

(a) Sometimes it will be by suffering (*vv.* 4, 5).

(b) Sometimes it will be by doing (*vv.* 6, 7, 8a).

(c) Sometimes it will be by being (*vv.* 8b, 9, 10).

It is far easier to record and recount these various methods of commending the ministry than to reproduce them in natural life, and yet this is the ideal to be aimed at, and by the grace of God realized.

### III. *The Simple Secret.*

How is this life to be lived? That is the supreme question for all ministers.

1. The first point to be remembered is that conduct is only truly based on character, and life can only be lived aright if it is the expression of what we are. No emphasis can be too great on ministerial character. We are too apt to think of ministerial reputation, but this is always erroneous and may prove disastrous. Let a man take care of his character and God will take care of his reputation. Never a thought need be given to reputation, which will be all that is essential if only our character is right with God.

2. And character in turn is based on communion with God. Faithfulness springs from fellowship, and the man who stands right with man is he who keeps right with God. Communion with God purifies, clarifies, solidifies the inner life and makes the man what he should be. And this communion is only possible through prayer and the Bible. In prayer we commune with God; in the Bible He communes with us. The two together provide

all that we need for the protection, sanctification, and consecration of daily living. As with Joshua of old, the man who makes God's Word his daily meditation will find his way prosperous and will have good success.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MINISTRY IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

**I**T is in the Pastoral Epistles that naturally we find much about St. Paul's view of the ministry. And of these a special interest attaches to 2 Timothy, because it contains the Apostle's last words. They are personal revelations of himself given as counsels to Timothy. The position of the Apostle gives pathos to the writing. He was in prison, and yet is full of cheer and hope as he bids his timid young friend to look forward to life and work. The weakness (perhaps partly physical) of Timothy was ever in view, and Paul valued him highly because of his earnestness.

#### SECTION 1. THE MINISTERIAL GIFT (2 *Tim.* i. 6f.).

##### I. *A Reminder.*

1. Of a gift bestowed. 'The gift of God which is in thee through the putting on of my hands.'

Dr. Hort (*Christian Ecclesia*, p. 186) distinguishes between this and the counsel in 1 Tim. iv. 14; 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery'; and regards this as not referring to Ordination only, but to the whole life (v. 5). In any case, it means the Holy Spirit as a definite Divine gift.

2. Of the need of using the bestowed gift. 'Stir up,' i.e. 'fan to a flame.' There was danger of the fire dying down, as there always is this peril in things spiritual. In medicine, the medicinal matter is on top and the water is at the bottom, and it must be shaken in order to give

every particle the medicinal quality. So in science, there is a difference between latent and energetic power, the former has to be transmuted into the latter. And so also in regard to human life, it is character that gives quality to action. When the excitation is withdrawn there is an inevitable tendency to precipitate itself. Hence the reason for 'stirring up' the gift, for fanning it into a flame.

## II. *A Reason.*

1. An actual gift had been bestowed, a gift which could be characterized in no uncertain terms, both negatively and positively. Negatively, it was 'not a spirit of fear,' or 'cowardice.' There was no fear in the Apostle. He neither cringed to the great nor was intimidated by the many. The ministry is in danger of being afraid. We may hide what we are, or have, or we may withhold what we possess. There may be simulation, or dissimulation, the pretence of what we are not, or the hiding of what we are. This is not the spirit of the Christian ministry. There must be no fear, no cowardice, nothing craven, or shrinking. But what precisely and positively does this spirit mean?

(a) It is a Spirit of Power. The Spirit of God is an energy in the soul, and a capability in speech and action. There is nothing more characteristic of Christianity than *δύναμις*, power, and that is part of our gift for life and ministry.

(b) It is a Spirit of Love. This is the method of the Spirit; overcoming opposition, rendering service, and suffering everything in an atmosphere of affection.

(c) It is a Spirit of Discipline. Not as the A.V., 'sound mind' (which would be *σωφροσύνη*), but 'discipline' (*σωφρονισμός*). It is the spirit of self-control, and the spirit which enables a man to control others.

These three elements of the gift show definitely what the Spirit is and does for the minister of Christ.



III. *A Remedy.*

How is the gift to be 'stirred up'?

1. We must recognize its possession. 'I believe' in the Holy Ghost, and I must believe that the Holy Ghost is in me. Let us take time to dwell on this; the Holy Spirit is actually dwelling in me.

2. We must remove all hindrances. As fire needs attention by the clearance of ashes, if the combustion is to have free course, so we must take care that no spiritual hindrance in us prevents the free movement of the Holy Spirit in and through us.

'The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.'

3. We must replenish the fuel. Fire needs both clearance and a fresh supply of fuel, and the soul requires fresh additions of the 'fuel' of the Word if the Spirit is to do His work. There is a close connexion between the Word and the Spirit; the Spirit uses and works through the Word, and it is only as the Spirit has the Word on which to work that He can fulfil God's will in us. He is the Spirit of *Truth*, and if God's truth is in us He will make it mighty and cause it to prevail.

SECTION 2. THE TWO DEPOSITS (2 *Tim.* i. 12-14).

The Apostle speaks here to his friend Timothy of two 'deposits.' In verse 12 'my deposit,' and in verse 14 'the beautiful deposit.' In these two phrases we have the ministerial life summed up.

I. *Our Deposit with Him* (v. 12.)

1. What it is. It must mean our lives. 'That which I have committed unto Him.' This is the true attitude of the Christian, and especially of the Christian minister. He is to 'yield' himself to God (Rom. vi. 13). To 'present' his body as a sacrifice to God (Rom. xii. 1). He

‘commits’ his soul to God (1 Pet. ii. 23). He ‘hands himself over’ on behalf of Christ (Acts xv. 26). This surrender must be definite, unreserved, irrevocable. We must ‘deposit’ ourselves with Him and abide there.

2. What it obtains. He guards, preserves, keeps our ‘deposit.’ The need of this is only too obvious; we cannot keep ourselves. Our life is ever at the mercy of sin, temptation, weakness, until and unless it is deposited safely with Him Who is ‘able to guard’ it.

3. How long does this last? ‘Against that day.’ The deposit is permanent, never to be recalled by us, never to be returned by Him, and never to be plucked out of His hand (John x. 28). Continuance is the main essential of the ministry. Our deposit is for ever.

4. What is involved in all this? It means deep conviction, and implies four steps in the spiritual life and attitude of the soul. Let us look carefully at the text and see how our experience travels. First, we *believe*: ‘Whom I have believed.’ Then, we *know*: ‘I know Whom I have believed.’ Then, we *commit*: ‘that which I have committed unto Him.’ Then, we are *persuaded*: ‘and am persuaded that He is able to keep.’ This means a ministry with an irrefragable conviction, and it is all essential. There can be no ministry, such as God intends, without this conviction. It is the only power against every form of materialism; against every phase of doubt; against every aspect of worldliness. Nothing can make up for the supreme assurance of conviction, and nothing can stand against it. The minister who possesses it has the pledge of everything that is worth having in Christian life and service.

## II. *His Deposit with us* (v. 14).

1. What it is. Undoubtedly this must mean the Gospel. ‘O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called’ (1 Tim. vi. 20). ‘Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me,

in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus ' (2 Tim. i. 13). This is the faith ' once delivered unto the saints ' (Jude 3), of which the Apostle speaks of himself as a trustee (1 Tim. i. 11). The Lord has handed over to us His glorious Gospel, His Divine message, and we are the trustees of so weighty a charge.

2. What it needs. Like our deposit with Him, so His with us needs ' guarding.' There are two acute dangers in ministerial work in relation to the Gospel. There is the danger of losing the truth of the Gospel by adulterating it, by mixing it with other ingredients, and so causing its purity and fulness to be lost. And there is the danger of losing the reality of the Gospel by weakening it in our life, through low standards, or inconsistencies. Whether by adulteration of truth, or by lowering the standard of life, we are only too apt to ' lose ' the deposit of the Gospel.

3 How it is preserved. In a threefold way. (a) By pondering it. (b) By living it. (c) By spreading it. Thought, life, testimony. Meditation, obedience, witness. When these three are combined, then, and only then, can we expect to guard the beautiful deposit.

4. The Divine Secret. ' By the Holy Ghost.' Herein lies the possibility of so pondering, living, and spreading the truth that it shall be for ever preserved. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul is the secret of all power. He makes the Truth real to the soul, and keeps it vital in life and service. He keeps the life strong, and maintains it at the right standard. Therefore our ministry must be ' in the Holy Ghost,' for only thus can we be sure of power and blessing.

As we review these two deposits and contemplate the two sides of the ministerial life we may sum up all by saying ; (1) We trust ; (2) He entrusts. (1) He keeps what we trust ; (2) We keep what He entrusts. In these two lie all things that pertain to life, godliness, and service.

### SECTION 3. THE VARIED SERVICE ( 2 Tim. ii.).

The whole of this chapter, taken up as it is with special

exhortations to Timothy, may be said to refer to the ministry. There are at least seven aspects under so many words or phrases. The keynote is in verse 1 ; ' Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' Timothy is exhorted to strength in Divine grace, and then is shown what the ministry is to be.

### I. *The Teacher* (v. 2)

It is his work to pass on the deposit (*ch.* i. 14), and the need of competent teachers is constant and great. Teaching is far too rare a characteristic in the ministry ; men can talk, or preach, or exhort, or appeal ; but none of these must be confused with teaching. Teaching is causing another to learn, and nothing short of this will suffice. We must not only endeavour to cultivate the teaching gift ourselves, but we must also ever be on the look-out for such to train them. The deepest, strongest, and most lasting results in the ministry accrue from those who can *teach*.

### II. *The Soldier* (v. 3).

The Christian man is here described as ' a beautiful soldier of Jesus Christ,' and he is exhorted to endure hardness, to regard himself as on campaign, and to be prepared to suffer accordingly. How is he to do this ? By keeping himself free from all entanglements. ' No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please Him Who hath chosen him to be a soldier ' (v. 4). As no soldier can possibly entertain the idea of any association with civil duties, so no Christian minister can allow himself to become entangled with anything that may hinder his work and warfare. Sometimes a minister interferes in purely party politics, sometimes he is unduly given to society, sometimes he becomes a too constant frequenter of clubs. Well, every man must face these and other things for himself, but there can be no doubt of the absolute necessity

of a genuine aloofness on the part of a Christian minister. If he is to 'please Him Who hath chosen him to be a soldier' he *must* keep himself free for active and strenuous service.

### III. *The Wrestler* (v. 5).

Here we have the thought of life as an arena in which the Christian athlete is engaged. Christian life involves contest; Christian service requires struggle and effort. And it behoves the Christian man, and especially the Christian minister, to 'play the game.' He must 'strive lawfully.' His methods must be straight and true, and nothing must be said or done in our service for God which cannot bear the searching gaze and test of the Great Taskmaster.

### IV. *A Husbandman* (v. 6).

The Christian worker is here described as one who tills the ground, a metaphor which is as intelligible as it is appropriate. Human hearts are the soil in which the seed of the Word is cast, and this means labour on the part of the husbandman. And in this passage we have the additional thought that the man who labours is to be the first partaker of the fruit. This is because he labours, and only on this account.

This simile, together with the two preceding (the soldier and the wrestler) will be seen to have special reference to the prize and how to win it. Whether soldier or athlete or husbandman, we must so live and work that we may rightly win and claim the reward.

### V. *A Workman* (v. 15).

Mark the threefold description of the true workman here. (a) He is to be zealous to be approved unto God. This is the supreme object of all 'zeal.' (b) He is to 'cut-aright' the Word of Truth. This may refer to the track of the



plough, or the knife of the butcher, but in either case it means 'right-handling' (R.V.) of the Word of God, bringing out things new and old and giving to each his portion in due season. He is to be a labourer that 'feels no shame' (Plummer, *Expositor's Bible*, p. 370). No shame from God, no shame from his fellows, is to come to him in his work.

## VI. *A Vessel* (v. 21).

Here is another figure, full of vividness and suggestion for the ministry. A vessel ! ‡ That which will *hold* something. That which can be *used*. That which may be an *ornament*. Mark the fourfold description : (a) unto honour ; (b) sanctifieth ; (c) meet ; (d) prepared. How glorious the privilege of being a vessel of mercy (Rom. ix. 23) for service in the Temple of the Lord.

But how is this possible ? Only by being cleansed. 'If a man therefore purge himself.' The vessel must be clean and empty. Empty to be filled, and clean to be used. 'Such honour have all His saints.'

## VII. *A Slave* (v. 24).

Once again the figure becomes personal, and the minister is regarded as a 'bondservant of the Lord.' He is so in a threefold way. (a) By purchase : 'Ye are not your own, for ye are bought.' (b) By possession ; 'He is thy lord.' (c) By service ; 'I love my Master, I will not go out free.'

As we contemplate these seven aspects of ministry we naturally ask, How can they become possible ? The answer is in verse 1 : 'Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.'

1. 'In Grace.' This is our *Position*. An Indian missionary remarked some time ago that the great feature of life in India is the strain due to the lack of those opportunities for recovery of physical elasticity and spiritual tone which are so valued in England. The Indian climate,



too, taxes to the uttermost man's power of endurance. Not only so, but an alien race, with uncouth habits of life, caste rules which prevent freedom of social intercourse, the consciousness of the English civilian's deterioration when removed from the religious atmosphere of a Christian country—all these will test a man's spiritual life to the utmost. Then comes the question, What resources will meet such demands? He answers as follows:—

'You must find them within yourselves. Nothing suffices to meet the strain, the depression, the moral shock of life in India—nothing but the Christ within you. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." If that is your equipment, you may take up the life to which you are called in the fulness of hope and confidence. There is no sufficient motive for missionary work but our personal relation to Christ, and it is in this relation, too, that you will find the grace that sustains, that carries you through the inevitable stage of disappointment and disillusion, and keeps fresh within you the devotion and enthusiasm which flows full-tide in your hearts to-night.'

This word has an application, for us at home as well. There is nothing to compare with the indwelling of Christ to enable us to rise superior to all surrounding difficulties. It is the absence of this that makes us in our religious life so dependent upon circumstances and so powerless when these circumstances are changed. If only we cultivate more the habit of resting upon, and being occupied with, the indwelling Christ, our life would become vigorous, be kept ever fresh, and in the truest sense spiritually independent.

2. 'Be strengthened.' This is our *Power*. The Greek word is noteworthy. It is either Middle or Passive. Not 'be strong,' but 'be strengthened.' And the word itself is noteworthy in its New Testament uses. Paul was strengthened (Acts ix. 22). Abraham was strengthened in his faith (Rom. iv. 20). We are to be strengthened in the Lord (Eph. vi. 10). We can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us (Phil. iv. 13). Christ strengthens us for service (1 Tim. i. 12). He stands by us and strengthens us (2 Tim. iv. 17). With

our position in grace and our power in Christ assured, nothing need deter us or check us from rendering true and laudable service in our ministry.

#### SECTION 4. CHARACTER AND WORK (2 *Tim.* ii. 24-26).

In every ministerial, indeed, in every Christian life, character and work are inseparably connected and inextricably bound up. A careful consideration of each is therefore necessary, and both are brought before us in this passage.

##### I. *The Work.*

The people with whom we have to do are described as 'those who oppose themselves.' Field (*Notes on the Translation of the New Testament*, p. 215) renders the Greek, 'those who think diversely.' In either case the fact of difference, and therefore of opposition, is clearly taught. The people will often oppose their clergyman as well as oppose themselves, even when their best interests are involved. Opposition is pretty certain in every genuine, earnest ministry.

1. The first great need of such people is 'repentance to the full knowledge of the truth.' Repentance is God's gift, and 'in case God should' give them this, the minister is to work, and strive, and pray. Opposition must be changed, and this can only be by means of repentance.

2. The second great need of the people who oppose themselves is 'that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' The wording of the original is very suggestive, and even startling. 'Recover,' i.e. 'wake up,' 'wake from fumes.' They have been 'drugged,' and are in the snare of the devil. St. Paul had a profound sense of the reality of spiritual powers of wickedness. These people thus 'hypnotized,' or 'anaesthetized,' had been taken captive by the devil at his will. The A.V. here is far more likely to be correct than the R.V., and the American R.V. renders the passage like our A.V. The two pro-

nouns refer to the same subject, just as in John v. 39 and xix. 35. We are not to expect the purism of the classics here, though Field (p. 246) quotes Xenophon for the identity of *αὐτοῦ* and *ἐκείνου*.<sup>1</sup>

‘Taken alive’ by the devil! How sad, terrible, and startling. There are only two passages where the word (*ζωγράφω*) is used in the New Testament. Here, where it refers to the capture of man by the devil; and in Luke v. 10, where the Christian fisherman is to ‘take men alive’ for the Master. The ‘capture’ is very real and demands constant attention from the servant of God, if he is to recover men and take them alive for God.

## II. *The Way.*

How is this work to be done? We are told, first, negatively, and, then, positively.

I. Negatively; the servant of the Lord ‘must not strive,’ ‘not fight.’ Is it not deeply significant that *μάχομαι* is never once used of the Christian life, even in its warfare against sin? We must not be ‘combative.’ We must strive (*ἀθλέω*) but not fight (*μάχομαι*). There is a constant danger of a combatant’s spirit. We sometimes stand up for the truth, but the ‘old Adam’ comes in and colours our testimony, and we do harm rather than good. Controversy is essential, and yet it must be waged in the right spirit. Like St. Paul, we may be called upon to withstand even a St. Peter, and yet we must be careful to ‘speak the truth in love.’ No one is ever recovered from the snare of the devil by contentiousness and a pugnacious spirit. ‘The servant of the Lord must *not* fight.’

2. Positively; the servant of the Lord must be ‘gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.’ Mark well these four elements of true service.

(a) Gentle, *i.e.* mild (1 Thess. ii. 7). Like the gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. x. 1), we must produce the fruit

<sup>1</sup> See also *Homiletic Review*, vol. vii., p. 650.

of the Spirit, 'gentleness' (Gal. v. 22), for 'gentleness allayeth great offence' (Eccl. x. 4, R.V. margin). Gentleness is rare because it is not a natural gift, or an inherited grace. It comes from above, the result of the Divine action when the faculties are possessed by the Divine Spirit. It is to be carefully distinguished from weakness, for it is quite compatible with sturdiness of character. God's works are full of gentleness and yet of strength. Nor is gentleness for a favoured few only. Loudness and violence are not Christian, but are anti-Christian. Warmth can be gentle. Gentleness may often need the discipline of suffering to produce it. There is profound truth in the well known text, 'Thy gentleness hath made me great.'

(b) 'Apt to teach,' i.e. explaining, not contending.

(c) 'Patient,' i.e. ready to endure malice.

(d) 'In meekness instructing,' i.e. with gentle humility bringing under true Christian discipline those who oppose themselves.

All this means character for the accomplishment of work, that is, we must *be* in order to *do*.

'Though no warning against an unspiritual, no exhortation to a holy life, may be tolerated, let your own pure, earnest, unworldly character and bearing be to the careless soul a perpetual atmosphere of spirituality haunting and hovering round it. The moral influence of such a life cannot be lost.'

### III. *The Secret.*

Such a work demanding such a character can only be accomplished by Divine grace, and this we must learn to obtain by the due use of means.

1. For perception of the truth which is to be brought before 'those who oppose themselves,' we must study and become mighty in the Scriptures. In the Pastoral Epistles St. Paul lays great stress on 'sound doctrine,' i.e. doctrine which ministers to moral and spiritual soundness, or truth (*ὑγιαίνω*). This will mean a regular, steady, personal study of our Bible in fellowship with God in Christ

by the Spirit. It is only in this way that we shall obtain that insight into spiritual truths which will enable us to present those truths in the right way to our people. Nothing can compare with this definite Bible knowledge in mind and soul, if we would do the difficult work of recovering souls from the snare of the devil.

2. For power in using the truth thus obtained, prayer is the supreme secret. It must not be a mere appendix of our spiritual life, but the central and dominant feature. We ought to have fixed times, and if possible, a fixed place. The essential principle is that habits of regularity tend to make the spiritual life capable of constant, instructive action. Sir Walter Besant used to say that he had so habituated himself to working at his novels at nine o'clock in the morning that, when that hour arrived, his mental powers were like servants standing ready to do their master's bidding. It is the same in the supreme business of conscious relationship with God. If we have regular appointments with Him, we shall find that, when the hour draws near, our souls will reveal a certain bias and expectancy, and will be watchful for His appearing.

And so long as this regularity of time is observed we can vary our methods as much as we like, and perhaps the greater the variety the better. Posture of the body, while important, is of course secondary to the attitude of the soul, and our methods of prayer must be largely settled by our temperament and choice. The Bishop of Durham (Dr. Moule) once said :—

'As regards attitude, I very seldom venture to kneel at prayer in secret. At night it leads almost invariably and very speedily to sleeping on my knees ; and even in the morning hour, I know not how, recollectiveness and concentration of heart and mind are usually quickened in my case by a reverent standing attitude as before the visible Master and Lord, or by walking up and down, either indoors or, as I love to do when possible, in the open air. A garden may prove a very truly hallowed oratory.'

And these times of prayer must be definitely, largely, and increasingly times of intercession. Our horizon



must be ever-widening, our prayers less and less self-centred, and our intercessions more intellectual, more systematic, more constant, more persistent, more believing.

And thus by the Scriptures and by Prayer we shall build up that character which will in turn affect our work with vital power and make it instinct with spiritual blessing.

#### SECTION 5. THE MINISTER AND THE SCRIPTURES (2 *Tim.* iii. 14-17).

In all Christian work there are three elements absolutely indispensable : the Spirit of God as the power, the Word of God as the message, and the man of God as the instrument. The Spirit of God uses the message by means of the man. In that handbook for Christian workers, the Acts of the Apostles, we have these three elements in order brought before us. The first eleven chapters are full of the Spirit of God. The next nine chapters have less of the Spirit and more of the Word of God. The last eight chapters have very little about the Spirit, and very little about the Word, but a great deal about the man of God. Eleven, nine, eight : that is the order and the proportion. The Spirit first, the Word second, and the man third. The Spirit greatest and foremost, then the Word, and only last of all the man. It will be found, through a concordance, that the references to the Spirit, the Word, and the man are exactly along this line. These three are indispensable, inseparable from all Christian work that is worthy of the name.

Two of these are very prominent in the present passage, and the other is at least implied in one word contained therein. The subject, therefore, is the Word of God in relation to the man of God for the purpose of the service of God.

#### I. *What the Scriptures are.*

1. They are *Divinely inspired*. We read in verse 16, 'Every Scripture inspired of God,' or 'all Scripture is



given by inspiration of God.' We are all aware that the phrase, as thus rendered, is one word in the original: 'God-breathed.' The A.V. is, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.' The R.V. is, 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable.' Some prefer the one and some the other. Yet I do not think there is very much in the difference, because in either case the reference must be to the Old Testament Scriptures. Either it is a statement that they are inspired and profitable; or else that, being inspired, they are also profitable. One reason that makes me prefer the old version in this case is that there are six or seven texts which in the Greek are exactly like this, with a noun and three adjectives connected by *and*; and this fact seems to suggest that we ought to translate this passage in the same way, which would be according to the Authorised rather than the Revised.

The one point I want to make is that the Scriptures are Divinely inspired, 'God-breathed.' Some one says, '*How* are they inspired?' The only possible answer to that question is that we cannot tell. We know the results, but we do not know the method. The method is really of no consequence whatever, so long as we can be sure of the result. We must distinguish between our theories of the method and the blessed reality of the fact of inspiration; and this is exactly according to what we know of other aspects of experience. Life, for instance, cannot be defined in its essence; it can only be described in its effects. So with the Scriptures. You cannot define them in their essence, but you can describe them in their effects.

There are three reasons why we believe that the Scriptures are Divinely inspired, God-breathed. The first is, the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only before, but after His resurrection, He bore His testimony to the old Testament Scriptures in such a way that they were for Him the absolute and supreme authority. The second reason is the testimony of history. If there is one thing clear it is the testimony of all Christian history to the

inspiration of Holy Scripture. And, of course, the third reason is the testimony of experience. There is that in this book which, as Coleridge says, 'finds us,' something unique, something inexplicable, fully inexpressible, and yet so real, so true, and so blessed that we can say, and say with all our hearts, This is from God. So that the Bible is the key to the lock of human nature. We can test these things for ourselves. When we put two and two together, we know by the certain principle of mathematics, that four will be the result. When we blend oxygen and hydrogen in the proper proportion we know the result will be water. When we bring human nature and the Bible together we find that one is the problem and the other is the solution. All Scripture, every Scripture, is God-breathed, Divinely inspired.

2. Then they are *Divinely powerful*. 'The sacred writings which are *able*.' Mark the precise force of the Greek phrase, 'which are continuously powerful,' implying the continuous process of power. We know what this is when we contrast this Book with other books, these writings with other writings. They are continuously powerful, they are able, continuously able, to do everything that man needs for time and for eternity. Divinely inspired; Divinely powerful.

3. They are also *Divinely profitable*. 'Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable.' It is a marvellous thing to realize that this book was written centuries ago and is living and fresh and profitable to-day. Think of the sermons that are composed and preached from this Book week by week. Take, again, the Commentaries; almost every month we read or hear of some work coming forth from the press. When we go through it, if the writer is a scholar and a Christian, we are certain to find something in it that we have found in no other. There is nothing more delightful than to study a commentary by a man who is worthy to write it, and to find in it marvellous proof of, and testimony to, the freshness and profitableness of the Word of God. Take Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, or any other of the great

grammatical exegetes, and allow yourself to be led step by step, from point to point, and you find freshness after freshness, until it is true of you, as it was true of Alford, who said that in preparation for his Greek Testament he found something fresh every time he went over the passages for the new editions. The profitableness of the Scriptures is one of the marvels of the present day. Every man knows this in his own experience. You may come to the most familiar passage, and in the power of the Holy Spirit you may see something you have never seen before. As John Robinson of Leyden says, it is still true that

‘The Lord hath yet more light and truth  
To break forth from His Word.’

## II. *What the Scriptures do.*

1. The first thing they do is to *save*; ‘which are able to make thee wise unto salvation,’ able to save. They bring into our minds, darkened by sin, the illumination of God’s truth and will, and the result of that wisdom is that the Christian man is one who has not five but six senses. There is the sixth sense of spiritual perception that comes as the result of God’s Word brought to bear upon the soul. We know the oft-quoted illustration of a lady who looked at one of Turner’s master-pieces. She said to him, ‘*I never saw such colours in nature.*’ ‘No, madam,’ he replied; ‘don’t you wish you could?’ William Pitt was once taken by Wilberforce to hear Richard Cecil preach, and Wilberforce prayed that Pitt might get a blessing. Wilberforce was soon rejoicing in the message, and prayed that his friend might hear and heed. Pitt placed himself politely to listen, just as he would attend to a speech in the House of Commons. At the end Wilberforce was overflowing with joy and thankfulness for the message, and said to Pitt, ‘What did you think of it?’ ‘Well,’ said Pitt, ‘I gave the gentleman my very best attention, but I really could not understand what he meant.’ Why not? These things are spiritually discerned. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of

the Spirit of God,' and we might go on to translate the Greek, 'neither can he recognize them.' He has not the faculty. It is the Holy Spirit, by the Scriptures, Who makes men wise unto salvation—salvation in the widest, greatest, deepest of all senses. Salvation for the past ; the Holy Scriptures assure us of justification. Salvation for the present ; the Scriptures assure us of sanctification. Salvation for the future ; the Scriptures assure us of glorification. There is nothing to compare with that spiritual perception which comes from personal reception in experience of the Holy Spirit in the Word. I never tire of quoting a phrase which I believe was uttered by James Hamilton, of Regent Square : ' A Christian on his knees sees further than a philosopher on his tip-toes.' It is because he has been made wise unto salvation. That is why St. James is able to say, ' Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.'

2. Then the Holy Scriptures *guide* as well as save. Let us look very carefully at this passage. ' Profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.' I take these together, and include them in the word "guide." You will find four distinct ideas. The first is positive : profitable for 'teaching.' The second and third are negative : for 'reproof' and 'correction.' The fourth again is positive : 'for the instruction which is in righteousness.' First of all, the Scriptures inculcate truth ; they are profitable for teaching. How true that is every one of us knows as he bows before the Scriptures and says, ' Lord, send out Thy light and Thy truth.' They are profitable for 'rebuke', or 'conviction,' whatever it may be. How true that is we also well know. When we come to this Book and there is something unconfessed and unforgiven in our soul the Scriptures convict, confute, rebuke us. If we regard iniquity in our heart the Lord will not hear us. Oh, the rebuking power of the Bible ! Then, for 'correction ;' that is, putting straight things that are crooked in our lives. That seems to be the meaning of the word : setting right all that is wrong. If there is anything wrong or

doubtful in our lives, the Bible will meet us. That is the value of the Scripture for the deepening of the spiritual life. Many a life has to be corrected before it can be deepened. You must have the channel straight before you think of the depth of it. The fourth thing is positive : 'instruction ;' but it is really much more than that. It means 'discipline,' 'making like a child,' making us real children of God. It is for 'discipline which is in righteousness,' everything that is included in the combined ideas of the duties of parent and teacher. There is no discipleship worth the name without discipline, and both etymologically and spiritually there is a close connexion between these two words.

This is what I mean by guidance, everything for our daily life of sanctification in the fullest sense of that term ; inculcation of truth, refutation of error, correction of our conduct and the exercise of our character and conduct. All this is in the Word of God.

3. The third thing the Scriptures do is to *equip*. 'That the man of God may be completely furnished complete unto every good work.' The words 'complete,' and 'furnished' mean jointed, adjusted, fitted ; and the reference is either to a piece of machinery fitted for its work or to the human body with every joint and part adjusted ready for action. 'That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.'

'The man of God.' This is the last book in the Bible where the phrase 'the man of God' occurs, and we are rather surprised to see it applied to Timothy. He is addressed twice by this title. In the Old Testament it was used for the prophets. Here in the New Testament it is actually given to a somewhat weak, nervous man. This is great encouragement for us, for it shows clearly that the weakest of us can have that highest of all titles, 'man of God,' one who is *manly* and *godly* ; and when you have manliness and godliness you are 'God's man.'



III. *What the Scriptures require.*

1. The first thing the Scriptures require is *knowledge*. 'The things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them ; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings.' There were two generations behind this boy. He had been taught these sacred writings from a babe by his mother and by his grandmother. And he had also *seen* the Scriptures in their lives. The result was he knew them.

This is what you and I need. First of all, we must know the contents of the Bible. Then, we must seek to know the meaning of these contents. Thirdly, we must get to know their application to our life and to our service. Knowledge, that is what we need above all things—intellectual, devotional, homiletical knowledge ; but let us take care we do not put the homiletical first. Intellectual, or, what these books say and mean ; devotional, what they mean to me ; homiletical, what they mean to my people for next Sunday.

2. The second thing these books require is *trust* : 'through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' That was St. Paul's view of the Old Testament. There are many people who do not seem to take much account of the Old Testament Scriptures to-day, but St. Paul thought so highly of them that he said they were able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. They need trust. We all know how true that is. A promise comes to us ; let us trust it. Let us trust Him Who is the Promiser. In proportion to our faith in the truth of this Book we shall find the power of it in our daily life.

3. The third thing is *continuance*. 'Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned.' At least three times we have the idea of continuance connected with the Word. 'If ye abide in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed.' We remember that it is said of Satan that he 'standeth not in the truth.' Conversion is not everything. We are thankful when we are able to count conversions and say that God has blessed the Word. But



it is of much more importance to ask what about those people five years, ten years hence? 'Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned.' 'So Daniel continued.' 'Continue instant in prayer.' 'Continue ye in My love.' The secret of all growing life lies in knowledge and trust continued day by day to the very end.

So I ask you to notice that what I have been saying is, first of all, the secret of *personal power* in Christian life. The Scriptures known, trusted, obeyed, and continued in; these things are the secret of personal power. Daily meditation, not weekly, otherwise it will become 'weakly' in the other sense. If we live upon what we get elsewhere from men or books, our Christian life will be very poor, for it will only be a second-hand Christianity. But if day by day we come to God's Word for daily and definite meditation, we shall find in that the secret of personal power. Our mind will become saturated with truth, our heart will be inspired by the love of the Scripture, our conscience will become ever-increasingly sensitive, our wills will be more and more subjected and submitted to the will and power of the Scriptures.

This is also the secret of *ministerial power* in Christian service. Some one asked Hudson Taylor once how it was that he had such freshness in his messages as he delivered them day by day when on deputation work. He said he could only account for it in this way, that he was accustomed to spend time with the Lord in the morning and then pass on in the afternoon and evening what the Lord had told him. Some people wonder what they shall preach about next Sunday, and they fear they will very soon come to an end of their Bible. If we keep close to the Greek New Testament, or even to the English Bible, the difficulty will be, not what we shall preach about, but what we must leave out. If a man has been in the ministry for thirty or forty years, and follows this plan, at the end even of that long time there will be any number of subjects that he has never been able to take, and never will be able to take, unless there are sermons up in heaven. The secret of ministerial freshness is the power of God's word. Some

time ago I read one of those interesting and suggestive reviews which are found in the *British Weekly* signed W.R.N. This is what he said about a certain volume of sermons : '—— is a man marked for good service if he will clearly recognize that the truth in spiritual things is not learned from conversations with energetic men in the market-place, but from the solitary and prayerful study of the Word of God.' Whether the criticism was true or not, the application is clear. 'Solitary and prayerful study of the Word of God' is our deepest need. Then we shall be indeed mighty in the Scriptures.

This is also the secret of congregational power. This is so, positively, both in regard to expository preaching from the pulpit, and to Bible class work. It is also the secret of power, negatively, because it will set aside and render unnecessary all the more than doubtful methods which obtain in many Churches. Bible classes and expositions, teachers' training classes and prayer meetings will shut out all other instrumentalities. The secret of congregational power is the prominence that we give to the Word of God. The source of everything fruitful and mighty in the life of God's people is to be found there. So let us determine that we will go to our Churches and congregations with the words of the Apostle on our lips : 'We will give ourselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer.'

#### SECTION 6. PARTING WORDS (2 *Tim.* iv. 5).

Just as the last Epistle of the great Apostle closes he gives his young friend and disciple four parting words as watchwords of his ministry.

##### I. *Soberness.*

'Be sober.' The minister must be fully awake and in a condition the very opposite of drowsiness. The contrast with verse 3 is clear. 'But.' There were those who were turning away from the truth, *but* Timothy was to be on his guard. The thought is much the same as in chapter

ii. 26, the necessity of being fully aroused, spiritually alert, keen, watchful. No minister can afford to be drowsy, or other than awake and watching. As Simeon used to stand before the picture of Henry Martyn, the serious face seemed to say to him, 'Be earnest.'

## II. *Endurance.*

'Endure afflictions.' 'Suffer evil with me.' The call was to sacrifice and suffering as essential to the life and work of the ministry. It is an appeal against all self-indulgence, and for readiness to do strenuous service in the face of trial, persecution, and suffering.

## III. *Evangelization.*

'Do the work of an evangelist.' This means that a man must have a message, an evangel, an announcement of 'good news.' The minister is not a philosopher, though his Gospel has philosophy in it. The minister is not a moralist, though his Gospel has ethic in it. He is a proclaimer of Glad Tidings, or he is nothing, and without this all else will be worthless.

Fifteen years ago two American missionary students, occupying the same room, talked thus to one another 'What message have we got for the heathen to whom we are going? Can we tell them of a Christ mighty in us, Who saves us day by day? If we cannot, it would be cheaper to send Bibles and tracts.' There and then they decided that their first work was to know God for themselves, and so from then, right on through the rest of their course, they rose regularly at 5 a.m., and had one unhurried hour with God and His Word, and another unhurried hour with God in prayer. Note the outcome—the fulness of the Spirit for the satisfaction of their own life needs, and the promised 'rivers of water.' One of these preaches Christ in China, the other is George Sherwood Eddy, one of the foremost workers in the Student Volunteer Movement both in America and in India, and

also one of those who spoke most to men's hearts in the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. Only last year God wrought through him a mighty work among the Indian students of Calcutta, when some three hundred were moved to yield themselves to Christ in public. But there is far more. A few years since he was led of the Spirit to publish a tract made up mainly of extracts from President Finney's writings, and that tract led Mr. Goforth to seek and find the fulness of the Spirit. He in his turn becomes an instrument of revival in the East. All this because two young men sought God's best with all their hearts.<sup>1</sup>

#### IV. *Faithfulness.*

'Make full proof of thy ministry,' or 'fully discharge thy ministry.' Let the ministry 'fill' your life, with nothing left undone that ought to be done, and nothing done that does not minister to the service to which we are called. We must draw 'all our cares and studies this one way.' There must be a power of detachment and concentration if the ministry is to be fully discharged. We must do our own work and that alone.

From these four watchwords we readily recognize four things in connexion with the ministry: a Supreme Necessity; a Supreme Danger; a Supreme Problem, and a Supreme Secret.

1. The Supreme Necessity. This is spiritual life, and life in abundance. Without it there is, and can be, no ministry.

2. The Supreme Danger. This is spiritual death. By this I mean soul-death, what some one has called a lost soul in the pulpit. Not sinfulness, but uselessness; not badness, but soullessness. Sermons well prepared but without the electric spark of fellowship with God.

3. The Supreme Problem. This is to keep the soul alive. Not our sermon, or our work, or our organization,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. P. Clark, in *The Life of Faith*.

but *ourselves* ; to keep our spiritual life keen in the face of professionalism. And to this end we must guard the fire and keep it burning. One of the foremost dangers of the ministerial life is intellectual indolence, and it is far more common than is generally supposed. Mental activity is not natural, but acquired ; not congenital, but achieved. It requires and demands mental toil. A man may be “ fussy ” and busy and yet be an intellectual “ dawdler.” He may engage in work of all sorts, and yet not compel his mind to work. Intellectual interest must ever be strong ; we must feed the fire of the mind ; reading, thinking, storing. A well known Methodist leader said not long ago :—

‘ Anything in a preacher that makes for mental stagnation ministers also to moral deterioration and inefficiency for spiritual leadership. A mind grown stale will never quicken interest in another mind. A heart whose fires are faded will not kindle a flame in other hearts. If the pulpit is to have its due place in the lifting of our Church’s life, it must have in it men who, by God’s blessing, are finding their own life in the truth ; to whom it is most truly the central interest, who count themselves delightedly its slaves. There will then be a ringing note of reality in their ministry.’

The one thing which, above all others, will keep a man from mental stagnation is a daily first-hand study and meditation of the Word of God—if possible, in the original Greek. There will come into the mind an interest and a freshness which will first of all affect with life-giving power the minister’s own spiritual life, and then express itself in renewed freshness and vigour of testimony in his ministry.

And the spiritual enthusiasm must be maintained by a closer walk with God. As some one has acutely said, ninety-nine may tolerate our sermons, but the hundredth will find us out. Some men may be able to hide intellectual sloth, but the clergyman cannot. Some men may hide spiritual weakness, but the clergyman cannot.

4. The Supreme Secret. This is perpetual freshness of soul, due to the ‘ continual dew ’ of the Divine blessing, and spiritual freshness can only come through prayer,

the Bible, and the Holy Spirit. But when these are real all else is real, for the life grows strong and influential, and full of grace and glory. A recent book describes how, when riding in Wales, the author came upon a preacher's cottage, lonely among hills and rain and miry roads. 'How does he stand the monotony?' he asked his companion. 'The Bible is to him the Word of God,' was the answer. 'He lives to preach it. There is no monotony when all life is one great desire.'





*PART I*

THE MAN

(B) THE MINISTER IN THE PRAYER BOOK

## (B) THE MINISTER IN THE PRAYER BOOK

While much of the Church of England view of the ministry can be seen in the services which the clergyman is appointed to render, and in the various principles of teaching suggested and indicated in the prayers and other devotional parts of the Prayer Book, it is to the Ordinal in particular that we naturally look for the clearest, fullest statements of the Anglican view of the Christian ministry. In the Scripture passages selected and in the exhortations based on these, we are enabled to understand with perfect plainness in what light the Church of England regards the Ministry. To the Ordinal, therefore, we turn first to consider the message of the Scripture portions, and then to study carefully the questions put to the candidates and the answers expected from them.

## CHAPTER I

### THE SCRIPTURES OF THE ORDINAL

#### SECTION I. THE DEACON'S APPOINTMENT (*Acts vi. 3*).

**A**LTHOUGH the Seven are not actually called Deacons, and although modern scholarship hardly permits us to regard them as the first of the line of men subsequently called by this name, yet the general association of these men with the later Deacons, the work which they were called to do, and the selection of this passage for the Ordination Service, may perhaps warrant us in seeing in the account of the Seven some of the original qualifications of the Deacon, and some of the qualifications still required to-day. 'The person of the clergyman is the life of his work,' and the qualifications sought and found in the Seven are certainly required in the modern minister.

#### I. *Relation to Men.*

They were to be men of 'honest report;' 'borne witness to from you.' This qualification in the Christian Church is very prominent in the New Testament. 'Well spoken of' means 'of good reputation.' Let us observe this element in the following passages: Luke ii. 52; Acts x. 22; xvi. 2; xxii. 12; Col. iv. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 12; 1 Tim. iii. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 21; Rom. xii. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 12.

Could anything be more striking or suggestive? And could anything be more necessary and of greater power? It is a real proof of a man's reality, how he stands with his fellows. A well-known clergyman tells a story of a man who was described as 'all right towards God, but a little "twistical" towards man.' But this is impossible. A man who is right with God cannot be 'twistical'

with man, and, contrariwise, if he is 'twistical' towards man it is a proof that he is not essentially right with God. It is therefore one of the finest tests of a man's life to know how he stands with his associates. What do his College contemporaries think of him? What do the College servants think of him? What do his relatives at home think of him, especially, perhaps, his brothers? What is his reputation in the Church at home with which he is connected? Herein lies the principle suggested by the opportunity given in the Ordination Service for the people to raise any objection to the Ordinand, though of course the qualification now considered is much more, and goes far deeper than anything to which public objection can be made. If we make a Christian profession and are yet careless, unreliable, undependable, what is our profession worth? If our spirituality is not ethical, it is not spirituality.

## II. *Relation to Himself.*

The Seven were to be men of 'wisdom.' This means knowledge in its practical application, sagacity, common-sense, practical ability. They were to be engaged in work that would call for this, for they would have to distribute money, administer gifts, and do all without partiality, with absolute integrity. No wonder, therefore, they were to be men of 'wisdom.'

The minister to-day is in just as great need of 'wisdom.' The administration of charity alone calls for it, and there are few greater tests of a man's character than the use he makes of public money entrusted to him. Ministers must be no weaklings, and not even merely shrewd. They must be men of sanctified common-sense, men of Christian sagacity, men of impartiality, men of integrity. Wisdom in the Bible always has in it a moral and not merely an intellectual element, and a minister without wisdom will mean a ministry without power.

## III. *Relation to God.*

'Full of the Holy Ghost.' The Holy Ghost is the

ultimate fact and factor in Christianity, the essential characteristic, the unique reality. Bishop Thirlwall once said that the great intellectual and religious struggle of our day turns mainly on the question whether there is a Holy Ghost. Bishop Westcott defines this more closely and says the question turns on a belief in the Holy Ghost sent by Jesus Christ according to His emphatic promise. I would venture to give it a still more definite application and say that the question turns on whether we have received that Spirit for life and power in service.

What will the Holy Ghost in the soul of a minister do for him ? He will enlighten the judgment, control the feelings, direct the will, and possess and energize every faculty. The natural temperament will be glorified, the natural wisdom illuminated, and the natural determination set on fire.

The measure of the Holy Spirit also is to be noted ; 'full.' This is regarded in the Acts as the normal condition of a Christian man. And the association of this spiritual gift with the work of 'serving tables' is particularly striking. For secular work (so-called), as well as spiritual (so-called) we need the fulness of the Holy Spirit. 'To the Christian,' Archbishop Benson said, 'nothing is secular but what is sinful,' and for everything in life and service we need the fulness of the Holy Spirit. As 'Virtue which is not enthusiastic is not safe,' so a life which is not full of the Holy Ghost will lack the supreme element of spiritual power and blessing.

#### IV. *The Outcome.*

As we look carefully at the results of the appointment of the Seven, we see in Stephen alone the outcome of the use of these three qualities. He was 'full of grace and power' (v. 8) ; not grace without power, nor power without grace. No one could resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke (v. 10). His personal character is described in a very striking phrase (v. 15). His testimony for Christ was overwhelming (ch. vii), and his evangelistic power was remarkable (ch. viii).

V. *The Secret.*

How, then, was all this brought about? In a very simple way. By 'Faith' (v 5). Faith receives grace; grace gives wisdom; grace and wisdom are shown in character; and character witnesses for God as nothing else can. It is the worker who counts in all work, the speaker in all speech. All genuine speech and service are personal, and everything, therefore, that enriches personality is to be coveted as one of the very best gifts. As an advertisement once read, 'It is the power transmitted and not the power generated that counts. Power generated without being transmitted is a dead loss.' Stephen and his fellows generated power in the Holy Ghost through faith, and then transmitted it in living force to the Church and the world.

SECTION 2. THE DEACON'S PORTRAIT (1 *Tim.* iii. 8-13).

Paul here draws for us the picture of an ideal Deacon. It is noteworthy that in the New Testament we read little of his ecclesiastical functions, but much of his personal character. The Ordinal puts its emphasis in the same place. What then are his characteristics?

I. *Gravity.*

The word *σεμνός* with its cognates means the 'deportment which inspires respect.' It is a prominent word in the Pastoral Epistles and scarcely found elsewhere. Is there any special point in this in view of the Epistles being addressed to young men? It means the opposite of that lightness which is so often confused with brightness. Bright, but not light. Not a light-hearted creature who counts for nothing. There is to be gravity and yet not gloom. There is a constant tendency to lightness in the ministry which needs to be watched. Jocularities may easily degenerate into flippancy until a minister is not taken seriously. Some clergymen are known on platforms mainly for the jokes they are expected to perpetrate.



II. *Genuineness.*

‘Not double-tongued.’ Lightness may easily tend to unreality. The minister is not to change his opinion with every comer. There is frequent danger of scandal, or at least of gossip, which makes it hard for a minister to avoid unreality. There is also the danger of saying pleasing things for the sake of popularity. But whatever be the temptation, the man must be real, his mind must be made up. He must stand by his word, and people must know that he is a man of his word.

III. *Temperance.*

‘Not given to much wine.’ The text does not teach the necessity of Total Abstinence. But it certainly means such control of himself in regard to wine as will make him an object lesson wherever he goes, and not lead people to shrug the shoulder when he is talked of. Some ministers are known as ‘diners out,’ and some have been known to take more wine than was good, without at all becoming intoxicated. If butlers would talk publicly, as they sometimes do privately, they would give many a broad hint as to the drinking capacities of clergymen who come as guests to their masters’ houses. So far at least the text takes us, and yet I will venture to go a step farther and say that in view of ‘present distress’ Temperance for clergymen is best interpreted as Total Abstinence. I am confident that his power for good would be doubled whether among rich or poor if he were known to be a total abstainer. And he would never regret the slight sacrifice of self-indulgence thereby involved, but would rejoice in it as a help to his ministry.

IV. *Liberality.*

‘Not greedy of filthy lucre.’ Are there no dangers in connexion with money in the ministry? Are standards so low that no peril is to be feared? There is still a real danger of seeking personal ends in the ministry. I have known of men seeking a good curacy to pay debts contracted before Ordination. I have seen a prominent,

almost flaring, advertisement for a curate in a Church paper of which the part in largest print was

£200 A YEAR.
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There is a great danger of meanness and stinginess in the ministry. The clergyman is not exempt from the New Testament principle of proportionate giving. Without laying down any rule we may at least say that one-tenth should be regarded as the minimum. And although it may seem a small matter, I would dare to urge that a clergyman should himself give every time there is an offertory in church, his own or any one else's. The force of example in giving is great and important, and it is not right for a clergyman to urge others to give and never be seen to give himself. Without ostentation and without concealment let him give as the plate comes to him in the chancel, or as he receives it for presentation at the Holy Table. However little he can give, let him do it every time. No list of subscriptions can make up for proportionate and systematic weekly giving in the church offertory. The very act will be a means of grace.

Do not let us say there is no danger, even to-day, in regard to money matters in the ministry. Balaam, Gehazi, Judas stand out as warnings, and though circumstances change, human nature does not, and it is only too possible for a man to become illiberal, and even mean and grasping, in the ministry.

#### V. *Sincerity* (v. 9).

As we ponder this verse in connexion with the ministry we observe three things :—

1. The greatest thing in the world. 'The mystery of the faith.' Truth is the greatest gift of God and the choicest possession of man. The 'mystery of the faith' is something to ponder and prize.

2. The highest thing in man. 'A pure conscience.' We may not be able to agree as to our definition of conscience,

or our description of it as an element of human nature. But we are clear as to its (a) Existence ; (b) Sphere ; (c) Supremacy. It is the essential, final, and eternal witness to right and wrong in our life. A pure conscience, therefore, is the highest and most precious thing in life, and it means a conscience true to God's Spirit, God's Word, and God's Will.

3. The noblest thing in life. 'Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.' When the conscience unites with the truth of God, and one holds the other, we reach the highest point of life and realize its noblest element. 'Holding.' Not merely as a record embodied in the Bible ; that, certainly, but much more. Not merely as a theory expressed in a Creed ; that, certainly, but much more. Above, beyond, and beneath these, it means 'holding' it as an experience expressed in obedience. To 'hold' is something more than to subscribe to a creed, or to accept a verbal definition. Orthodoxy apart from holiness is one of the most terrible and horrible things in life. We must 'hold' the truth. Thus, and thus only, can there be sincerity.

#### VI. *Proof* (v. 10).

The true minister needs to be tested. He is not to be a novice, and there must be no accusation levelled against Him. 'Blameless.' His life must be unchallengeable. The criterion of testimony is very simple but very searching. It is the test of reality. Not brilliancy, but faithfulness ; not scholarship, but spirituality ; not capacity but genuineness. By all means bring out scholarship and capacity if possible, but never without the essential elements of faithfulness, spirituality and genuineness. Some one has said that it took Moses forty years to try to be somebody, then it took him forty years more to find out that he was nobody, and then forty years more to see what God could do with a nobody.

#### VII. *Reward* (v. 13).

The man who fulfils the above-named requirements will

not go unacknowledged, unrewarded, unblessed. The 'good degree' is a 'good footing' towards God (Ellicott), and certitude towards man. The reference is not to office but to influence. Faithfulness gives capacity and provides opportunity for higher, fuller, and better service, and this is the reward of true ministry. Not higher office, but more and better service to glorify God.

### SECTION 3. THE DEACON'S ATTITUDE (*Luke xii. 35-38*).

We can readily see the kind of minister required by the Church of England through the Scriptures chosen for the Ordination Service. The first, second, and third thing is personal fitness. Let us consider this in the light of the passage read as the Gospel for the Deacon's Ordination.

#### I. *Requirements.*

1. Readiness for Service. The loins are to be girded. In view of John xiii. 4 and Ephesians vi. 14 we at once see what this means. There must be no hindrance. The flowing robe tended to hinder effectual service, so it was girded up and raised, leaving freedom of movement for work. The minister of Christ must be similarly 'ready.' There is a great possibility of 'entanglements' (2 Tim. ii. 4), and no man who so entangles himself can war a good warfare. There is also a distinction to be drawn between 'weights' and 'sins.' Weights are matters which, while not wrong or sinful *per se*, are nevertheless liable to hinder. Every man who is about to enter, or who has entered, the ministry, should make it a subject of special personal dealing with himself in the sight of God in regard to entanglements and weights. Are there any personal habits or tendencies which hinder the fullest possible exercise of every faculty in the service of God?

2. Reality of Character. 'Your lamps burning.' The figure of a light is connected with two elements in Scripture; the light of truth and the light of holiness. And these two are to be ever burning. The oil of grace bestowed by the Holy Spirit is to be in constant use;

our souls fed and supplied by communion with God in Christ will ever be ready because real, and nothing can make up for the girt loins and the burning lamps.

3. Eagerness of Expectation. 'And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.' The coming of Christ is a great reality in the New Testament. It is the goal of all things individual and corporate. The Christian man and the Christian Church are depicted as 'looking for that blessed hope.' Why is this not so now? It is one of the most practical doctrines of Scripture. It is brought before us in at least forty aspects. It is referred to in at least three hundred passages. It is regarded as the great incentive to holiness and service. 'Seeing then that all these things should be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?' Shall we not see that our ministerial life is dominated henceforward by the thought of eager expectation for the Coming of our Lord?

4. Alertness of Activity. 'They may open unto Him immediately.' They were to be ready for their Master without any delay. What a picture of alertness. Is this so in our life? Are we thus alert and ready? Ships' companies give passengers a supply of labels, and among them is one for large packages which are 'Not wanted on the voyage.' Are there not many things in our life which are 'Not wanted for the voyage of life,' and which, if we got rid of them, would minister to alertness for Christ and His Coming?

5. Strength of Endurance. 'Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.' The second watch was from nine to twelve, and the third from twelve to three, just that part of the night when watching is most difficult. The servants are depicted as under a genuine test, and so it is with the Christian minister. His task calls for endurance. He is always on duty, and the need of strength is constant, pressing and imperative.

These are the requirements demanded of the true Deacon. Are they not enough to make us cry out, 'Who



is sufficient for these things ? ' But there is another side. God never requires without encouraging and inspiring.

## II. *Rewards.*

1. Blessedness. The Master realizes how splendid the service has been and acknowledges the faithfulness of His servants by pronouncing them 'blessed.'

2. Honour. They are to be served by Christ. What we are to God He will be to us.

There is perhaps no test of ministerial life so accurate as that of the Second Coming of Christ.

(a) It tends to fearlessness. 'And now, little children, abide in Him ; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming' (1 John ii. 28).

(b) It inspires to love. 'We shall see Him.'

'O the joy to see Thee reigning,  
Thee, my own beloved Lord !  
Every tongue Thy Name confessing,  
Worship, honour, glory, blessing  
Brought to Thee with one accord,—  
Thee, my Master, and my Friend,  
Vindicated and enthroned,  
Unto earth's remotest end  
Glorified, adored, and owned !

(c) It prompts to devotion. Loyal service ever follows the conviction that He may and will come.



## CHAPTER II

### THE QUESTIONS OF THE ORDINAL

EVERY Christian is called and expected to be a witness (Acts i. 8), but not every one is called to the ministry. The questions put to the Deacons and Priests at their Ordination show with clearness what is the view of the ministry held by our Church. They should be studied with all possible attention, their order and character carefully observed, and the searching nature of the inquiries earnestly pondered.

#### SECTION 1. THE DIVINE CALL.

The question is plain :

‘ Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people ? ’

The true note is struck at the outset. A Divine call is imperative.

#### I. *Its Necessity.*

What are we to understand by a Divine call to the ministry ? A friend of mine who has to interview candidates for the ministry once told me that many of the men who came before him were quite unable to adduce any definite proofs of a call from above. Indeed, they were without an idea on the subject, hopelessly confused about any such thing. And yet all true ministry must commence here. The call must come from God and not from man. It must be in some way the immediate appeal of God to the soul ; ‘ Son, go work to-day in My

vineyard.' This call will not be primarily through the Church or the Bishop, but is the internal work of the Holy Spirit. And as such it will be an 'effectual call'; such a man will inevitably reach the ministry.

Why do we insist on this necessity of a Divine call? Scripture is full of it. Old Testament prophets were all called of God, as we see from the stories of Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, and others. The New Testament Apostles were similarly called of God; the Twelve, St. Paul (Gal. i. 1), and Timothy. Of the ministry we may say what is recorded of the Aaronic priesthood. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God." (Heb. v. 14). The very nature of the case suggests the same thing. The minister is called an 'ambassador.' He is said to have 'received' his ministry, and to have it 'committed' to him. Human governments illustrate this principle. A man must be called to his office. And if it should be argued that the Bible illustrations are special cases, it may be replied that Church History bears testimony to the same profound principle. If we think of men like Ambrose, Augustine, Luther, Latimer, Knox, Wesley, Whitefield, and many others, we cannot help being conscious of the working of Divine grace. God never calls without equipping, and the very fact of equipment proves the call. The Lord ascended to give gifts, and He still bestows the varied gifts of ministry (Eph. iv. 11).

## II. *Its Proofs.*

How may a man tell whether he has received a call from above? The call may be proved in various ways; there is no precise law of detail or method, but a few marks may be confidently stated.

1. An intense desire. This may come early in life, or after conversion, or after confirmation, or at some still later time. But it will come. It will not be an unreasoning desire, but full of serious and earnest thought. It will be a disinterested desire, and motives will be pure and true.

And it will be a persistent desire. It will come again and again. The man will say, 'I ought, I want; and please God, I will.' Dr. Forsyth has put this point finely from his own personal experience :—

'It has been said by one who is fond of the truth as it is in paradox, that nobody ought to enter the ministry who can by any means keep out of it. And nobody should encourage another to enter it if he can possibly dissuade him. If the impulse is strong and steady enough to survive all the cold water that can be thrown on it, there is some reason to think that it may be the first stage of a call. So it has been said.' Now, without going all the length of the paradox, I think the longer we live in contact with the matter the more truth we feel to be in it. For instance, if a man comes up to us for an entrance examination in which he fails, and if he accepts one rebuff it much eases my mind. For I then feel that he has made good proof that the rejection was right.'

2. Converging circumstances. These are different in different cases. Sometimes they may be expressed in the desire and prayer of our parents. At other times we may see the hand of God in the provision of means and the opportunity for training. But whatever they may be, and however they may reveal themselves, circumstances will converge and indicate the will of God.

3. Some indications of qualifications. There ought to be physical qualifications. A minister must be prepared to 'endure hardness.' A serious defect in the voice, or some pronounced bodily infirmity, may well make a man question seriously whether God is calling him to the ministry. It may be going too far to insist on the old Aaronic requirement of absence of physical blemish, as is done, we believe, in the Church of Rome to-day, but the underlying general principle is sound, whatever may be the precise personal application. Intellectual qualifications will necessarily be included. A man ought to have *brains* for the ministry, some mental aptitude, and no looseness of intellectual machinery. Greatest of all are the moral qualifications; steadfastness of character, stability, self-control, and some concentration of purpose.

These are the qualifications essential to ministerial life, and the man who is really called of God must not be known to have failed in every other calling.

4. Approval of those around. The opinion of wise friends will be valuable on this point. Not merely the opinion of mother and sisters, nor necessarily of the opposite sex at all, but the judgment of men friends and acquaintances who really know us, fellows of our school days, men of our University and College. And not least of all, the opinion of the best men of the Church which we attend and where we are known. 'A good report of them that are without' will be a further qualification to support the idea of a Divine call.

5. A measure of blessing on our work. If we have not already done something for our Master it is hardly likely that we are being called to the ministry. We ought to have endeavoured to win someone for Christ, or to have tried to help some weak young Christian to a firmer footing in discipleship.

When these five characteristics exist; desire to enter the ministry, providential circumstances pointing in that direction, some evidence of qualifications, the approving judgment of those we can trust, and some experience of Christian work, we may 'assuredly gather' that God is calling us to preach the Gospel.

### III. *Its Assurance.*

'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost. . . I trust so.'

Mark the *confidence* of this answer. There is no doubt in the man's mind. He has faced the situation, and he can speak forth because of his knowledge of the Holy Ghost in his life.

But mark also the *humility*. 'I trust so.' His confidence is not baseless, but founded on a genuine Christian hopefulness and humility. He does not venture to say 'I know,' because he might possibly be mistaking the Divine Voice and Providence. But in the true spirit of

Christian trust and self-distrust he responds to the inquiry, 'I trust so,' and waits to obtain further verification in actual experience.

This is the Divine call, and it is the foundation of all else. Let us face it before we enter the ministry lest we find out our mistake afterwards. Is it not terrible to think of any man daring to respond to this solemn inquiry, into which the Holy Ghost is actually brought, without possessing that spiritual experience which alone can warrant the reply? Who shall dare to say 'I trust so' unless he has such definite personal dealings with God the Holy Ghost as will enable him to feel sure that he is in the pathway of God's will? The personal experience of the Holy Ghost is at once the most solemn and the most blessed reality of the Christian life.

## SECTION 2. THE CHURCH COMMISSION.

The Divine call settled, it follows next that we become assured as to the place wherein we are to exercise our ministry. And so Question 2 naturally follows the first.

'Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this Realm, to the Ministry of the Church?'

### I. *The First Proof (Divine).*

'Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ?' Once again, at the risk of repetition, the spiritual element is emphasized by another reference to a Divine call. Let us, following this plan of repetition, briefly recall the aspects of 'the will of our Lord Jesus Christ' in regard to the ministry.

1. The will of Christ may be deduced from Holy Scripture. In the various elements of the ministry and its purpose of 'serving God for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people' we learn 'what the will of the Lord is.'

2. The will of our Lord Jesus Christ may be learnt from

personal providences in life. As we review our pathway we should be able to see 'all things working together for good' in relation to our entrance upon the ministry.

3. The will of our Lord Jesus Christ may be gathered from the marks of personal fitness we possess. Body, mind, and soul should combine to prove that we are ready for this 'office and ministration.'

4. The will of our Lord Jesus Christ may be deduced from a consideration of our spiritual experience. The witness of the Spirit within, and our knowledge of and fellowship in things spiritual, ought to bear their culminating testimony to the other lines of evidence of a Divine call.

Let us therefore face this afresh and make sure of our call to the ministry of the Church 'according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

## II. *The Second Proof (Ecclesiastical).*

We are expected to know and confirm our belief in a call to the specific ministry of the Church of England. 'According to . . . the due order of this Realm.' 'Realm' and 'Church' were two aspects of the national Christian life in the sixteenth century. Convocation represented the clergy and Parliament the laity, and the Church and Realm were thus coterminous, though looked at from different points of view. It was thus that the Article could say, 'The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England,' meaning thereby the Church of the entire nation. But what is the 'due order of this Realm'? It has several bearings in relation to modern life, and it is essential for a clergyman to know what is implied.

1. The 'due order' must be related first of all to Holy Scripture. Article VI is the sheet-anchor of the Church of England in this respect, and indicates quite plainly that Holy Scripture is our supreme authority in all Church matters. Articles XIX and XX point in the same direction, and show that the Church is subordinate to the



Word of God. So that 'the due order of this Realm' will mean first and foremost a general agreement with Scripture in regard to the fundamentals of the faith. The doctrines of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and the various aspects of the Divine Redemptive Person and Work of our Lord, as taught by the Church, will be accepted because they 'may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.' And as with the Church in general, so with the Ministry in particular, we must believe that the 'due order of this Realm' is Scriptural. The ministry of the New Testament, as we know, is that of a presbyterate, and 'the Ministry of the Church' will necessarily be the same if it is 'according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and on the basis of Article VI.

2. The 'due order of this Realm' must also be considered in relation to the Church of Rome. The repudiation of Roman supremacy in the sixteenth century carried with it consequences which last until the present day, and our Prayer Book and Articles enshrine for us what is up to the present, and will be apparently for a long time to come, the permanent position of our Church in relation to Rome. Both in doctrine and discipline the Church of England stands committed to a particular position which necessitates an attitude of definite opposition to Rome. This is not stated for the purpose of mere controversy, but for the sake of that clearness as to our position which it is incumbent on every true English Churchman and clergyman to know, emphasize, and maintain. The history of three and a half centuries, and the attitude of the Church of Rome to-day, leave us no alternative but to insist with all possible definiteness and force on the spiritual validity and the ecclesiastical value of the Church of England.

3. The 'due order of this Realm' has also an important bearing on the Nonconformity and Dissent of our land, and there is scarcely any point on which Churchmen need to be more accurately informed in order to avoid two extremes which are rife in the present day. Our safe and sure ground will be to consider certain facts of history

if we are to form a right judgment on this important and complex matter.

(a) We cannot fail to note the fellowship at the Reformation between our own Reformers and the non-Episcopal Reformers of Germany, Switzerland and Scotland. Cranmer, Ridley, Parker, and Jewel, to whom we owe all that is best in Anglican theology, were in constant and close association with foreign Reformers, while the influence of the Confessions of Augsburg and Wirtemberg on our Articles, as seen in their phraseology to this day (Articles XIX, etc), bears the same testimony.

(b) Nor can we omit a reference to the action of the Church authorities against the Elizabethan Puritans, which led so high an authority as Bishop Creighton to say of the Elizabethan Church that—

‘It tended to lose the appearance of a free and self-governing body, and seemed to be an instrument of the policy of the State. Its pleadings and its arguments lost half their weight because they were backed by coercive authority. The dangerous formula, “Obey the law,” was introduced into the settlement of questions which concerned the relations of the individual conscience and God.’<sup>1</sup>

(c) This spirit inevitably led to reprisals, and when the Puritans obtained the upper hand they made short work of the convictions even of moderate Churchmen. ‘The Presbyterians had now succeeded the Laudians, and their intolerance was as great as those whom they had supplanted.’<sup>2</sup>

(d) Then again, when Charles II succeeded to the throne, a Church reaction took place, with the result that what in Elizabeth’s day had only been Nonconformity within the Church, became Dissent outside the Church, with a gulf made impassable by persecution and oppression.

(e) And the action of the Church in the eighteenth century is not to be overlooked. No one doubts that

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures and Addresses.*

<sup>2</sup> Butler’s *Life and Letters of Archbishop Leighton*, p. 192.

John Wesley never wished or intended to leave the Church of England, but was really compelled to do so by the attitude adopted by the authorities of the Church of that day. As the *Church Quarterly Review* has truly said :—

‘ We are not prepared to defend either the spiritual life of the Church of England in the eighteenth century, or the spiritual self-assertion of the Wesleyan movement. Schism means sin in the past and needs penitence and reparation in the future.’

(f) While, therefore, in view of all these facts we are careful about our use of the term ‘ schism ’ when Dissent is being considered, it will not prevent us from maintaining a firm adherence to our own position as Churchmen as that which is the most Scriptural, most historical, most useful form of Church government and life. The strongest Protestantism against Rome and the warmest sympathies with the spiritual teaching of Evangelical Nonconformity, are not incompatible with the firmest convictions and the most loyal devotion as Evangelical Churchmen. ‘ Are you a Churchman ? ’ a well known man was asked. ‘ Yes,’ was the reply, ‘ I am a Churchman definitely, but not exclusively.’<sup>2</sup>

4. The ‘ due order of this Realm ’ must also be considered in relation to what are called Church parties. There have been such ever since the Reformation, and their existence has been found quite compatible with true Churchmanship. While thoroughly agreed in substance, they have differed in outlook and emphasis, and thus, though diverse they were not divergent in view. Such men as Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, Latimer, Jewel, Parker, Hooker, represented different types of Churchmanship, while heartily at one on the great fundamentals of faith and life. This diversity of view has been seen at all periods since those days, and men like Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor, Ussher, Barrow, Tillotson, and later on, Venn, Newton, Simeon, Coleridge, Kingsley, Hare, Arnold,

<sup>1</sup> July, 1908, p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> A further and fuller statement of what seems to the writer the true attitude of Church to Dissent may be seen in his *Manual, The Catholic Faith*, pp. 361–9.

Whately, Burgon, and many more, have represented various phases of thought while heartily agreed on the essentials of true Churchmanship. And this is as natural as it is welcome, for no one could wish to have absolute unanimity of thought and entire agreement of practice in so wide, varied, and complex a community as the Church of England.

But of course such diversities must have their limits, and while we may have our preference in this or that direction, the great principle of loyalty to the Prayer Book and Articles should be the dominant factor. By loyalty we mean an honest and true adherence to the doctrines and practices of the Prayer Book and Articles in the light of their emphasis at the Reformation, and of the subsequent history of the Church of England in relation to Rome and in relation to our national life. Granted this, and then our differences of thought and life will be productive of nothing but good.

The fact is that a man can belong quite definitely and acceptably to a Church party without being a partizan. The so-called 'non-party' Churchman is as a rule either a molluscous individual of no service to himself or to others, or else he turns out to be as definitely a party man as any one else. Party without partizanship should be the motto of all loyal Churchman. Preferences but not exclusions should be our aim and ideal.

As we review the consideration of 'the due order of this Realm' in relation to Scripture, to Rome, to Dissent, and to Church parties, we cannot help seeing the true meaning and real force of the Prayer Book phrase; 'sober, peaceable, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England. There is such a thing as a definite Anglican tradition, which has been maintained amid all differences since the Reformation, and to this we shall find it our wisdom to adhere, whatever particular tint our Churchmanship may take.<sup>1</sup> And true Churchmanship will always be characterized by these three elements.

<sup>1</sup> For a further treatment of the attitude to take to Church parties, perhaps I may refer to *The Catholic Faith*, pp. 369-373.

1. **Definite Convictions.** The mind must be made up on certain matters, and our position held with tenacity. Such subjects as the Deity of Christ, the Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit, the Redemptive Work of Christ, should be settled, never to be re-opened. It is only by definite convictions that any Churchmanship worthy of the name can live and work.

2. **Wide Sympathies.** While definite we must not be narrow ; although possessing preferences we must make room for other outlooks. While our convictions are part of ourselves and are founded firmly on the Rock of Ages, our sympathies should be as wide as they can be. It is the 'intensive' man who can safely be 'extensive,' it is only the shallow man who is in danger of losing everything definite by extending his sympathies.

3. **Genuine Spirituality.** This will give warmth to our convictions and strength to our sympathies. The men to be feared and avoided are (1) the man of convictions only, who is narrow, cold, hard and perhaps bitter, without the warmth of spiritual experience : and (2) the man of genial indifference to settled doctrine, and of easy-going acceptance of all types of thought and effort, without the safeguard that comes from a true spiritual life. But when convictions, sympathies, and spirituality meet and blend in reality and proportion, we have the true Churchman contemplated by our Prayer Book.

### SECTION 3. THE BELIEF OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The first question refers to the Source, the second to the Sphere, and the third which follows, appropriately deals with the Message. There are two questions about the Scriptures : (1) Its place in the Minister's life. (2) His use of it in his work. 'No other Church requires this from Deacons and Priests, only from Bishops, because no such commission was given to Deacons and Priests.'<sup>1</sup> It is of the utmost importance that our attention should

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, quoted by Bishop Diggle, *Addresses on the Ordinal*, p. 17.



be directed to this first question on the Holy Scriptures, for it is vital to all else.

‘Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?’

### I. *The Church's View of Holy Scripture.*

In order that we may appreciate properly the force of this question put at a solemn moment to the one about to become a minister, we must inquire generally what the Church of England holds as to the place and power of Holy Scripture.

1. It teaches the Supreme Authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice. Of the two characteristics of the Reformation, one was the appeal to Scripture. We see this in Articles VI, XX, XXI, and many others. As Article VI says: ‘Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.’ Article XX says: ‘It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another.’ Article XXI, speaking of General Councils, says, ‘things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.’

2. It teaches the Spiritual Sufficiency of Scripture. This second characteristic of the Reformation was the insistence on Religion as personal and as not necessarily mediated through an institution, or a man. The title of Article VI shows this clearly. “Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.”

So that according to the Church of England, Scripture is (a) the Source of Doctrine, (b) the Spring of Duty, (c) the Final Court of Appeal.

3. The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture were based on the conviction of its possession of a Divine



Revelation guarded by Inspiration. This Revelation meant that God had spoken, and that His will had been made known and could be understood and followed in Holy Scripture. Inspiration was never defined or described (beyond the phrase, 'God's Word written,' Article XX), but was assumed, taken for granted. It is sometimes said that the Church of England lays down no theory of Inspiration. True, but why is this? Because Inspiration was presupposed. The Church in the sixteenth century was not engaged on the proof of Divine Inspiration. That was not a question in dispute, and being everywhere allowed, it was assumed and taken for granted. What the Church of England was doing was to assert that these Divinely inspired Scriptures were the supreme authority for Christian men and Churches. The use of Scripture, and the reference to it as authoritative, showed that the Church believed the Scriptures revealed the presence of the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Truth ('Thy Word is truth,' John xvii. 17), and the Spirit of Holiness ('Thy Word is very pure,' Psa. cxix. 140). Revelation and Inspiration are best proved by the Gospel contained in Scripture, as it affects in transforming power our lives and the lives of others. It is the uniqueness of Scripture which is the great thing, its authoritativeness for life as a revelation from God. And whatever may be our precise theory of Inspiration, we shall be well advised if we adopt none that tends to diminish our reverence for the Bible as the work and instrument of the Holy Spirit. 'The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.' We are on a sure foundation when we accept, without attempting to explain, the two statements of God's Word: 'All Scripture is God-breathed' (or, 'Every Scripture is God-breathed,' 2 Tim. iii. 16), and 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21).

## II. *The Ministerial Attitude to Holy Scripture.*

1. The question is definite. 'Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New

Testament ?' That is, are we prepared to accept their truth and acknowledge their authority. It should never be forgotten, amid all the critical controversies of to-day, that the fundamental question is as to the historical trustworthiness of Holy Scripture. It is not a question of any precise theory of Inspiration, but whether the account given in the Old and New Testament of God's revelation of Himself can be relied upon for its historical trustworthiness. Some words of a modern scholar are worth quoting on this :—

'What is of vital concern to the Christian Church is not questions of literary analysis or minor points of literary history and criticism, but whether the story of Israel's history from the call of Abraham down to the preaching and writing of the last Apostle is, as to all its essential and characteristic features, correct; whether, in particular, what it tells us of the part God took in it, is as objectively true as what it tells us of the part men took in it. We need not be troubled if an inaccuracy be found here and another there, whether of thought, or sentiment, or date, or name, or number, or any other subject; for neither a nation's nor an individual's whole history can be discredited because mistakes may have crept into the literature by means of which its life has found expression, and through which later generations have to learn what it was. What the Christian Church needs to be on its guard against, is the acceptance of a reconstruction of the history of Israel which eliminates the special Divine acts, revelations, and inspiration, whose purpose was the reconciliation of God and man; in a word, all that has constituted, and still constitutes, its distinctive value.'<sup>1</sup>

The minister must be clear here, or else he had better not think of the ministry. Error on this point is fatal to usefulness and power. 'How canst thou go, seeing thou hast no tidings ready.'

2. The question is searching. 'Do you unfeignedly believe?' This is a call for sincerity, and if a man lacks that, he lacks the essential of all ministry. Sincerity leads inevitably to reverence, and no one will ever use the Bible aright unless he is reverent to it. All Bible problems should be approached from the point of view

<sup>1</sup> Principal Simon, *Some Bible Problems*, p. 284.

of spiritual religion. Literary study alone is useless. And reverence in turn will lead to spiritual power.

3. The question is to be answered without any hesitation or qualification. 'I do.' It is a confession of personal experience. The difference between the 'I trust so' of the first answer, and the 'I think so' of the second is profoundly significant. It means that the man knows by experience what the Scriptures are. The response, 'I do,' expresses at once his confidence, his conviction, and his courage.

From all this we see that our attitude to Scripture determines all else. It comes in at every point. The Bible must be our Fount of Doctrine. Its Authority must be our deciding factor. The Life of the Bible must be our ideal, and the Grace of the Bible our dynamic. Indeed, the first and most natural view of everything in the ministry ought to have a close relation to the Bible.

And this will of course mean a first-hand experience of the Bible as the Word of God. The mind must be saturated with its truth, the heart inspired by its love, the conscience made sensitive to its law, and the will submissive to its grace. Then, then only, then always, will our life be fragrant and our ministry fruitful to the glory of God.

NOTE.—It will be observed that the second question in the Ordering of Priests differs fundamentally from the above question about belief in the Canonical Scriptures. That question having been asked of the Deacon is not needed again, and so the Priest is questioned as to his belief in the sufficiency of Scripture for saving doctrine, and his determination to preach and teach for salvation only what he finds therein.

'Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? and are you determined, out of the said Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?'

It ought to be obvious that this question cannot possibly be regarded as an equivalent for that discussed above. It does not call for separate treatment here because it is implied in the following question from the Ordering of Deacons, and is also emphasized quite fully in the long exhortation in the Ordering of Priests which is to come before us in due course.

#### SECTION 4. THE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

From the minister's own personal attitude to Holy Scripture we naturally pass to the consideration of his use of Scripture in ministerial life and work.

**'Will you diligently read the same unto the people assembled in the Church where you shall be appointed to serve?'**

##### *I. The Place of Scripture in the Church of England.*

There is no Church in Christendom which uses so much of Scripture or gives it so prominent a place in its services.

1. In the Articles it is the supreme standard of doctrine and the final court of appeal.

2. In the Lessons, Epistles, and Gospels it is used daily and weekly for instruction.

3. In the Psalms it is employed for worship daily through the month.

4. In the Prayers, the substance of the petitions is often verbally identical with, or evidently based on, Holy Scripture.

5. In the Ordination Services special prominence is given to the Bible by the presentation of a Testament to the Deacon and a Bible to the Priest with the words, 'Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God.' 'Take thou authority to preach the Word of God.' We have only to compare, or, rather, contrast these with the words spoken in pre-Reformation times as (not the Bible, but) the sacramental vessels were given with the words, 'Take thou authority to offer sacrifice to God, to celebrate

the Mass for the living and for the dead.' Our Ordinal by this significant change lays the chief emphasis on our work as Ministers of the Word.'

## II. *The Ministerial Use of Scripture.*

1. The Reading of the Lessons. The value of this part of the Service cannot well be over-estimated. Let us make the most of it and do our best to make the 'hearing of His most holy Word' the means of grace it is intended to be.

2. Preaching. As the Bible is necessarily the source of our sermons, so it should be their substance and their inspiration. We are to 'preach the word'; we are to be 'faithful dispensers of the Word'; our work is primarily a 'ministry of the Word.' If our sermons are not Biblical they cannot properly be Christian; the Bible must enter into every part of our preaching work.

3. Teaching. In the various methods of instruction employed by all Churches; Bible classes, Sunday schools, day schools, church services, the teaching must be above all things Biblical. Our people need to be 'built up in their most holy faith,' and this faith is drawn primarily and pre-eminently from the Word of God. No Church that is worthy of the name dare neglect the teaching of the Bible, or fail to give it a prominent place.

4. The clergyman is pastor as well as preacher, shepherd as well as teacher, and the Bible must be as prominent in this as in other spheres of his work. It is only 'by the ministry of God's Word' that he is able to dispense the benefit of absolution 'together with 'ghostly counsel and advice.' It is only by 'the wholesome medicine of the Gospel' that he will be able to heal the spiritual diseases of his people. For the weary, the sorrowing, the despondent, the hardened, the fearing, the despairing, the Bible will naturally and necessarily be the minister's *vade mecum*, his indispensable help. And the more he studies it with this practical pastoral end in view, the more effective and the more blessed will be his ministry. Our minds and



hearts should be so stored and saturated with the Bible that the Scripture view of things should instinctively be the first that occurs to us. No time is too long, no trouble too great, that is spent with the Bible in relation to pastoral preaching, teaching, and service.

### III. *The Secret of Ministerial Use of Scripture.*

The minister must know his Bible, and his knowledge will be threefold; Intellectual, Devotional, Homiletical.

1. He must first master its contents. Whatever may be his methods of study he must know the contents of his Bible. To this end a few suggestions may perhaps be given.

(a) Let us study the Bible itself first and chiefly, instead of what is said about it. Dr. Campbell Morgan recently said that the weakness of Free Church preaching to-day is its uncertainty, the absence of any clear note, and he attributes this to the lack of Bible Study.

‘I feel very strongly that a great deal of this is due to their almost total neglect of study, prayerful study, of the Bible. Many have been so busy dealing with it as literature that they have entirely neglected its spiritual note. They can read it in Greek and Hebrew, but scores of them leave their theological college utterly unable to pass the simplest examination in the Bible. Many a humble old woman in their Church knows her Bible far better.’

Is not this equally true of the Church of England? Are there not many who could give the arguments, *pro* and *con*, as to the criticism of Deuteronomy, the unity of Isaiah, and the Apostolicity of the Fourth Gospel, who would find it difficult to pass an examination on the actual contents of Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and St. John? While we do not fail to make ourselves acquainted with all the modern scholarship within our reach, we must first of all make ourselves acquainted with the actual contents of the Bible. And another thing follows.

(b) Let us study the books as they are, before we concern ourselves with their real or supposed sources. To resolve a book into its sources is perfectly legitimate, but it is not everything, and it is not the primary thing.



Let us suppose that we were sure of the sources or strata of Genesis, or the Synoptic Gospels, it would still be true that the sources were fragments and not the full form. But it is the present form of these books that has given, and still gives them their unique power. Besides, no analysis of sources is likely to be final, but at most only inferential, and meanwhile, our work calls for the definite constant use of these books for spiritual, pastoral purposes.

2. He must then consider how to apply the Bible to his own life. The Bible is not only to be mastered, it is to be assimilated. Meditation has been defined as 'attention with intention,' and the Word of God is to be a mirror in which we view ourselves (Jas. i. 23-25); the water which cleanses (Eph. v. 26); and the food which strengthens our spiritual life (1 Pet. ii. 2; Heb. v. 12-14; Psa. xix. 10). The message of the Bible must come home first of all to our own hearts if it is to be of use to others. 'What saith my Lord to His servant?' (Josh. v. 14); 'What wilt Thou have me to do?' (Acts ix. 6), must be our constant, personal, definite inquiries.

3. He must then use the Bible, thus mastered and assimilated, in his ministerial work. For preaching, teaching and pastoral needs the Word of God is all important. All Scripture 'is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness' (2 Tim. iii. 16). And it is just at this point that we see the force of studying and using the Book with a belief and confidence in the great truth of its contents. To be able to prove that three sources exist in Genesis, or two in St. Mark, is one thing, but to argue that these sources when analysed are contradictory is quite another. We ought to be able to assume in our ministerial use of the Bible that the history as a whole is correct, and that the Scripture account is a trustworthy record of Divine revelation. It is difficult to imagine ordinary men believing the truth of the Bible if it is proved inaccurate on matters of fact. The question at once arises whether inspiration is compatible with frequent inaccuracy or frequent incom-

petency. In all this we must be genuine, open-eyed students, determined to discover and possess the truth, not followers of any fashion in scholarship, whether ancient or modern. We must call no man Master, but determine to go our way and settle these things for ourselves. We may depend upon one thing, that any view of the Bible which cannot be proved and taught, is pretty certain to be wrong, or at any rate so doubtful as to be practically useless for pastoral work. Sir William Robertson Nicoll once remarked of Old Testament questions that ordinary hearers cannot be expected to follow the intricate process of historical criticism, and that therefore in our preaching we must take the Old Testament as it is, or leave it alone.<sup>1</sup> Some of us have not hesitated to draw the conclusion from these words that if new views of the Old or New Testament cannot be taught they cannot be right, and that if they are right they can be, and ought to be taught. In the work of the ministry the Bible ought to be the light (Psa. cxix. 105), the hammer (Jer. xxiii. 29), the fire (Jer. xxiii. 29), and the sword (Eph. vi. 17). Like David in regard to Goliath's sword, we ought to say concerning the Bible, 'There is none like it, give it to me.'

4. This threefold attitude of Scripture: intellectual knowledge, devotional experience, and ministerial use, will be at once the cause and the effect of a convinced and ever-deepening belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God. We shall believe in its power over men as we experience its power over ourselves, and we shall be convinced of its sufficiency for all ministerial needs without resorting to any methods of service in which the Bible finds little or no place. And so the minister will be 'mighty in the Scriptures,' and will find in them the supreme secret of ministerial joy and power.

The answer to this fourth inquiry on the Scriptures needs special attention. The first three answers were the expressions of our inmost convictions. 'I trust so,' 'I think so,' 'I do.' But this is a deliberate promise, 'I

<sup>1</sup> Index to *Expositor's Bible*, Introductory Essay.

will,' and, as such, it must be carried out. Promises are intended to be fulfilled. Each day we must do something in regard to the intellectual knowledge, the devotional application, and the pastoral use of Scripture. Each day we must unite with these three methods the exercise of prayer for light, guidance, and blessing. 'We will give ourselves to the ministry of the word and prayer' (Acts vi. 5), for it is only in this firm and constant waiting on God in His Word and prayer that we shall wax riper in our service and be 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

#### SECTION 5. THE WORK.

After the consideration of the Minister's relation to God, to the Church, to the Holy Scriptures, the thought of his work naturally follows.

'It appertaineth in the Office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, to assist the Priest in Divine Service, and specially when he ministereth the Holy Communion, and to help him in the distribution thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and Homilies in the Church ; and to instruct the youth in the Catechism ; in the absence of the Priest to baptize infants, and to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is his office, where provision is so made, to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the Parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the Parishioners or others. Will you do this gladly and willingly ?  
'I will so do, by the help of God.'

As we ponder these various statements, we shall see something of what the Church considers to be the work of a Deacon.

#### I. *Strenuous Service.*

The fulness and variety of the description show the character of his work. The very word 'deacon' teaches the same idea. It comes from δῖωκω, to pursue, and

suggests the eager pursuit, the faithful following up of our work.<sup>1</sup>

1. It will not be a light and easy service. There will be plenty of work, and work, too, which will put a heavy strain on mind and body. If a man imagines that he will have 'an easy time' by entering the ministry he will find himself very much mistaken. The calls upon his time, the pressure upon his strength, the demand upon his intellect, and not least of all, the drain upon his sympathies, will soon show him what is meant by the Church of England diaconate.

2. And yet the service of the ministry is one of the most searching tests of character, because our time is our own in the sense that unlike men in professional or business life we are not subject to particular hours of duty which must be observed. A clergyman can easily fritter away his time between breakfast and lunch, and find by one o'clock very little done.<sup>2</sup> It is essential for a man to make some definite rules for the use of his time, and keep to them. Thus, the avoidance of the newspapers and the easy chair until after lunch would often prove a help to genuine work between nine and one. But whether morning, afternoon, or evening, it still remains true that the very fact of the clergyman having the control of so much of his own time offers a real temptation to waste it, and thereby to do himself and his ministry great and lasting harm. From the earliest days of our ministry, and indeed, before we enter it, we shall do well to form the habit of regularity and method in the employment of our time, or else our freedom may prove a spiritual snare to us.

3. Another difficulty and temptation will be found in the multifariousness of ministerial duties. So many things will arise that seem to clamour to be done that a man may utilize all his time and find nothing at the end to show

<sup>1</sup> Trench, *New Testament Synonyms*, p. 3; Drury, *The Prison Ministry of St. Paul*, p. 112, note.

<sup>2</sup> Since the above lines were written, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll's fine lecture, entitled *Mr. Fritterday*, has appeared in the *British Weekly* for June 29 and July 6, 1911.

for his efforts. A man can easily be busy and yet not industrious. The minister must soon learn to say 'no' to requests for his services and to demands on his time. He will have to limit his work and determine to do only those things that are nearest to and most directly in line with his sphere. Our Churches to-day are suffering from over-organization, and if they would do less they would accomplish more, less of the indirect and more of the direct, less of the secular and more of the spiritual. In view of all the varied organizations of a parish nowadays, one is tempted to say to a man when he is seeking a curacy, 'Beware of any advertisement which speaks of a "well-organized parish."' There is no problem to-day more pressing on the ministry, senior and junior, than the best disposal of our time in order to accomplish the greatest possible work of the right kind, that which will be spiritually productive.

## II. *Subordinate Service.*

The words 'assist the Priest,' 'help,' and 'in the absence of the Priest,' show that the Deacon's work is primarily that of an assistant to the clergyman in charge of the parish. This at once raises the problem of the relation between the two men, and the present question naturally looks at it from the side of the Deacon as the subordinate worker.

1. He should render a *loyal* service. The Deacon will probably find that some of the people will show their preference for him in unwise ways, and may even go so far as to constitute themselves into something like a Curate's party. If he detects this he must show his disapproval in every possible way, and meanwhile maintain a loyalty to his senior officer which will enable them to work together heartily and happily. If a Curate is in close touch with his Vicar he need not trouble about what others may say and do.

2. He should take care that his is a *co-operating* service. By this is meant that he should so arrange his work that



it is not independent of the other work of the parish. Of course circumstances vary, and sometimes a Vicar hands over a work to the Curate and gives him a perfectly free hand to do as he feels best. At other times a Curate is at work in direct and immediate association with the Vicar. But there are few parishes in which a Curate does not find himself responsible for a certain department or district, and in such cases he will be well advised if he does not initiate any new work without first consulting the Vicar. The parish is really an unit, and the work in each section should bear some relation to that of the whole. For this reason it is also useful, and, indeed essential, to consult the Vicar with the view of considering the bearing of the proposed new departure on the work of the parish in general. My own strong preference in parish work was to give a colleague a free hand to do the work of his particular district in his own way, only asking him to take counsel with me when he felt impelled to adopt some new method, or initiate some fresh department of work. With this spirit of co-operation between seniors and juniors the work will go on happily and successfully day by day.

3. And all through his term of service the Deacon should render a *sympathetic* service. The younger minister cannot at once realize the strain of responsibility on the older man, and for this reason the fellowship of the junior worker should be as readily offered to as it should be warmly appreciated by the senior clergyman. The Curate should beware of any severance of heart between him and his Vicar. It may be that the scholarship of the older man has become rusty, and it may also be that his parochial methods are not as modern as they might be, and the younger man may feel tempted to think slightly of such lack of adaptation to modern needs. But he should endeavour to resist such a temptation, and to remember that 'not even the youngest of us is infallible,' and that allowance must be made for age, circumstances, and associations. Of course, if from any reason the Curate should find himself unable to respect the character of the Vicar, he should endeavour to make a change as soon as



possible, but while he is in the parish he should resolutely refuse to allow anything to sever heart from heart in two workers so inevitably and closely associated in the work of God.

### III. *Spiritual Service.*

A careful study of the statement of the Ordinal indicates quite clearly the character of the work. It is primarily and fundamentally spiritual. The Deacon is to assist in Divine Service, to help at Holy Communion, to read the Holy Scriptures and Homilies in Church, to instruct the youth in the Catechism, to baptize, and to preach. His paramount duties are therefore spiritual, and this element must ever predominate. The salvation of the sinner and the edification of the believer must be always in view. He is ordained to minister to a Church, not a Concert Room or a Club. First things are put first, and this is ever the great characteristic of the Ordinal. Secondary things do not appear, and since this is so, no pressure of modern life ought to crowd out these primary spiritual realities for which the clergyman is ordained. The ministry of the Prayer Book, following closely that of the New Testament, is a spiritual ministry, and nothing must ever be allowed to set this aside.

### IV. *Social Service.*

It is not to be supposed that what has been said about spiritual work excludes the true idea of social service. On the contrary, the spiritual may, and must, be expressed in the social. And so it is said to be of the office of the Deacon (doubtless following the example of Acts vi) 'to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish, to intimate their estates, names, and places where they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his exhortation they may be relieved with the alms of the parishioners, or others.' Christianity appeals to the whole man, and from the very first the care of the poor, the sick, and the aged has been part of Christian work. In the Incarnation the human body has been raised to its proper position

and we are now enabled to understand what it means to 'glorify God in our body' (1 Cor. vi. 20). And yet even this work is not merely social, but in strict subordination to the spiritual. The clergyman is not a relieving officer, and the Church is not a dispensary or a club. Salvation by club is no salvation at all. Whatever social efforts are attached to a Church must be the outcome of the spiritual efforts. All clergymen of the largest experience tell us that 'Through the Club to the Church' is an utter failure, while 'From the Church to the Club' is a true, legitimate, and necessary way of expressing and cultivating the social aspect of Christianity. As my friend Mr. Watts-Ditchfield once said, "the converted men in the Church create and maintain the true atmosphere for the club." A thoughtful writer has penetrated to the heart of this problem when he says that the weakness of the Church often lies in the fact that it does not and cannot deepen the shallow lives of men :—

'It is not deepening a man to keep him out of bad company ; to keep him out of the public-house is something ; but it is only an arrest, the avoidance of a further shallowing. It is good so far as it goes ; still, the idea is not to keep a man on a level of life in which you happen to find him, but to get him on to another level altogether, and so to influence him that, of himself, he shall mount higher and yet higher. The end is not attained if the man is not quickened.'<sup>1</sup>

#### V. *Satisfying Service.*

Mark the inquiry. 'Will you do this gladly and willingly ?' And the answer. 'I will so do, by the help of God.'

1. The Ministry will be a *glad* service. This is a simple but searching test of the quality of our ministry. Are we enjoying it ? Are we glad in it ? We may be tired *in* it, but we ought not to be tired *of* it. There is no service on earth in which there is so much deep gladness.

2. The ministry will be a *willing* service. Not forced labour, but spontaneous service out of a ready mind and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Arthur Hoyle in the *Methodist Recorder*, November, 1910.

willing heart. The moment the foot begins to drag and the service becomes a burden, it is a call to inquire as to our spiritual, or our mental, or, most likely of all, our bodily health.

3. And the ministry will be a *trustful* service. 'By the help of God.' Herein lies the supreme secret; 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' And hence, too, is the fearless response; 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' In the face of all the problems, the demands, the temptations, the disappointments, the weariness, the failures, the word rings out beyond all question, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' And the heart responds as it rests on the Word of our Heavenly Father; 'With God all things are possible.' 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'

#### SECTION 6. THE PERSONAL LIFE.

After the official duties comes the consideration of personal life. Character is the true source of service, and duties can only be efficiently performed by one whose life is true. 'They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.' Let us ponder carefully this question.

'Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own lives, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?'

##### I. *The Call.*

'Wholesome examples.' This is the object set before the minister.

1. Consider the 'wholesome examples' in relation to *personal life*. On the publication of the first volume of Dr. Temple's Rugby Sermons, some one said to him, 'They will stir people strongly.' 'No,' said Temple, 'written sermons seldom do. It is the man behind the

sermon that stirs.' This is the case in every department of ministerial life and activity. It is 'the man behind' that tells. What, then, is the life of the true minister of Christ ?

(a) It should be marked by Sincerity. In everything said and done he should be straight and true. In the matter and manner of his sermons, in the substance and form of his teaching, in the conduct and guidance of parochial affairs, his life should be consistent. Not ability, but reality is what people earnestly desire and rightly demand.

(b) It should be marked by Seriousness. As we have seen, one of the key words of the Pastoral Epistles is "grave" (σεμνός), and it is the more striking in that it is pressed upon young men. But can we expect gravity from young men ? Yes, if we remember that gravity is not gloom, and that brightness is not lightness. The minister is rightly expected to take a serious view of life and not to allow himself to degenerate into a reputation for lightness, still less for flippancy.

2. Consider the 'wholesome examples' in relation to *home life*. While primarily the question refers to the influence of the man on those around him in the endeavour to make them examples, we may fairly widen the thought and dwell upon the man's own personal character in connexion with his home life. A bachelor Curate, living in lodgings, has a special opportunity for making or marring his reputation. In his use of time, in the regularity of his meal hours, and generally in his thought for his landlady, he can do much to glorify God and recommend his Master's service. It is not at all surprising to find the impressions of the Curate that leak out in the parish from what is known of his life in his lodgings. It is a true test of a man to find out how he lives in the privacy of his rooms and in the secrecy of his chamber. How does he spend his time between breakfast and lunch ? What about his afternoons ? What are the books which are found about in his rooms ? Does he pay his landlady regularly ? Does his room reek with stale tobacco smoke ?

These may seem small in themselves, but 'straws show which way the wind blows.'

And when he is a Vicar and has a house of his own ; when, moreover, he is married and a family is growing up around him, the call to be ' wholesome examples ' is even more pressing. The Vicarage will often give the tone to the parish. The affairs of the Vicarage will be known in the parish. People will become aware whether tradesmen's bills are paid, whether servants are fairly treated, whether the children are well disciplined, whether the Vicar's wife is concerned for the welfare of the parish, and above all, whether the man who preaches such eloquent and able sermons is able to ' show piety at home.' It is one of the saddest and most deplorable things when a clergyman's house gets a reputation for the very opposite of these things. It is all the more terrible when the clergyman happens to preach the highest spiritual doctrine, and even dismisses his choir for being unspiritual and unconverted, and yet fails again and again to pay his debts to tradesmen in the parish. Who can wonder that spiritual religion is repellent in that parish by reason of the ' unwholesome example ' of that clergyman? And this is no fancy picture. Men soon take the measure of their clergy. Truth will out, and the average judgment of a congregation respecting the clergyman can usually be trusted with unerring certainty. A layman once judged a clergyman by a single test only ; whether he would be the sort of man to send for when one is on a deathbed. A very fair, a very true, and a very searching test. ' Wholesome examples of the flock of Christ.' This, and this above all, is the secret of ministerial blessing and power over men.

## II. *The Effort.*

How is the call to be met, and the ideal realized ? Only by dint of definite effort. The question suggests this.

1. There must be genuine effort. ' Frame and fashion.' This means work, and work which will not be done at once.



2. There must be constant effort. 'Will you apply all your diligence?' The clergyman will need all his powers to accomplish this end, and he must never be off duty. Bishop Wilberforce acutely says:—

'Let there be no intervals of conscious self-allowance, no earthly parentheses in our ministerial life.'<sup>1</sup>

The saddest of sad experiences is the case of those clergymen who fall after years of untarnished reputation. For a long time they have laboured with outward and apparent acceptance, but all the while they have been indulging some secret sin, or doubtful habit which has at length made its appearance in the life. Like those at Sardis they have a name that they live and yet are dead (Rev. iii. 1). They are like the fungus in the tree which makes no apparent difference until it falls off in the autumn and reveals the real change effected. A man is used of God in preaching and working, and then at the close of a long ministry he is found guilty of some sin which necessitates instant resignation, and a retirement into permanent obscurity until at length we read the bare announcement of his death, and we wonder what might have been if only he had been true to the end. This again is no mere imagination, for there are cases such as this known to many. I remember reading in the *Church Times* a brief but poignant article entitled 'In Memory.' It began:—

'A few days ago there passed to his account a priest who must be nameless, and he died in greatest destitution and want. He was a man who, with others, had defiled the Church he served by language and actions unspeakable; after his ejection from the living and degradation from his Office he went lower and lower in the social scale until, just lately, he was found utterly destitute and incapable in a common lodging house, whence he was removed to the workhouse infirmary, and there he died. God grant to us that he has not lived and died in vain.'

Truly, truly, we are not safe until the last. There

<sup>1</sup> *Addresses to Candidates for Ordination*, p. 222.



is a way to Hell, says Bunyan, even from the gate of Heaven. 'He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' 'Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.'

### III. *The Standard.*

It is time to ask how this 'wholesome example' may be realized. And one answer is 'according to the doctrine of Christ.' We must live our life in constant view of Holy Scripture. The Word of God is to be the 'discerner,' the 'critic,' the criterion of our inner life (Heb. iv. 12). We must submit ourselves to it as to a search-light, as to a probing instrument, as to a plumbline. If our life does not ring true to Scripture it means that there is a flaw in the metal. No lower test will suffice. Our own view may easily be partial. 'I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified.' And the view of others will not always and necessarily be correct and complete. 'In Thy light shall we see light,' and it may be said without hesitation and without qualification that the man who allows himself to be tested and searched and guided day by day by the unerring word of God will never back-slide in any degree whatever. On the other hand, if our lives are not lived ever in the light of Holy Scripture, 'according to the doctrine of Christ,' and in face of the mirror of truth (Jas. i. 23-25), it is impossible to say how far a man may not go from the path of rectitude and holiness.

### IV. *The Secret.*

But this reference to Holy Scripture inevitably suggests something more. The question is answered by a resolution and an expression of trust. 'I will so do, the Lord being my helper.' And we must endeavour to discover the secret of its realization.

1. Scripture finds its fullest power over the life only when we are in fellowship with Christ. The Persian parable tells of the clay being asked how it was that it

was the possessor of such fragrance, and replying, 'I have been living near a rose.' Henry Drummond tells of a young girl of exquisite beauty of character, and when after her death they opened a locket, expecting to find the portrait of some loved one, they saw nothing but the words, 'Whom having not seen, ye love.' This was the secret of her loveliness of spirit. It is there and thus that we shall assimilate such a spirit that we shall never fail to be 'wholesome examples of the flock of Christ.'

2. And this fellowship comes in a simple way. The trustful resolution, 'I will so do, the Lord being my helper,' becomes possible in the twofold method of prayer and meditation. In prayer we speak to God; in the Bible God speaks to us. And prayer is the response of the soul to the Bible as the Word of God. Private prayer, regular private prayer, definite regular private prayer, is the one prime secret of holy living. There is a profound truth in these words (are they Oliver Wendell Holmes' or Thackeray's ?) ;

'If you go into a minister's study and find that there is a bare place on the carpet in front of his chair, get him to pray for you; but if you find the bare place in front of his looking-glass you pray for him.'

The story is familiar, but well worth recalling, of Dean Hook of Chichester, that when a workman was going up a ladder early one morning at the Deanery, he saw through a window the Dean even then in his study and at prayer, and this made a deep and lasting impression on the man. Be it ours to 'pray, always pray,' and then will assuredly come holiness of heart, acuteness of mind, insight of soul, resoluteness of will, and winsomeness of life.

NOTE.—In the Ordering of Priests there is a special question dealing with the place of Prayer and Holy Scripture in the personal life of the clergyman, but as this subject is briefly considered above, and will be dealt with more fully in connexion with the Exhortation in the Ordering of Priests, it has not seemed necessary to treat it separately here.

## SECTION 7. OBEDIENCE TO LAWFUL AUTHORITY.

The seventh question in the Ordering of Deacons and the last question in the Ordering of Priests are almost identical in terms, and refer to the minister's loyal acceptance of the Church of England as found and received. The inquiry is not so personal and spiritual as others, but it is none the less valuable and necessary. Independence of authority is a characteristic of to-day, and it is well that we should be reminded of the need of obedience. It is of course implied that our obedience is always subject to the Word and Law of God.

'Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers of the Church, and them to whom the charge and government over you is committed, following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?'

'Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, and other chief Ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?'

I. *Our Church Authorities.*

1. First come the Creeds of the Church Universal. They represent the belief of the whole Church and come to us with all the weight that rightly attaches to so universal a testimony. In the sixteenth century the truths of these Creeds were put in the forefront of the Articles to show the continued adherence of the Church of England to these fundamental realities.

2. Then come the Articles of the Church as national. These represent the distinctive position of our Church on those points on which its mind is declared, and with special reference to the circumstances of the sixteenth century. As the Articles have still to be accepted by every Ordinand, and by every clergyman on entering a new benefice, their authority is unquestioned.

3. Then follow the Rubrics which represent the detailed instructions as to the conduct<sup>of</sup> Divine Worship by the

clergy of the Church. These call for obedience to their plain grammatical meaning, with as close adherence as possible to their instructions.

There is practically no difficulty in regard to these three as the Sources of our Church Authority. The difficulties commence when we proceed to our next point.

## II. *The Interpretation of our Authorities.*

What is to be done, if for any reason we cannot agree as to the meaning of Creeds, or Articles, or Rubrics ?

1. The first reference is to the ' Ordinary,' which is usually interpreted to mean the Bishop of the Diocese, or else the immediate superior officer for the time being. To him is to be referred any question touching the true interpretation of the Rubrics.

2. The next reference is to ' other chief Ministers of the Church,' by which is probably to be understood the Archbishop, according to the provision made in the prefatory address, ' Concerning the Service of the Church.'

' And forasmuch as nothing can be so plainly set forth, but doubts may arise in the use and practice of the same ; to appease all such diversity (if any arise) and for the resolution of all doubts, concerning the manner how to understand, do, and execute the things contained in this Book ; the parties that so doubt, or diversely take any thing, shall alway resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who by his discretion shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same ; so that the same order be not contrary to anything contained in this Book. And if the Bishop of the Diocese be in doubt, then he may send for the resolution thereof to the Archbishop.'

3. But as things stand at present in the Church of England, there is an appeal, if necessary, even from the Archbishop, because the highest legal authority does not reside in the Bishops. The Church being established, and Parliament still being supposed theoretically to represent the lay element, the Supreme Court of Appeal in all causes Ecclesiastical is the King in Council, the King being supreme in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil. This appeal to the King is not Erastian, as though the State

is to dominate the Church, for it is well known that the Supreme Governorship by the King was not made with reference to his position as Head of the State, but as to his character as Chief Layman of the Church. The supremacy of the King was intended to safeguard the Church against a clerical supremacy.

Now this is the threefold provision in the English Church at present for the interpretation of authorities, and it is not too much to say that no man ought to be ordained unless he is prepared to obey the authority as thus constituted. He may object to the jurisdiction, and may wish and endeavour to get it altered, but meanwhile he should obey it. It surely signifies the possession of a somewhat curious conscience for a man to be ordained who knows that these are the authorities and who yet is determined to disregard and disobey them.

4. But we are sometimes told that there is an appeal from the Church National to the Church Catholic. It would be extremely helpful to know precisely what this means and how it may be applied. Article XXXIV. is very plain as to the authority of National Churches :—

‘Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.’

It is difficult to see what there can be of appeal beyond this. Besides, to what authority in the Church Catholic can we appeal? And on what subjects has the Church Catholic really made its voice heard and its mind known? Is there anything truly Catholic apart from the great Creeds of Christendom? Article XXXIV. says quite definitely that

‘It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners, so that nothing be ordained against God’s Word.’

This question of the relation of National Churches to the



Church Universal needs the most careful and thorough definition by those who advocate it, for most men find no satisfaction in such an argument owing to the absence of any declaration beyond the Creeds as to what is truly Catholic or Universal. The impossibility of the position was clearly seen at the recent Royal Commission when Lord Halifax was asked by the late Bishop of Oxford to give a clear distinction between what the Church of England could and could not alter. The reply had reference to Communion only in one kind, and to Reservation for the Sick. But this does not carry us far, or give us the help we need. The inability of so representative a man to give a satisfactory answer tells its own story. Meanwhile we retain our definite, clear, Anglican position, as stated above, until it is altered by lawful authority.

### III. *Some Practical Illustrations.*

By way of example, it seems worth while to consider the practical working out of some of the problems associated with ecclesiastical discipline and obedience, as they are found to-day.

1. The Use of the Athanasian Creed. It is well known that many Churchmen are of opinion that this Symbol is unsuited to general use as a Creed. We find as the result that in many Churches it is never used, while in others it is only used on the rarest occasions. And yet the Rubric is quite clear, ordering its use on thirteen occasions in the Christian Year. What then ought we to do? Is it not our duty to obey the Rubric until the law is altered? This would seem to be the wisest, and indeed the only right course. There are very many Churchmen who would welcome relief with gratitude and heartiness, for they do not think it is possible for so highly technical a document to be recited by ordinary congregations without serious misconception. But meanwhile, however difficult and trying it may be, loyalty seems to suggest an observance of the Rubric as it stands, while using every lawful method to obtain an alteration.



2. The Ornaments Rubric (as it is called) is a still more difficult and thorny problem. There is no need to enter into the controversy on the subject. For our present purpose, using the question as an illustration, it will suffice to say that, whether rightly or wrongly, the present law of the Church of England, as declared by the Privy Council, is that the Vestments supposed to be authorized by this Rubric are illegal. This is the law, whether we like or dislike it, and what we ought to do is to obey it. We may object to it, may disbelieve its accuracy, but there it is. We may endeavour to get the law altered and use every effort in our power to accomplish this end, but meantime the law stands and ought to be obeyed. Unless there is obedience to constituted authorities it is difficult to see how clergy can possibly enjoin obedience on their flocks.

3. The Use of Incense and of Reservation. This is another illustration of the same great principle of obedience. Some years ago a number of Churchmen who were dissatisfied with what they regarded as the 'secular' Court of Appeal, the Privy Council, appealed to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, on the principle of the Preface in the Prayer Book already mentioned, for a Hearing on these two subjects of Incense and Reservation. The Archbishops decided in both cases against the use of Incense and the practice of Reservation as contrary to the mind of the Church of England. But the Judgment or Opinion of the Archbishops has not been obeyed by the very men who invoked it, and who may almost be said to have clamoured for it. And yet it was a 'spiritual' Court, and ought to have possessed the highest sanction for those who would not accept the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Surely the duty of all Churchmen is clear. 'We ought to obey,' or else leave the Church, or at least the ministry. It is a striking fact that not a single instance can be found in the Church of England of Vestments, Lights, or Incense, from 1559 to the rise of the Tractarian Movement. If facts mean anything, the mind of the Church is clear.

4. The Use of the Prayer Book of 1549 is another case in point. There are Churchmen who advocate this and who even do more, practise some of its methods and observances. And yet the law is clear, and the clergyman on ordination, or presentation to a benefice, solemnly promises to use the Prayer Book as it now stands 'and none other except it be ordained by lawful authority.' And inasmuch as no lawful authority has authorized another book, our duty is as clear as daylight ; it is loyal obedience.

5. The Eastward Position at Holy Communion may be cited as yet another illustration of the principle for which we are contending. It is well known that up to sixty years ago the position of the celebrant was invariably the North side, or North end, and that do other was known. But with the Oxford Movement came the use of the Eastward Position, and at length the question was tested before Archbishop Benson in the Lincoln Judgment. His decision on this point was that the Eastward Position was not illegal so long as the manual acts were visible.

Now I am not called upon to discuss the legality of the Archbishop's Court, or the character of his decision. Nor am I necessarily concerned with the ratification of the Archbishop's Judgment by the Privy Council. What I feel constrained to emphasize is that whether North or East the Rubric is clear, the Manual Acts must be performed 'before,' i.e. in sight of the people. This dominates the situation, and no man can be a loyal Churchman who does not carry out this order. If a man thinks that by taking the Eastward Position and holding the elements over his head or shoulder in order that the people may see the Manual Acts, I can but wonder whether our Reformers and Revisers ever meant that to be the interpretation of the Rubric. And if the Celebrant turns to face North, as I have seen a Bishop do, at the prayer of Consecration, it is a position which is not found on any view of the Rubric, and is of course an actual surrender of the Eastward Position. The great thing is to be assured of the true meaning of the Rubric and obey

it scrupulously, and 'before the people' is absolutely clear, as Archbishop Benson pointed out in his Judgment.

These five controversial questions will suffice to show the great importance of the present question of obedience to lawful authority. To those over us is committed charge and government, and we are required to face the question of their 'godly admonitions,' and 'godly judgments.'

#### IV. *True Churchmanship.*

What then is our duty in view of all these considerations? In what way can we really show ourselves to be 'sober, peaceful, and truly conscientious sons of the Church of England?' By obedience such as the question describes and expects. It ought to be reverent ('reverently obey'); glad ('a glad mind'); thorough ('I will endeavour myself'); and trustful obedience ('the Lord being my helper'). In these suggestions we see how obedience to Church Authority is lifted up into the spiritual realm and made part of our spiritual life. When this is realized there will be no serious difficulty, because obedience to ecclesiastical authority will form part of that spiritual experience which is the joy of 'conscientious sons of the Church of England.'

#### SECTION 8. CONTROVERSY.

The preceding questions cover all that are asked of Deacons, but there are two other questions in the Ordering of Priests which need special attention. These are in some respects unique in interest and importance. The fourth in the Ordering of Priests is as follows:—

Will you be ready with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word; and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given?

I. *The Necessity for Controversy.*

The appeal to 'banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines' is a call for controversy. We are not to seek it, and yet it will often be found to be a duty. We shall doubtless shrink from it as trying to the flesh, and yet we must not be afraid of it. St. Paul doubtless felt it to be one of the most testing times of his life to stand up against St. Peter at Antioch, and yet he did it. But we have to take care that we are not mere controversialists, for this type of man is one of the most unlovely, unspiritual, and objectionable of beings. We must not wage war for the love of it, but if we find it necessary to wage it, we must do so in love.

II. *The Aspects of Controversy.*

Let us not think that 'controversy' means nothing else than opposition to Roman Catholicism. It means very much more than that. 'Erroneous and strange doctrines' are of several sorts, and we must 'be ready' to meet them all to the best of our ability.

1. One controversy will be on the Deity of Christ. Whether we have to deal with Unitarianism or Scepticism, the Godhead of our Blessed Lord will call for a defence and an advocacy which cannot be other than controversial. And in the endeavour to 'banish strange and erroneous doctrines' on this point we are fighting for the very existence of our Christianity.

2. The Atonement of Christ will also be to the forefront. And this especially, because of the controversies about sin. Sin and Redemption go together, and a denial of one will often mean a denial of the other. The facts of Sin and Atonement will need emphasis, and the views of modern thinkers will have to be faced, and since Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of Redemption, it will not be long before we are engaged in the work of 'banishing erroneous and strange doctrines' on these vital and fundamental questions of our faith.

3. The Divine Authority of Scripture will inevitably

occupy our attention. Rationalism of various kinds makes this the centre of attack, and we shall be compelled to take up an attitude against the foe of truth. Since we believe (on any theory) in a unique element in Scripture which gives it its authority, we must of necessity be prepared for warfare against those who, if allowed freedom to spread their views unchecked, would certainly injure the faith and life of uninstructed believers.

4. The Supreme Authority of Scripture will also engage our efforts in another direction. Roman Catholicism meets us here, and in our insistence on the truths of Articles VI., XX., and XXI., we shall inevitably fall foul of opponents and be compelled to engage in controversy. Indeed, it may be truly said that practically all differences are somehow concerned with the position and character of Scripture. From the days of Celsus downwards the strongest opposition has been directed against Holy Scripture, as containing the substance of Christian belief, and whether we like it or not we shall have to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3).

5. And we shall pretty certainly have to face the practical question of the soul's direct relation to God. From two quite different quarters this truth is being assailed. Rome interposes the priest and the Church, and says that it is through the Church to Christ. We, maintaining the same position as our Reformers, urge that it is through Christ to the Church, and that no human intermediary can ever be allowed to come between the direct approach of the spirit to God. Justified by faith the soul enters into the Holiest, abides there, rejoices in the presence of God, and receives the grace of God for daily living. Anything that interferes with this is an 'erroneous and strange doctrine' which must be 'banished and driven away.'

But in the present day a very serious attack is made on this position by a form of intellectual scepticism which tells us that knowledge of, and fellowship with Christ is impossible because we know little or nothing of



Him as an Historic Figure. And thus by destroying the supernatural element in Christianity, by removing from us the unique Personality of Christ, the souls of men are bereft of all that peace, and grace, and love which Christian experience through the ages has known and valued and spread. Such a view robs the soul of rest and hope, cutting at the very vitals of faith and godliness. It is due no doubt to the overwhelming, and, it must be added, over-weening influence of critical studies which tend to dissolve everything that cannot be vindicated at the bar of reason and physical science. But there are deeper things in life than reason and science, and the heart will soon know its own bitterness if they take away the Lord. Such a view is easily discussed and accepted by philosophers in College rooms where they are surrounded by all the privileges, associations, and atmosphere that centuries of Christian munificence and ethics have made possible. But if such barren and deadening doctrines were to be proclaimed among the slums of our large cities and in the haunts of vice and crime, their utter futility would soon be seen. And all this must mean controversy, and the determination and readiness 'with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines.'

### III. *The Standard of Controversy.*

These doctrines are described in one simple and pregnant phrase, 'contrary to God's Word.' There is our perfect and constant standard of truth. The Pastoral Epistles frequently remind us of teaching which is 'contrary to healthful doctrine.' Isaiah appeals to the law and to the testimony (*ch.* viii. 20). St. Paul speaks of doctrine which is 'according to godliness.' And the prophets were always asking, 'What saith the Lord ?'

1. This means that the Scriptures must be known by us. Ignorance of Scripture will do more than anything else to play into the hands of opponents, and knowledge



of Scripture will be our most powerful weapon against every form of error.

2. This means, too, that the Scriptures must be preached. Teaching and preaching the truth of Holy Scripture is our paramount duty. Like Philip with the Eunuch, we should be ready to take up Scripture at any point and preach Jesus as the Saviour and Friend of man.

3. But most of all this means that the Scriptures must be lived. Our lives must 'express the Holy Gospel we profess.' The man who preaches by his life will perhaps do more in that way than in any other to safeguard his people against error. And our teaching and preaching must be positive as well as negative. As Spurgeon once said, laying down the straight stick of truth is the best way of showing the crookedness of error. No knowledge of Scripture can be too great, too minute, too thorough, for use in our necessary but difficult work of 'banishing and driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines.'

A thoughtful writer has called attention to the solemn fact that the people of God are being attacked along three lines: sceptical, heretical, and fanatical. The sceptic endeavours to make us disbelieve the Divine authority of the Bible, to question God's love, and even His very existence. Then comes the heretic with his new doctrines, apparently supported with scattered passages from the Bible. He will tell us how we have been mistaken, and how God is revealing Himself to progressive minds in other ways. Last of all comes the fanatic, who does not doubt God's Word as the sceptic does, or attempt to elicit from it any new Gospel as the heretic does, but who pushes everything beyond the bounds of Scriptural authority and the limits of sober reason. Many good people are thus on the verge of a dangerous fanaticism, who are not in any way tempted to scepticism and heresy. How, then, are God's people to meet these errors? Against the sceptic, we ministers must teach them to hold fast to the absolute authority and Divine inspiration of Scripture. Against the heretic,

we must insist upon the whole of Scripture in its various parts and progressive teaching. And against the fanatic, we must walk with God in the Spirit, and thus be able to discern between the true and the false. The closer we keep to the Word of God in spiritual study and practical earnest meditation, the more thoroughly we shall be kept alive to these various errors, and have the spiritual perception to detect them, and the spiritual power to defeat them. Every error comes in some way or other from a neglect of God's Word, and every safeguard against error comes from the closest adherence thereto.

#### IV. *The Spirit of Controversy.*

1. The 'faithful diligence' with which this work is to be carried out shows the importance placed upon it by our Church. It is a necessary work, a hard work, and therefore one that requires the best of our powers. It takes 'diligence' to 'banish and drive away.' Such work is not to be done without very definite and sustained effort.

2. Another thing is very marked in this question. There is an evident and close connexion between 'banishing and driving away all erroneous and strange doctrines' and the general pastoral care. After the reference to error come the words, 'And to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within your Cures, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given.' This means that the care of the sheep is the paramount consideration, and must ever be the object of the shepherd. He does not wish to win any mere gladiatorial victory, but he desires so to fight and strive that his sheep may be protected and guarded. Or to change the figure, he must be careful that his flock enter no poisonous pastures, and to do this he must lead them in the green pastures of Divine truth. If this positive spiritual view and purpose of controversy is ever kept in mind, the work of the shepherd will go forward with ever-increasing blessing.

3. And this will mean 'speaking (or living) the truth in love' (Eph. iv. 15). We shall endeavour to see the truth for which our opponents think they are contending, and we shall conduct our controversies in faith and love. Not victory, but edification will be our aim, and in meekness we shall endeavour to instruct those who 'oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will' (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26).

4. And so we shall ever keep in mind the great truth of 'Principles not Party.' Whatever be our party we must never be partizan. No man worthy of the name of man can ever submit himself wholly to his party, however much he may be in general hearty sympathy with its principles. 'My party right or wrong' is as vicious in religion as it is in politics. We must carefully distinguish between a partizan, an advocate, and a judge. It is never seemly for a Christian man to be a partizan, for in a partizan the great and important faculty of judgment is really not exercised. He has committed himself to a certain line and is content to insist only on considerations which support his own opinion without any regard for evidence which is not in harmony with it. He may often have to be an advocate, but this will never mean making out the worse case to be the better, or even making the most of the evidence on his side to the ignoring of all on the opposite. But his chief and most noble function will be that of judgment, gathering up all the available facts and factors bearing on the subject, giving all a patient hearing and then out of full knowledge, balanced judgment, true experience, producing his decision. Let us endeavour in our controversy in all the 'monitions and exhortations' needed in our ministry to act the part of the judge. This is our high vocation, and everything we do should be actuated by this thought. 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus' (Col. iii. 17).

5. And it follows that in our work we shall emphasize principles and not attack men. Our opponent may be charming and our own side may repel, but in either case, in both cases, we are concerned for truth, and truth at all costs, under all circumstances.

And so the supreme need is for Consecrated Controversy. The one great object is to know the truth, and to get it known, loved, and lived. And if our life is lived in the atmosphere and under the control of the Spirit of Christ we shall be at once fearless, loving, and righteous in our necessary warfare for Christ, His cause, and His Church. And then, neither we nor our people will be 'carried away with every blast of vain doctrine,' but 'established in the truth of God's Holy Gospel.'

#### SECTION 9. MAINTAINING PEACE.

The contrast between this and the question last considered is striking. The minister is to be ready to wage war, and yet to maintain peace. It is something like the twofold statement of the Gospel concerning our Lord's mission: 'Peace on earth;' 'Not peace but a sword.' The question is peculiar to the Church of England and to the Ordering of Priests and Bishops.

'Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to your charge?'

##### I. *The Ideals.*

'Quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people, and especially among' our own flock are to be maintained and set forward. The value of these things lies in their being an illustration of Christ-likeness. Their glory consists in their being an exemplification of the 'new' commandment of our Lord, and the 'brotherlove' of the Epistles. The 'newness' quite evidently lay in the new objects of affection consequent on the new relationship to 'one another' in Christ (John xiii. 34, 35). And

the prominence given in the New Testament to brother-love, not brotherly love (love *because*, not *as* brethren), is another proof of the new Christian grace. 'See how these Christians love one another.' And the power of these things is seen in the blessing that inevitably attends Christian unity, wherever it is realized and manifested. 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' 'For there the Lord commanded the blessing' (Psa. cxxxiii. 1, 3). The opposite is always fatal to Christian life and work. Unity brings power; disunion produces weakness. It was with a sure spiritual insight that our Reformers included this question among those for use at Ordination. There is scarcely any part of a clergyman's work which is so fruitful in spiritual results as the endeavour to 'maintain and set forwards . . . quietness, peace, and love.'

## II. *The Methods of Realization.*

1. The clergyman's first work will be among his own people, and he will do his utmost to prevent or remove friction, jealousy, and misunderstandings in the Church of which he is the minister. If any 'root of bitterness' should spring up between members of a congregation, and especially between Communicants, the results may easily prove heart-breaking to the minister. It is no wonder that St. Paul urges Christians to show zeal in keeping the 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph. iv. 3). If Satan can but drive in a wedge of discord between two members or two sections of a congregation, his work there can be left to produce its own dire results of spiritual barrenness.

2. The clergyman will also be able to do not a little to 'maintain and set forwards . . . quietness, peace, and love' among the various classes connected with his Church and parish. Political feeling often runs high, and it will be the clergyman's bounden duty to avoid all parties and emphasize in every possible way the great principles of Christianity which are equally applicable to both political



sides. It is for him to proclaim principles and not the political applications which those principles involve. Social feeling also tends to become acute as between rich and poor, a tendency that has become accentuated by that unfortunate phrase, 'the classes and the masses.' To the clergyman these distinctions will have to be faced with the greatest possible care. There are rich and rich, and there are poor and poor. There are godly rich and godless poor, and there are godly poor and godless rich. Let the clergyman take care to show that Liberals should believe in the existence of conscientious Conservatives, and Conservatives in conscientious Liberals; that the rich have duties as well as privileges, and that the poor have their responsibilities as well as their disadvantages. Without pandering to the rich or truckling to the poor, without taking sides with Liberalism or Conservatism, the clergyman can still hold firmly his own political, social, and economic principles, and bring to bear what he believes to be the truth on the consciences of his people. He can do much, perhaps more than most people, to 'maintain and set forwards quietness, peace and love' among men and women of varied social grades and political principles.

3. The relations of Church and Dissent will provide yet another opportunity for fulfilling the requirement of this part of the Ordination Service. The clergyman should make friends as far as possible with the non-Church people of his parish, including the Roman Catholics if he is allowed to do so. It is one of the finest features of College life that men of different and differing views and Churches meet and live together, and there is no reason why parochial life should be inferior in this respect to the College. The clergyman should also endeavour to discover why certain people are Nonconformists or Dissenters, or Roman Catholics, and by large-hearted sympathy to enter into their position. He may be sure that while he holds his own principles firmly he need have no fear as to the results of 'maintaining and setting forwards quietness, peace and love among' the Christian people



of various Churches in his parish. The clergyman has an unique opportunity of doing the work of a peacemaker, and he will lose much if he fails to respond to it.

4. Nor may we leave out of this account the thorny question of Church parties. The question in the Ordinal has a definite bearing on this aspect of life. As we have already seen, a man can be definitely attached to a party without being a partizan, and he will not fail to remember the varied aspects of true Churchmanship which have characterized our Communion for the last three hundred and fifty years. The secret of 'maintaining and setting forward peace' among Churchmen is the careful and constant distinction between principles and sympathies. Let the principles be firmly fixed on the unmistakable rock of Divine truth, but let the sympathies go out as widely as possible to all who are endeavouring to live and labour for Christ. Never shall I forget the words of the saintly and noble Bishop Whipple of Minnesota, the Apostle of the Red Indians, as I heard them in Exeter Hall on a memorable occasion. 'For thirty years I have tried to see the face of Christ in those who have differed from me.'

### III. *The Requirements.*

What sort of man must he be who is to 'maintain and set forwards quietness, peace, and love'?

1. He must be filled with the Spirit of *Truth*. Unity must be based on Truth. Anything else will prove disastrous. First righteousness, then peace (Isa. ix. 7); first pure, then peaceable (Jas. iii. 17). As it has been well put, we must not work for compromise at the expense of truth, but for comprehension within the truth. 'In things essential unity, in things doubtful liberty, in all things charity.' Yes, but beneath all things fidelity.

2. He must be filled with the Spirit of *Love*. Love to Christ elicits and compels love to man. 'He who loveth God must love his brother also' (1 John iv. 21). Love

will express itself in sympathy, for we shall be keen-sighted enough to see things from his standpoint. And Love will show itself in tenderness. Nor will true Love ever mean weakness, for the stronger the convictions the greater the love. It is just because we are so convinced of our own position that we can love others with a pure heart fervently.

3. And he must be filled with the Spirit of *Wisdom*. Truth united with Love will lead to the threefold qualifications of Wisdom, Perception, and Tact. We shall 'perceive and know what things we ought to do,' and we shall have 'grace and power faithfully (and wisely) to perform the same.' Love is not blind, but keen and far-sighted, and when love is guided by truth, and truth is inspired by love, the result is a spiritual wisdom which is from above, and will do God's work in God's way.

But we must go still deeper.

#### IV. *The Secret.*

How can this threefold spirit become ours? It can only come from a deep, true, full, spiritual life. There must be a rich experience of Christ and a real fellowship with Him. It is only as the soul draws 'nearer still and nearer' to Him Who is 'the Lord of Peace' that the work of ingeminating peace can be done. It is only as 'the Spirit of Jesus' possesses us that we bring fruit forth, the fruit which is 'love, joy, and peace,' and produce 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' And in the same way it will only be by a similar work of grace in the hearts of others that they will be drawn nearer together and help to bring that day when the reign of everlasting peace will commence. It has often been pointed out that when the tide is out there are little pools of water here and there on the shore, separated from each other by vast stretches of sand, and it is only when the great tide rolls in and submerges them all in its vast embrace that they become one and are united. So must it be, so will it be with our

severances of heart, 'our unhappy divisions,' the great tide of God's love will flow deeper and fuller into each and all of our lives, and in the ocean of that love we realize the Divine ideal of love, joy, peace for evermore.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EXHORTATIONS OF THE ORDINAL

**I**N the Priests' Ordinal there is a long address which is quite unique. There is nothing like it at the Deacons' Ordination. Apart from the Questions already considered, it gives the fullest conception we possess of the Church of England ministry. It shows quite evidently that the essential idea of the ministry is not that of a paid official or administrator, or even only of a trained teacher or expert. The minister is first and foremost, and all the time, a man of God, a servant of God to His people.

#### SECTION 1. THE GREATNESS OF THE MINISTRY.

' You have heard, Brethren, as well in your private examination, as in the exhortation which was now made to you, and in the holy Lessons taken out of the Gospel, and the writings of the Apostles, of what dignity, and of how great importance this Office is, whereunto ye are called. And now again we exhort you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance, into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called : that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord : to teach, and to premonish, to feed and to provide for the Lord's family ; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.'

#### I. *The High Dignity.*

Ministers are called Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards.

1. In relation to God they are Messengers. This means that they are *sent* by Him and *taught* by Him.

They are men with a message and men that possess both *authority* and *ability*. This is equivalent to the idea of Apostleship. 'Even so send I you.' There is the authority. And when He had said this He breathed on them and saith, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' There is the ability.

2. In relation to the Word they are 'Watchmen.' This is equivalent to the New Testament idea of an Evangelist. 'They that watch for your souls' (Heb. xiii. 17). The Old Testament prophet was also a watchman (Isa. lii. 8; lvi. 10), and the work includes watching against evil and for good; sleepless vigilance on behalf of the souls for whom Christ died is the essential work of a Watchman.

3. In relation to the Church they are 'Stewards.' This may almost be said to be equivalent to the work of the Pastor. A steward is a trusted servant. He has to give food to the household. And similarly, the Christian minister as a steward is specially concerned with the household of faith.

## II. *The Weighty Office.*

1. As Stewards the Ministers have to 'teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family.' To 'teach,' he must know how. There is a vast difference between teaching and talking, between teaching and preaching. Many can preach or talk, while few can teach. And yet for Christian people teaching is absolutely essential and exceedingly important. To 'premonish' he must be faithful. No one can admonish without incurring the possibility of hostility, or at any rate of some opposition and difficulty. And yet 'warning' is as much a part of his work as 'teaching' (Col. i. 28). 'To feed and provide' he must know where and how to obtain food for his flock. It is only too often true that 'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed' because the minister has not fed himself. Many are the complaints from time to time that the clergyman does not break the

bread of life to his people. 'He does not feed me or my children,' said one earnest man, 'What am I to do?' Pastoral work is an absolute necessity and should be a prominent feature of ministerial service. If a man says he has not time for it, then it must be said with all love and faithfulness that he must *make* time for it. Fewer meetings of a secular, recreative, or entertaining class, and more teaching and visiting work. Less effort expended (often fruitlessly) in providing an institutional Church, and more endeavour to feed the flock of God in Church, Class, and home. The New Testament has three epithets to describe the Steward. He is wise (Luke xii. 42); faithful (1 Cor. iv. 2); good (beautiful) (1 Pet. iv. 10). He will be 'wise' in his efforts to instruct and feed. He will be 'faithful' in the discharge of duties. And he will be 'good' both inwardly and outwardly (*καλός*) in that attractiveness which ministers and wins for Christ.

2. As Watchmen Ministers have to 'seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever.' This means evangelistic work, the work of 'catching men alive.' The work of a Watchman will therefore be intensely real and definitely personal. Individual work was a prominent feature of Christ's ministry, and it should be of ours also. The solemn responsibility is made very clear in Scripture. 'But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand' (Ezek. xxxiii. 6). 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you' (Heb. xiii. 17).

3. As Messengers Ministers have to receive and deliver their Master's message. This means that we have a message to deliver and that we mean to pass it on without addition or subtraction. 'How canst thou run, seeing



thou hast no tidings ready ? ' And this in turn involves spiritual fellowship with God. The Holy Spirit is ever desirous of making disclosures to the soul. Do we receive them ? If so, we must deliver them. ' What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light.' Dr. R. W. Dale well said to students for the ministry :—

' Your generous impulses, your strenuous and exhausting labours, your eagerness to bless men, your natural powers, your learning, will achieve nothing in those higher regions of human life, in which alone the enduring results of our work are to be found, unless you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Herein lies the supreme secret of Christian ministry : a man who knows God, who knows God's truth, who knows by experience what Christianity is, and who intends at all costs to tell what he knows and give what he has received. The man who is in doubt can never be a messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

## SECTION 2. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY.

After the consideration of the Dignity, it is natural to consider the Responsibility of the Ministry.

' Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood. The Church and Congregation whom you must serve is His Spouse, and His Body. And if it shall happen the same Church, or any Member thereof, to take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your Ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.'

I. *The Greatness of the Treasure.*

Our people are described in a threefold way; as the Sheep, the Bride, and the Body. As Sheep, they are Christ's blood-bought possession (Acts xx. 28). As the Bride they are loved by Him Who 'gave Himself for' them. (Eph. v. 25). As the Body of Christ they are one with Him in life and grace (Eph. i. 19, 20). Nothing could well be more searching and solemn than this thought of the value of the people among whom we labour. Well does the address say, 'Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge.'

II. *The Possibility of Danger.*

Two dangers are mentioned here: 'Hurt,' and 'Hindrance.' The one refers to the wounding of consciences, the other to the prevention of spiritual progress. And this is said to be due to ministerial 'negligence' and is spoken of as a 'great fault' to be visited by 'horrible punishment.' The truth of these statements will be admitted by all who have had experience of the ministry. The flock are in danger from the negligence of the shepherd.

Sometimes we are tempted to 'hurt' them. Young beginners in the ministry are apt to take pleasure in 'shocking' old Christians. They think the old views are narrow and impossible, and they wish to let these Christians know how far advanced the younger generation is. But if this is done, as it is often, with a disregard to old-fashioned consciences, it will serve the very opposite of its purpose. It will not do the old people any good, and it will often do the younger man harm. When next he goes to God in prayer he will see for himself what he has done. The fact is that no air of superiority and certainly no ridicule has a place in Christian ministry. Ridicule is only another word for sneer, and some one has said that a 'sneer is an apology for an argument made by a man who does not understand.' Jesus Christ, though angry, never

ridiculed the views and life of those who were opposed to Him.

Sometimes, too, the minister is tempted to introduce elements into his teaching which, if they do not 'hurt,' at least 'hinder' the spiritual life of his people. There is profound force in Dr. Torrey's testimony on this point. I make no apology for quoting it in full :—

'It is a great temptation to a minister of the Gospel who thinks or reads some view of things that strikes him as new and original and likely to prove interesting. He thinks it is true, but he did not think it through, and he gives out that view of things he supposed true, but which he has not thought through, and he awakens some day to the awful fact that he has been preaching error instead of truth and poisoning the flock of God. I ought to confess right here that I have had that bitter experience myself. In my earlier ministry I had certain views of things, I thought they were original. They were not, others had held them, though I did not know it at the time. I thought them fresh, and new, and original, and I was sure they were striking, and I was certain they would prove interesting. I knew they were not generally held in the Church in which I was an ordained minister, but I honestly told the people what I thought. Brethren, it is good to be honest, but it is safe to be sure, and I beseech you, out of a bitter experience, do not for honesty's sake preach anything until you have thought it through and way through upon your knees before God. Do not for honesty's sake preach anything in this position of responsibility until you have thought it way through in the white light of God's own presence. If somebody had said this to me when I began my ministry, and I had had sense enough to pay attention to it, it would have saved me one of the bitterest experiences of my life. I found out my error and renounced it, but that was not the bitterest part. The bitterest part was that I had led men and women into error, and I could not lead them back again to the truth when I had discovered my error. It is a great deal easier to lead people into error than to lead them back again, for the human heart loves error. I think to-day of a young man in my Theological Seminary who was in the class below me—the most brilliant man there, the man of the greatest promise beyond question—but not a very clear thinker. He depended upon me, and what I thought he adopted rather than take the trouble of thinking it through for himself. And the result? I came back, but I have never been able to lead him back. And to-day that man, after a brief and brilliant ministry, from the human standpoint, is out of the ministry altogether. And the last conversation I had with him he said

to me, "If I were to define my position to-day, I think the most correct definition I could give would be—I am a Christian Agnostic." And that magnificent man is lost to the Church, and lost to the ministry, I think largely through my influence. I have had the joy of leading many others into the truth, but I have never been able to lead that man back. So, brethren, I beseech you, out of an aching heart, don't, don't, don't, declare anything from your position of responsibility, opportunity, and influence in which God has put you, until you are absolutely sure it is true, before you have thought it through in the white light of God's presence.'

### III. *The Demands on the Ministry.*

'Wherefore consider with yourselves the end of your Ministry towards the children of God, towards the Spouse and Body of Christ; and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty.'

1. Constant thought. 'Consider the end of your Ministry.' With this in mind we cannot be negligent.

2. Unceasing diligence. 'Never cease your labour, your care and diligence.' The spiritual work of the ministry means work, unsparing work, unceasing work on behalf of the people.

3. Whole-hearted effort. 'Until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty.' Nothing left undone, nothing disregarded, but everything used in furtherance of the one object.

### IV. *The Goal of the Ministry.*

'To bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.'

1. Agreement in faith and knowledge. This is an echo of Ephesians iv. 13, and shows what the ministry is intended to do.

2. Maturity of experience. 'And to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ.' From faith and knowledge

will come 'ripeness and perfectness of age.' Christian experience is one of the essential features of ministerial effort. 'Unto the perfecting of the saints for their work of ministering.'

3. Reality of Life. 'That there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life.' Truth and life are to be our ultimate goal. Character and Conduct. Holiness of heart and life.

This is the Church of England view of Ministry. As we look at it, do we not obtain the proper perspective by which to gauge the various elements that go to make up the ministerial life to-day? In the light of these profound spiritual realities where can amusements come in? In the face of the experiences of heart and life what need can be found for the technicalities of criticism? And in view of these fundamental requirements of spiritual life and progress how subsidiary do our ecclesiastical differences become? The more thoroughly a man will ponder these thoughts the more clearly will he come to know the paramount idea and meaning of the ministry of the Church of England.

**'Forasmuch then as your Office is both of so great excellency, and of so great difficulty, ye see with how great care and study ye ought to apply yourselves, as well that ye may shew yourselves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord, who hath placed you in so high a Dignity; as also to beware, that neither you yourselves offend, nor be occasion that others offend.'**

And in so doing he will realize the Apostolic call to 'take heed.' (1) He is to take heed to 'himself' and his 'flock' (Acts xx. 28). To himself on account of his flock; to his flock by care of himself. No man set over such a charge can possibly be indifferent to the greatness and solemnity of the position. (2) And for this he will take heed to 'himself' and his 'doctrine' (1 Tim. iv. 16). Himself first, his doctrine next, his flock next. If he is right with God, and his doctrine true to God's Word, his flock will assuredly be right, and his ministry will be an



increasing blessing to his people, an increasing joy to himself, and an increasing glory to God.

### SECTION 3. THE GUARANTEES OF THE MINISTRY.

With the Dignity and Responsibility of the Ministry clearly and constantly in view, the natural and inevitable inquiry comes, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Whence comes the ability?

#### I. *The Source of Power.*

'Howbeit, ye cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone: therefore ye ought, and have need, to pray earnestly for His Holy Spirit.'

From God alone comes the power of true ministry. 'Our sufficiency is of God, Who also hath made us able ministers.'

And it is always through the Holy Spirit. Twice in this address is the Holy Ghost mentioned, and as we study the New Testament we see on almost every page the prominence given to the Holy Spirit in relation to life and work for God.

#### II. *The Conditions of Power.*

##### 1. Prayer.

'Pray earnestly.'

'Pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost.'

Our prayer must be individual and intercessory. We must pray for ourselves and for others, and this, regularly, intellectually, and faithfully.

We are in danger of being too much with men and too little with God. While we must not be ascetic we certainly must not be too social. Forbes Robinson used to say that he could do more for a man by praying for him than by talking to him. It is a searching question, how much time we spend a day in private prayer.



'Someone has asserted—I do not believe it is true—that an average Christian does not spend more than three minutes a day in secret prayer, and the average minister not more than five minutes. I do not believe it is true, but it is a good deal nearer the truth than it ought to be. A friend quoted that statement, and an older minister came and said, "You should not have done it." He said, "Try it on yourself, and come back and report." He said, "I will." But he forgot to come back, so my friend went to him and asked, "Did you try that?" He said, "I did." "What was the result?" "I thought my watch had stopped!"'

Dr. S. Tyng, one of the finest clergymen in the American Church, said :—

'I do not wish I had preached more, or visited more, but prayed.'

And as Leighton said :—

'Let prayer be not only the key that opens the day, and the lock that secures us at night, but let it be also our staff and stay throughout the whole of our daily journey, and enable us to ascend into the hill of the Lord with cheerful alacrity.'

## 2. Bible Study.

'Doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Scriptures.'

'Reading and learning the Scriptures.'

'Daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures.'

This must be at once intellectual and spiritual, an endeavour to get first at the meaning and then at the message. It can be said without hesitation or fear of contradiction that ministerial weakness and, still more, ministerial unfaithfulness spring from neglect of the Bible and prayer.

There are from time to time awful tragedies in the ministry ; the complete breakdown of character which often involves others in ruin. It will be found that these moral shipwrecks have been preceded by slow decay of spiritual life. The fall of large trees in the Broad Walk, Oxford, proclaimed rottenness long going on within, and I believe that moral spiritual decay is also traceable to neglect of private meditation of Scripture and prayer.

## 3. Holy Living.

‘A life agreeable to the same.’

‘Framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain to you.’

‘Ye may so endeavour yourselves from time to time, to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.’

In these solemn words we have a reminder of the New Testament distinction between sins and weights ; things wrong and things doubtful ; things essential and things unessential for life.

## 4. Concentration of purpose.

‘For this self-same cause, how ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies.’

‘Apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your care and studies this way.’

The need of this is seen in the fact that no position exists which has more opportunities for laziness, or more opportunities for intellectual and social dissipation. And a man who has been known as a ‘slacker’ in the University is more than likely to be a ‘slacker’ in the ministry. ‘This one thing I do’ should be writ large over our study desk and imprinted deeply on our conscience.

III. *The Outflow of Power.*

1. Growth in ministerial experience. ‘Wax riper.’ Growth is the great law of ministry.

‘In America they have what is called the “dead line”—fifty years of age. It is held that a minister need not look to be invited to a new sphere if he is above fifty years of age. Mr. Moody once said to Dr. Torrey, “Torrey, this dead line is all nonsense. The reason they cross the dead line at fifty is because they do not study, and keep on preaching old sermons.” He said, “Torrey, if a man will keep studying he will be better at fifty than he was at forty, and he will be better at sixty than he was at fifty.”’

2. Progress in personal holiness. 'Sanctify.' There is constant danger of professionalism. Our dress, gait, manner, reading, tone, tend to unreality and professionalism. The minister must ever be a man if he is to be a true minister.

3. Reality of spiritual influence. 'Examples.'

Dr. G. S. Barrett tells us that :—

'One day, now many years ago, a friend of mine, a man of letters, of some distinction in his day, told me that he had just been to call on the late Samuel Martin, himself one of the saintliest ministers, and I have never forgotten what my friend added to his announcement, "Do you know, I never leave that man's presence without feeling I could never sin again."'

Then, as Dr. Barrett asks :—

'Do we leave behind us wherever we go that aroma of saintliness which they who breathe find goodness sweeter and easier than before? There was a tradition in the early Church that wherever the foot of Jesus trod sweet flowers sprang up as He passed by. Are our footsteps marked by any such fair flowers of goodness, blooming because we have passed that way?'

Be it ours to realize Keble's words :—

'There are in this loud, stunning tide  
Of human care and crime,  
With whom the melodies abide  
Of th' everlasting chime;  
Who carry music in their heart  
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,  
Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.'

As we review this long address, and ponder afresh these aspects of ministry; its Greatness, Responsibility, and Guarantees, we see as never before that the Church of England ministry is first of all, and always, one of personal power. 'Thou must thyself be true.' Lord Leighton was once addressing a company of artists at the Royal Academy. He said, 'Gentlemen, you can only put into a picture what is in yourself.' And for this there is only one way; we must live with God.



*PART II*

THE WORK

This section endeavours to discuss some of the most important parts of the clergyman's work. It does not pretend to be exhaustive, but only aims at dealing with the more usual aspects of ministerial service. For further and fuller discussions of other departments and details of work reference must be made to the books on Pastoral Work found under Chapter XII in the Bibliography.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PRAYER BOOK SERVICES

#### SECTION I. THE RENDERING OF THE SERVICES.

THE importance of a good and effective rendering of the Prayer Book Services by the officiating clergyman needs no discussion. We often read and speak of 'our incomparable Liturgy,' and this is true. But it must be properly rendered. As far back as 1709 the *Tatler* remarked that of all people on the earth none are a greater puzzle than the clergy of the Church of England. While they are most learned, yet the art of speaking with proper voice and gesture is wholly neglected. Sir Squire Bancroft, at the Church Congress of 1907, said much the same :—

'When I call to mind the care and cost lavished upon the splendid choral services in our Cathedrals, the pains and practice taken to acquire the skill melodiously to chant the Litany, I ask, in wonder, why is not the same labour, the like devotion, bestowed upon the teaching of young clergymen to speak audibly and to control a congregation? I have been struck with amazement at glaring instances of false emphasis in the recital of the Order for Morning Prayer; surely so sublime a monument of learning, reverence, and piety, should be spared such treatment.'

There are three requisites for good reading, and these concern the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of our nature. The first is Distinctness, the second Intelligence, and the third Impressiveness. All are necessary, and not one can be omitted in any truly acceptable reading of the Service.

One special danger that attaches to effective reading

in Church is the constant repetition of the same prayers week after week, and even day after day. The clergyman is apt to become slovenly in manner and at the same time mechanical in expression, for the temptation to the hardening of his spirituality by this repetition is only too real. Uniformity must always be the great foe of spontaneity, and yet there is no necessary incompatibility between constant use and constant spirituality if only proper care is taken. Sir Squire Bancroft, in the paper already referred to, expressed a strong opinion that repetition of the same words can never be fairly alleged as an excuse for the dull recital of daily prayer, for experience of the actor's life with its great ordeal of hundreds and even thousands of performances proves conclusively that repetition need not affect reality of rendering.

One point seems to demand particular consideration; the question of reading *versus* monotoning. It is not pressing the Rubrics unduly to observe that the word "say" in the Prayer Book is to be taken literally, and in direct contrast with the other term "sung." The latter seems to have been originally applied to Cathedral usage as distinct from that which obtained in Parish Churches. It should also be observed that monotoning is not intoning. The Roman and Greek Churches 'sing,' but it is understood that they do not monotone. The Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Gore) not long ago spoke forcibly about 'the tyranny of the note G,' and Canon Hensley Henson at the Church Congress of 1906 caustically remarked: 'Monotoning may have sufficient justification, but I have never heard of any.' In a paper issued by the S.P.G. in 1908 in connexion with the Day of Intercession for Foreign Missions, Bishop Montgomery calls attention to the effect produced by the natural human voice:—

'There is nothing really more grand than the massed tones of human voices speaking earnestly and not singing. There are times when such voices are in prayer far more effective than songs, because old and young, musical and unmusical, can all take their part. We believe that on special days of Intercession we ought

everywhere to rediscover the natural human voice in the services of the Church. Let us at such times intreat every worshipper to take his or her part in intercession in a natural voice, without shyness.'

It is sometimes argued in favour of monotoning that it is easier and carries further than the speaking voice. We venture to question whether the statement is true, unless we may believe that artificiality is more effective than naturalness. We are convinced that given the proper use and control of the voice, speaking will carry further than monotoning. Added to this, we are all painfully aware of the difficulty in ordinary Churches of keeping the note with which the Confession starts. Both clergymen and choir almost invariably go down half a tone, or a tone, to the mental and spiritual distress of all who happen to be musical in the congregation. Then again, each part of the Service has its own style and should have its own expression, and this is quite impossible with monotoning. Nor would it be altogether incapable of proof that what is known as 'clerical sore throat' has something to do with the practice of monotoning. If we are rightly informed, this voice trouble, known as *dysphonia clericorum*, does not affect members of the Bar, or actors in a theatre, or Nonconformist Ministers. May it not be due to the fact that the practice of monotoning tends to use only one spot in the vocal chords, and that there is not sufficient exercise and play given to the other parts? At any rate, we shall all agree with Sir Squire Bancroft in his Church Congress paper :—

'Why are so many of the clergy seemingly ignorant of the power of naturalness? Why are they simple and unaffected—delightful companions indeed—for six days of the week, and clothe themselves with artificiality on the seventh, inviting, it may be, their congregation to attend some meeting or harmless amusement in a sing-song voice, with mournful intonation, well calculated to keep every one away? I remember a distinguished physician, noted for his natural, cheerful manner, saying that he owed it all to being taken in early days to a difficult case by a

leader in his noble profession, who, as they reached the door of the patient's room, fortunately turned round and saw that his young friend had assumed what he thought to be a grave and proper aspect. The great man said at once: "For mercy's sake, be natural; don't look like that, or the poor soul will think you are the undertaker." "

It is not always realized that a proper rendering of the Service necessitates careful study on the part of the clergyman. Such work is thought to be easy, but this is by no means the case. Naturalness does not come by nature, and of course piety is not sufficient in itself. Familiarity inevitably tends to carelessness, and there are constant dangers either of a preaching or of a theatrical manner. No amount of instruction will suffice without careful and regular practice.

There are five faults often associated with clerical rendering of the Service.

(a) Indistinctness; people are unable to follow point by point because of the inability to hear what the clergyman is saying.

(b) Rapidity; the Service is taken at far too great a pace, suggesting that the man wishes to get through his task as quickly as possible.

(c) Absence of Emphasis; everything being done without thought and heart.

(d) False Emphasis; indicative of a lack of intelligence, or of careful study, or of proper training.

(e) Careless Punctuation; not an infrequent experience, and often due to constant familiarity.

A few general hints may be suggested for consideration.

1. It will be found useful to have a Prayer Book properly marked with the various renderings of the Services, especially at those points which are only too apt to be inaccurately expressed.

2. We should not think it a work of supererogation to read over even the prayers to make quite sure that we realize their meaning. The writer never forgets the lesson taught to him at King's College,<sup>1</sup> London, by the late Professor W. H. Monk, who insisted upon the most

familiar hymns, like 'Our Blest Redeemer,' being practised by the choir every time they were used in Chapel.

3. A careful attention to the rubrics will prove of great service, for the various directions are not given at haphazard and without proper distinction.

4. Most important of all, the clergyman should keep himself in an attitude of spiritual freshness, and pray the prayers for himself as well as for his people.

## SECTION 2. MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER.

While it is impossible to touch upon every point of importance found in the course of the services, some of the more outstanding features may be mentioned by way of study and suggestion.

### I. *The Introductory Rubric.*

This should be carefully noticed. The minister is to 'read with a loud voice' the sentences, and then he is to 'say' that which is written after the said sentences. This distinction between 'read' and 'say' is often reversed, clergymen saying the sentences and reading the Exhortation, but when it is realized that the Sentence is like a text of which the Exhortation is the Sermon, it will at once be seen that we ought to read our text and deliver our sermon by facing the congregation and being as independent as possible of the Prayer Book as we appeal to them on various grounds to worship God.

### II. *The Exhortation.*

For the due rendering of this important part of the preparatory section the following points seem to be essential. Stress should be laid on the word 'moveth'; on the contrast between 'all times' and 'most chiefly'; and on the connexion between 'you' followed by 'as many as are here present.' A slight pause after the phrase 'meet together' will enable the hearers to follow intelligently the remaining four reasons for coming to Church expressed by the four verbs in the infinitive mood.

### III. *The Confession.*

The rubric should be noticed ; the Confession is to be 'said.' There is much force in Bishop Gore's suggestion that the natural voice should be used until the close of the Lord's Prayer. Several points of enunciation need attention in the Confession, especially the sounding of the final 't' in 'lost sheep,' the two 'd's' in 'and desires,' and the two sibilants in 'His sake.'

### IV. *The Absolution.*

The rubric is very clear in the contrast between the 'humble voice' of the Confession and the 'pronounced' of the Absolution. A due pause, or at any rate an absence of hurry, should be observed in speaking of 'power and commandment'; a brief pause is very impressive before the words 'He pardoneth,' and a slight emphasis on the 'us' of 'Grant us true repentance,' as an application of the 'all them that truly repent.' In this and in other prayers it is well not to emphasize unduly the preposition 'through' in the closing phrase.

### V. *The Lord's Prayer.*

Again the contrast is noteworthy between the 'audible voice' of this prayer, and the 'humble voice' of the Confession. There seems also to be a clear distinction between 'after the Minister' in the Confession, and 'with him' in the Lord's Prayer, however we may fail in modern days to make this difference clear. The phrase 'Which art' is very difficult. There must be no stress on 'art,' and we must not pronounce it as though it were 'urt.' Let us also be careful not to put any emphasis on the threefold 'Thy,' but upon the verb in each case. But in 'Forgive us our trespasses,' the contrast is clear between 'our', 'and' 'us' in the next phrase, and this should be indicated.



VI. *Versicles, Responses, and Gloria.*

When the clergyman says the first versicle the emphasis should be on the word 'Thou'; 'O Lord, open *Thou* our lips,' and the *Gloria* should not be commenced until the people have had time conveniently and comfortably to 'stand up.' Care should be taken to avoid any stress on the conjunction 'and' in the clergyman's part of the *Gloria*. When he comes to the Exhortation, 'Praise ye the Lord,' he should turn and face the people, thus making a direct appeal.

VII. *The Venite.*

This is the first of the rubrics giving the alternative 'said' or 'sung.' Some authorities think that the Church's preference is indicated by the first words for 'said' or 'sung'; or 'sung' or 'said.' But this is not at all certain, for the 'saying' of the *Venite* is surely very inappropriate for the first verse, even though the rubric speaks of 'not to be read here.' It is a matter of regret that the two very different parts of the *Venite* are not appropriately indicated and contrasted by means of two single chants, or by one chant in two different keys. The exhortations to 'sing,' and then to 'worship,' are so striking that the distinction ought to be made quite clear. There is one Service by Jehu Martin (Abbott & Co., London) which makes this contrast very effectively, by taking the same chant a third lower for the second part, and returning to the higher key for the *Gloria*. There is a large number of Anglican chants capable of the same treatment.

VIII. *The Creed.*

Here we have the rubric 'sung' or 'said,' together with the word 'read.' It is probable that the word 'read' is a technical word intended to cover both 'say' and 'sing.' At any rate this view obtains some warrant from two rubrics. Before the *Venite* we are told, 'Then shall be *said* or *sung* this Psalm following: except . . .

on the nineteenth day of every month it is not to be *read* here,' etc. And the Apostles' Creed is ordered to be *sung* or *said* 'except only such days as the Creed of Saint Athanasius is appointed to be *read*.' Care should be taken that all the congregation, and not merely the clergy and choir, commence the Creed with the words, 'I believe.' The late Bishop of Wakefield, Dr. Walsham How, expressed himself very strongly against the congregation being robbed of the opportunity of expressing their personal faith. We must guard against any emphasis on the word 'again' in referring to the Resurrection, for of course it is only the English equivalent of the Greek preposition, 'He rose up.' The emphasis should be upon the 'rose.' Special care will also be needed to avoid any stress on the word 'of' in the three phrases towards the close of the Creed. How often clergy and choir have been heard to speak of 'the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness *of* sins'; 'the Resurrection *of* the body.'

#### IX. *Versicles and Lord's Prayer.*

The rubric orders the minister to pronounce 'The Lord be with you' with a 'loud voice.' It is unfortunate that the musical rendering of the Kyrie should have led to the false emphasis on the word 'upon.' No one dreams of saying 'Put my book *upon* the table. In each case the stress should be on the word 'mercy.' The rubric before the Lord's Prayer is noteworthy in contrast with what has preceded. It is to be said with 'a loud voice.' The same danger should be avoided in the first of the versicles after the Lord's Prayer, and emphasis placed upon 'mercy.' In the fifth versicle the emphatic word is 'peace.'

#### SECTION 3. THE LESSONS.

The importance of this part of the Service cannot be exaggerated, for it is a solemn responsibility to read God's own Word to the people, and it may easily be

made a powerful influence for spiritual blessing. 'Faith cometh by hearing,' and if only the Lessons are read as they should be read, there is no reason why the hearing of the Word of God should not produce faith, and thereby bestow blessing. 'You read as if you had no God in you,' said a French teacher of elocution to a young preacher, and the laity often have to complain bitterly of the way in which the Lessons are read. Nothing suggests that they have been studied beforehand, while the inaccurate emphasis, wrong pronunciation, and frequent haste, tend to make God's Word either inaudible, or even worse. We must take care in our reading to be natural and free from artificialities, and yet reading is an acquired art. 'All art is nature better understood.' Not the least element of importance in reading the Lessons is the thought that even though people do not understand or appreciate our sermons, they will have had the Word of God, if we have read the Lessons as God's Word should be delivered to the people. Many years ago an Oxford undergraduate sauntered into an Oxford Church, of which afterwards he was quite unable to remember the name. At that time he was nearing his final examination and was feeling somewhat depressed. As he entered the Church the second lesson was being read (Ephesians ii.), and the reader made somewhat unusual pauses as he read verse 8 thus: 'By grace—are ye saved—through faith—and that, not of yourselves—it is the gift of God.' The Divine Word went home to the undergraduate's heart, and led to his conversion. His name was John Charles Ryle, and in later life he became Bishop of Liverpool.

The following suggestions are offered in the hope that they may be of service towards the better rendering of this supremely important part of our time of public worship.

1. The rubric before the Lessons should be studied with great care. Observe the phrase, 'distinctly, with an audible voice,' and the instruction to the reader in regard to his position: 'So standing and turning himself,

as he may best be heard of all such as are present.' The reference to 'standing' is by no means unnecessary, for the head of the reader is far too often unduly near the Bible, and as a consequence the Lessons are practically inaudible to the congregation.

2. The Lessons should be read thoughtfully beforehand ; the New Testament Lessons in the Greek text and with a comparison of the Revised Version. No clergyman ought to assume that the Lessons are known because they are thought to be familiar.

3. Unless it is absolutely necessary, the reader should not go to the lectern during the preceding Gloria. It does not seem reverent to move about during this solemn and beautiful ascription of praise to God. Even if there is some distance between his place and the lectern, it is quite possible in most Churches to reach the lectern in time, as the people are settling themselves after the Psalms. This of course assumes that the Lesson to be read has already been found, so that there may be no delay when the reader is at the lectern. If, however, he is in a strange Church, and is not certain that the Lessons have been found, it will obviously be necessary to go to the lectern a little earlier, though even then it need not and should not be until nearly the whole of the *Gloria* has been sung.

4. The reading should not be too fast, and pauses should be made for the purpose of breathing. Ordinary punctuation is not as a rule sufficient for public reading ; there should be what are called oratorical pauses as well. A very brief pause between the nominative and the verb enables the congregation in large Churches to grasp the subject before the verb is heard ; and a slight emphasis on the verbs as the important words is also valuable.

5. All staccato reading should be carefully avoided. The verse division of the A.V. is responsible for some part of this danger.

6. Let every part be enunciated well, remembering the valuable rule for speaking and reading : ' Use your lips and spare your throat.' The voice should be maintained

to the very end of the sentence and not dropped towards the close.

7. Both extremes of monotonous and dramatic reading should be avoided.

8. The five characteristics of good reading are : (a) Accuracy ; (b) Distinctness ; (c) Intelligence ; (d) Sympathy ; (e) Reverence.

9. The faults to be avoided are : (a) Indistinctness ; (b) Rapidity ; (c) Absence of Emphasis ; (d) False Emphasis ; (e) Absence of care as to pronunciation.

10. All strict pedantry with proper names should be studiously disregarded and English current usage observed as closely as possible. In Ruth i. the husband's name 'Chilion' should be pronounced with the emphasis on the first syllable. In spite of the English and Latin forms, Timothy's name should be pronounced with some regard to the equivalent of the original Greek. It is a word of four syllables ; the first long, and the other three short ; Tī-mō-thē-ūs. The best guide to the pronunciation of Bible proper names will be found in that admirable edition of the Bible, published by the Oxford Press, called *The Oxford Self-Pronouncing Bible*, edited by the late Dr. Redpath, which can be obtained in various editions at a low cost.

11. There should be a difference of tone, and also suitable pauses in announcing the Lesson, and in closing in the usual way, 'Here endeth,' etc.

12. While every Lesson demands careful study from the reader, the following passages seem to call for special care. In Genesis i. 3, the verb 'to be' should not be emphasized. 'And God said, Let there be light : and there was light.' To read 'and there *was* light' gives quite a wrong impression. Similarly with St. John i. 1-3 ; if emphasis is placed on the words 'was' and 'with,' our hearers will fail to appreciate the profound truths taught by the Apostle. The emphatic words are 'Word,' 'God,' and 'made.' No one ever dreams of emphasizing 'was' in verse 4, or in verse 6, and it is only custom that leads to a persistence in the error now



mentioned. In St. Luke xiv. 18-20, the three excuses should be read in such a way as to suggest that they were made quite independently. To emphasize the pronoun in the second and third would give an entirely wrong idea. In contrast to this, St. Luke xvi. 5-7 requires stress on the pronouns, because all the debtors were present at the same time and were asked in turn. In St. Luke xv. 32 we must again avoid emphasizing the verb 'was.' Attention must be given from time to time in reading the A.V. to the distinction between 'that' as a conjunction and 'that' when used as a relative pronoun. St. Luke xix. 22 is a case in point. In St. Luke xix. 24, which is the emphatic word; 'hath,' or 'ten'? The Greek will solve the problem for us. In reading the First Lesson for Christmas Day it seems impossible to render Isaiah ix. 3 according to the A.V.; the negative must surely be omitted. St. Luke xxiv. 25 is a well-known difficulty, which will cause both error and irreverence if the comma should happen to be made after the word 'believe.' We must read right on from the comma after 'fools' to the end of the verse.

The names in Romans xvi. demand careful attention, for they are often very seriously injured in reading. For the most part it will be found that the Greek and the English pronunciation agree. It would sound curious to hear Aristobulus emphasized on the third, instead of the fourth syllable; and in spite of ordinary Shakespearean usage, Andronicus should be emphasized on the third, not the second syllable. Some of the names in the A.V. will be made clearer and more intelligible if the R.V. is compared with it. One of the worst mistakes sometimes made in reading verse 9 in the A.V. is to make Urbane a word of three syllables. But Dr. Redpath's edition will be of special value on this chapter.

In Ephesians iv. 9, no emphasis is to be placed on the first syllable of the word 'ascended,' because the people are not supposed to know that there is about to be a contrast between 'ascended' and 'descended.' The emphasis will come on the first syllable of 'descended,'



though of course in verse 10 the first syllable of both words will be properly emphasized. In Hebrews iv. 3, if the Lesson is read from the A.V., we are perfectly justified in rendering it, 'They shall not enter into My rest,' because the English version is senseless in its literal translation of the Greek form of the Hebrew idiom. So also in Hebrews iv. 8, 'Joshua' should be substituted for 'Jesus.' The names of the stones in Revelation xxi. will also need attention.

It is recorded of the late Archbishop Temple that when he had the preliminary interview with candidates for Ordination he invariably required them to read aloud to him in his study, and he always chose one passage: 2 Kings xix. 20-34. With characteristic wisdom he thereby tested the man's powers of reading, and also at the same time his intelligence. There are few passages more difficult and require more care in the due change of voice and emphasis in order to give the prophet's thought its full expression. I have often heard it read incorrectly. Verses 23 and 24 are the boast of the King of Assyria, and should be read accordingly. Then should come a pause, and verses 25-28 read in a different tone as expressive of God's answer to the boastfulness of the King. It is between verses 24 and 25 that the real crux comes, and of course the 'I' in verse 25 should have special emphasis. Then verses 29-34 should be read in yet another tone of voice, as addressed by God to His people Israel. When these three differences are clearly made the chapter becomes luminous with suggestion.

These illustrations, which are just a few out of many more that could be given, will show the imperative necessity of careful study before reading the Lesson. There are yet other Lessons which need attention beforehand for quite different reasons, which need not here be mentioned (e.g. 1 Kings xxi.). The greatest possible care, feeling, and reverence should be given to our reading of the Lessons. If only we become convinced of the power of God's Word we shall regard it as a means of grace to

give the Divine thought in the clearest and best possible way.

#### SECTION 4. THE COLLECTS.

As the Collects form so large and important a part of the devotional element of our Services in which the clergyman leads and voices the aspirations of the people, it is essential that the rendering should be attended to with the greatest care.

1. The structure of the Collect should be studied, and the complete prayer will be found to consist of three parts. (a) Invocation ; (b) Petition ; (c) Ascription. Each of these should have due consideration and its proper change of expression.

2. Our general rendering of the Collects should always be marked by two characteristics : (a) Deliberateness ; (b) Fervency. Anything that tends to hurry and the absence of earnestness will militate against the true devotional spirit of the prayers.

3. A slight pause after the Invocation before the Petition will be found helpful to reader and hearers, while towards the end of the Collect the rate of reading should be a trifle slower.

4. The clergyman should not pass too rapidly from one Collect to another. A brief pause, especially as the subjects of the Collects differ, will be found devotional and useful.

5. Each Collect needs to be studied with care, especially if it contains some word that borders on the archaic or obsolescent. A few suggestions on these points in connexion with the Collects for the day will indicate the need for further consideration. The Collect for the First Sunday in Advent has an antithesis between the two Comings which should be marked at the proper places. The Collect for Good Friday should somehow or other receive an emphasis and a heartiness in the word 'contented,' because it is the old English idea of 'contained,' or 'wholly possessed,' and not the modern idea of a bare endurance against one's will. We observe the same

idea and meaning in the Prayer Book Version of Psalm xl. 10: 'I am content to do it.' The Lord was 'contained,' 'fully possessed' by the thought of dying on our behalf. In the Collect for the First Sunday after Easter care should be taken not to lay stress on the word 'again.' The Collect for the Second Sunday after Easter needs special attention because it is so often inaccurately rendered. The pause should be after the word 'ourselves,' and not at all after the word 'endeavour.' It is the old English reflexive, 'endeavour ourselves.' In the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter the parallelism should be noted and expressed. In the Collect for Palm Sunday the equivalent for the Latin usage of *et . . . et* in 'both . . . also' should be marked by a slight pause after 'both' and after 'also.' In the Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity we must avoid any emphasis on the word 'upon,' and give it instead to the word 'multiply.' In the Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity the contrast between 'without Thee' and 'by Thee' should be noted by the emphasis of the latter preposition. In the Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity the parallelism will be best noted by a slight pause between the two clauses, and some emphasis on the words 'obtain,' 'promise,' 'love,' 'command.' In the Collect for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity perhaps we ought to emphasize the first syllable of the old word '*prevent*,' and also the same word in the Post-Communion Collect, until Prayer Book revision gives us the modern word 'direct.'

6. The second and third Collects at Morning and Evening Prayer call for some attention. In the second Collect at Morning Prayer in 'in knowledge of Whom standeth our eternal life,' care must be taken not to emphasize 'standeth,' which is the old equivalent of 'consisteth'; and 'defend us' must be properly rendered, and 'defendus' avoided. The emphasis on "any" should not be overlooked. In the third Collect at Morning Prayer a contrast is made between bringing us 'to the beginning of this day,' and being defended

‘in the same’ (day). A slight emphasis on ‘in’ rather than on ‘same’ will prevent us from giving the impression that ‘same’ refers to ‘beginning,’ not to ‘day.’ ‘That is righteous’ is another illustration of the need of a slight emphasis whenever ‘that’ is the relative pronoun. The second Collect at Evening Prayer is decidedly difficult, but the difficulties may be lessened by observing a slight pause after ‘both’ and after ‘also.’ Other slight pauses after ‘we’ and ‘enemies’ will help to remove the difficulty of a long pause between the nominative and the verb. There is, of course, no warrant either legally or on the score of good English for rendering it, ‘And also that we being defended by Thee from the fear of our enemies,’ which unfortunately obtains in some Churches.

7. The Prayer for the King is often spoiled by the unfortunate and unintelligent pause after ‘favour’ instead of after ‘behold.’ A slight emphasis on ‘heavenly’ and on ‘everlasting,’ will also be useful.

8. The Prayer for the Royal Family gives a fine opportunity for intelligent and reverent praying. Each verb should be emphasized with just the faintest pause after the following pronoun in each case: ‘Endue them,’ ‘enrich them,’ ‘prosper them,’ ‘bring them.’

9. The Prayer for the Clergy and People has two points to be noticed. Special care will be necessary in the opening Invocation, lest we should all unconsciously but very wickedly imply that it is a ‘great marvel’ for our Bishops, Curates, and Congregations to have what is asked for in the prayer. Once again, the word ‘upon’ must not be emphasized.

10. The Prayer of St. Chrysostom is sometimes found difficult by reason of the first long period without a stop. If the clergyman needs to take breath, it should be after the word ‘time’ and not after ‘grace.’

#### SECTION 5. THE LITANY AND OCCASIONAL OFFICES.

1. In the Litany the various parts should be carefully distinguished and definitely marked in delivery. It ought to be obvious that Invocations, Deprecations, Obsecula-

tions, and Petitions need very different expression. A pause should always be made in the first Invocation after the word 'Father.' God is not 'the Father of heaven,' but He is 'the Father, of (that is, from) heaven.' The Latin version of the Litany makes this quite clear, while the parallel between this and the other expressions referring to the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the Trinity, makes it obvious and essential. The Obsecrations should be rendered in a lower, slower and more solemn tone than the preceding Deprecations. In the first Petition all emphasis on the word 'day' must be avoided. In the opening Petition for the King the contrast between 'worshipping' and 'life' can be made by a slight emphasis. No stress must be laid on the word 'after' in the phrase 'live after Thy commandments,' because it is the old English for 'according to.' In the Petition, 'Have mercy upon all men,' the emphasis is naturally upon 'all,' or otherwise the effect will be ludicrous. One of the greatest difficulties in the Litany is how to express the true idea of the words 'O God, we have heard,' etc. It would seem as though the first clause should be emphasized with 'our,' and that another emphasis should be placed on the last word 'them' in order to obtain the truth suggested by the statement.

2. In the Baptismal Service special care should be given to the Addresses, which ought to be made as impressive as possible. It is one of the characteristic features of the Church of England that it lays such stress on instruction. For some at least of the parents and god-parents these addresses will be as salutary as they are practical.

3. The Marriage Service is one that calls for particular attention because it is not always rendered as carefully and as fittingly as it might be. If due attention is given to the rubrics the clergyman will be able to say, and also to require from those present, all that is essential and appropriate. Here again, the Addresses, the Declaration of Marriage, and the Benediction, offer a special opportunity for deep impressiveness of rendering.



4. No words are necessary to call attention to the unique opportunity afforded by the Burial Service. The opening Sentences, the Psalm, the Lesson, the Committal, the Prayers, provide the occasion for a testimony for God and His Truth that no truly earnest clergyman will wish to regard lightly. Amid the tenderness and solemnity of such an occasion, the reading of that magnificent chapter may well prove a direct message from God.

#### SECTION 6. THE HOLY COMMUNION.

Familiarity with this beautiful and solemn Service must not blind us to the fact that it calls for constant and thorough attention if it is to be rendered as it ought to be.

1. The Lord's Prayer at the opening is now invariably said by the clergyman alone, in spite of the rubric at the beginning of the first use of the Prayer in the Morning Service. Let it be prayed slowly and solemnly as the keynote to the Service.

2. In the opening Collect it adds to the impressiveness if a slight pause is made after each of the three opening statements about 'Almighty God.' Whether we pronounce the word 'Inspiration,' with a long or short vowel in the second syllable will depend upon taste or custom, but there does not seem any reason why the long vowel should be used in the Service of the Church, while the short vowel is used when the word is employed in ordinary conversation.

3. The rubric about the Commandments is frequently overlooked. We are to 'rehearse distinctly,' and it is evident that this is something quite different from 'reading.' The Commandments should be delivered in an authoritative voice, and recited rather than read, the clergyman letting the people know thereby that 'God spake these words.' In the second Commandment a slight pause after 'thousands' will suggest the helpful lesson that the reference is to generations and not merely to people. Evil may persist for four generations, but



God's mercy will persist unto thousands of generations. In the fourth Commandment 'all that in them is' will need careful statement, lest we incur the rebuke of the little child who asked her parents what the clergyman meant by 'all the tinthemis.' In the ninth Commandment no emphasis should be placed on the word 'neighbour,' lest it might seem that we may bear false witness against some one else.

4. In the first Prayer for the King a slight emphasis on 'whose' in each of the parenthetical clauses will be found helpful.

5. The announcement of the Epistle is only varied when the passage used comes from another part of Scripture than an Epistle. But in every case it seems to be correct to use the ending, 'Here endeth the Epistle,' because by that time the portion of Scripture has been read 'for the Epistle.'

6. The announcement of the Gospel needs attention. It is incorrect to say 'The Holy Gospel is written in the — chapter of that according to,' but 'The Holy Gospel is written in the — chapter of the Gospel of.' It is obvious that the term 'holy' refers to the message to be delivered, and should not also be applied, as is often the case, to the book out of which it is taken. We never think of speaking of 'the first chapter of the Holy Epistle.'

7. The Creed. The Nicene Creed has two points that call for care in recital. While it is usual to avoid emphasis on prepositions, the Creed affords one exception to the rule, for the three statements concerning our Lord call for emphasis. 'God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God.' This is obviously required because of the meaning of the Greek word. Our Lord is God 'from' or 'out of' God (*ἐκ, de*). The statement of our belief in the Holy Spirit is also somewhat difficult. There should be no comma after 'Ghost,' but after 'Lord,' in order that the remaining statement, 'the Giver of life,' may be duly expressed. The Holy Ghost is 'Lord and Life-giver,' not the Lord of life and the Giver

of life. Here again, the Greek is quite clear, and only the English is ambiguous.

8. The Church Militant Prayer. It is important to enunciate properly in the Exhortation preceding this Prayer. Too often it is described as 'Christ Church' instead of 'Christ's Church.' The phrase 'alms and oblations' is now almost universally recognized to refer to gifts for the poor ('alms'), and other offerings in money or kind for all other purposes ('oblations'). Bishop Dowden in his *Further Studies in the Prayer Book* (pp. 176-222) has set this question beyond all reasonable doubt, so that if the clergyman knows that all the gifts are for the poor he will naturally leave out the phrase 'and oblations,' while if he knows that no part is to be devoted to the poor, he will leave out the phrase 'alms and.' The contrast between the rubric ordering the clergyman to 'humbly present and place the alms and oblations upon the Holy Table,' and the rubric ordering him to place upon the Table 'the bread and wine' is very noteworthy, indicating that the former is an offering while the latter is not.

9. The Exhortations. Whenever the first and second Exhortations are delivered, every possible endeavour should be made to render them solemnly and impressively. It is a great pity that through pressure of time the first, in particular, is not more frequently used, as it contains so much clear and helpful devotional teaching about the Holy Communion. The long Exhortation intended for those who are present at the Communion is still more valuable for its spiritual instruction about the Lord's Supper, and as it takes only about two and a half minutes to read, it is much to be desired that it were used more frequently. The fourth, or short, Exhortation, 'Ye that do truly,' comes as a very definite message of application to those who intend to partake of the Lord's Supper. Care should be used not to emphasize the word 'do,' but all stress laid upon the following adverbs and verbs.

10. The Confession. The difference between this

Confession and that used in Morning and Evening Prayer indicates an essential difference between the two Services in the fuller and more thorough confession of sin. In the first section it is very important to emphasize the word 'all,' in 'Maker of *all* things, Judge of *all* men.' The false antithesis arising from the emphasis on 'things' and 'men' is very trying to hear. Again, in the Prayer for mercy we must take care not to lay any stress on the word 'upon.' The capital letters in the middle of sentences show where the pauses should be observed in the repetition of this prayer.

11. The Absolution. The main point to notice here is the relation between 'all them' who possess repentance and those present for whom no particular mercy is asked. A slight emphasis on 'all' and 'you' will bring out this thought.

12. 'Therefore with angels and archangels.' In strict obedience to the rubric the people should always be encouraged to commence their part with the words 'Therefore with angels,' and not to wait for the words 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' The whole paragraph, according to the last rubric, is to be 'sung or said,' and there is now no warrant for distinguishing between the clergyman saying or singing part, and the people joining in the rest.

13. The Prayer of Consecration. This beautiful and solemn prayer will be made deeply impressive by a careful observance of pauses at the proper places. Without being unduly slow, the prayer should be taken with as great care as possible. In the words of Institution, with reference to the cup, a slight pause should be made after the word 'all'; otherwise we may give an impression which is not only incorrect in regard to the words used by our Lord (*πάντες*), but also may introduce a jarring note at a very solemn time.

14. The Words of Administration. A real distinction should be made in voice between the two parts of these words. The first is a prayer, and should be offered accordingly. The second is an exhortation with reference to the elements, and should be spoken in a suitable tone.

15. The Post-Communion Collects. In the first Collect the parallelism between 'weighing our merits' and 'pardoning our offences' should be indicated by a slight emphasis on the four words. The second Collect might well be used more frequently than it is in some Churches.

16. The Gloria in Excelsis. If it is the custom for the people at the Church with which we are connected to rise for the purpose of saying or singing the Gloria, we must take care to give them time to do so, and not to hurry with the commencement before they are really ready.

17. The Benediction. A moment of silence between the Gloria and the Benediction will be found devotionally helpful, and then the Benediction should be pronounced slowly and devotionally, making pauses, and thus allowing each part of the exquisite language to have full effect. 'The peace of God—minds—God—Lord—Almighty—the Father—Son—Holy Ghost—you—always.' It may not be altogether useless to remind some clergymen that the Service is not complete when the Benediction has been pronounced. If any of the consecrated bread and wine remain they are to be consumed 'immediately after the Blessing.' The clergyman should therefore see that this is done before he kneels down for his own private devotions at the conclusion of the Service.

These suggestions, while only touching the fringe of a large subject will, it is hoped, be sufficient to show the supreme importance of giving the most earnest attention to every part of the Prayer Book Service. Inasmuch as everything depends upon the spiritual and intellectual state of the clergyman who leads the Service, no thought or prayer can be too much to give to this work of helping the people to 'worship God in spirit and in truth.' That all this is not unnecessary may be seen from a letter sent to *The Times* three or four years ago, calling attention to the necessity and importance of intelligent and intelligible reading. The Bishop of London has for some years held examinations of Candidates for Holy Orders in the reading of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer,

and in delivery of sermons. But, as the writers of the letter say, very much more than examination is wanted, and we cannot do better than give the very words of the letter, commending it to the attention of all theological students and younger clergy.

‘It is a fact that at scarcely any of the theological colleges is attention paid to equipping intending candidates properly for this important part of their work. Definite teaching is required, a regular course of study, and not merely perfunctory hearing a man read or preach in an empty Church or College Chapel once or twice a term, often not even that. The first qualification is intelligence; to be able to give an emphatic “Yes” to the question, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” The second is constant care and practice. If “to read comes by nature,” as Dogberry announced, to read aloud certainly does not. The voice must be steadily exercised, the modulations of pitch and pace and intonation must be cultivated, and, with it all, the delicate and highest art to conceal art must be patiently acquired, so that the result shall be perfectly easy and natural and unstrained, and above all things not theatrical. Again, apart from the reading of the Lessons, a close study of the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer would save many from the monotony which is so often irritating to the intelligent layman. Such phrases as “shall read,” “shall say,” “to be pronounced,” and so on, are not mere distinctions without a difference; they indicate certain subtle alterations in method and delivery where they occur, and suggest the value of such considerations in many other places and passages besides. We most earnestly beg the authorities at the Universities and the theological colleges to take this matter in hand seriously, and do their utmost to secure that the reading of the Word of God and of our unrivalled Prayer Book shall be more intelligent and intelligible than it is at present, and that the value of the voice as an impressive instrument for the utterance of a Divine message be more insisted on. If these authorities are apathetic, nothing can be done, nothing will be done; but if they will act as they can do quite easily, and make a course of training in this respect obligatory on all candidates, things will soon mend, and there will be an advance all along the line.’



## CHAPTER II

### PREACHING <sup>1</sup>

#### SECTION 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING.<sup>2</sup>

THERE is a decided tendency to-day to neglect preaching. It is not unfair to say that the average preaching is poor both in matter and manner. Canon Simpson bears testimony to this when he says that:—

‘The Anglican pulpit can hardly at the present day be described as either interesting, or impressive.’ <sup>3</sup>

The multiplicity of parish organizations demands time, thought, and strength. To organize Services, Clubs, Guilds, Entertainments, is easier than to study for sermons. Parochial work has become multiplied and secularized, with the inevitable effect of weakness in the pulpit. Added to this, there is the consciousness that great preaching is not necessary for ecclesiastical leadership, and as a consequence, administration is regarded as the prime essential for the clergyman.

There are also tendencies at work which lead to the depreciation of preaching. Other channels of instruction are thought to be of greater importance, and the platform and the press are accordingly emphasized to such an extent that in the minds of many, preaching is no longer regarded as essential. It must be confessed, too, that in certain

<sup>1</sup> For Bibliography see p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> I thankfully acknowledge my indebtedness here and elsewhere to that most valuable book *The Work of the Preacher*, by A. S. Hoyt. (Macmillan & Co).

<sup>3</sup> *Preachers and Teachers*, p. 223.



quarters Ritual and Sacraments have been over-emphasized to the disparagement of preaching. With the New Testament in our hands, it is perplexing to read that 'the altar is a more sacred place than the pulpit; the function of the priest . . . is greater than that of the preacher.'<sup>1</sup> Considering that the 'altar' finds no place in the New Testament, and the Holy Communion is only mentioned twice in all the Epistles, it is certainly difficult to account for the perspective suggested by the above remarks.

There are still other tendencies which are positively hostile to preaching. The critical spirit of to-day is largely impatient of teaching, and considers that it knows sufficient of itself, and has powers of its own which are adequate to all needs. Social problems, too, lead men to denounce what they regard as 'mere talking,' while the growing materialism and wealth occupy the undue attention of many people.

And yet it is simple truth to say that there can be no strong ministry, and no effective Church to-day without preaching. The Census of Church Attendance, instituted by the *Daily News* some years ago, showed with convincing proof that churches are well attended in proportion to the vigour of the preaching. People will forgive weakness anywhere in clerical life and organization sooner than in the pulpit. If preaching should ever be regarded as 'out of date' it is pretty certain that Christianity will soon be considered in the same light, for the preached Word and the living Christ have always been closely associated. We will go so far as to say that the spiritual prosperity of any Church is mainly determined by the preaching gift of its ministry, and we make bold to affirm our conviction that the spiritual condition of the Church to-day is largely related to the neglect of preaching. When we observe the lack of interest in Church attendance, and, still more, the absence of spiritual power in Church life, we do not think it is inaccurate to describe the situation as due to the neglected gift of preaching.

<sup>1</sup> Dean Carter, *Preaching*, p. 3.

Preaching is always prominently set forth in Holy Scripture. The prophets of the Old Testament were great preachers. The ministry of our Lord was very largely one of preaching and teaching, and His earthly ministry closed by a fivefold emphasis on the great commission to His disciples to go into all the world. The Apostles were pre-eminently preachers, and the preaching of St. Paul in such passages as 1 Corinthians i, clearly emphasizes the truth of his own contention, ' Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.'

Church History tells the same story. Is it not the case that for the first four centuries, when preaching and teaching were emphasized, the Church was kept largely pure and strong, while with the decline of preaching came the loss of spiritual power? Preaching in the Middle Ages was a comparatively insignificant feature of Church life, but its revival in the sixteenth century by Luther and other Reformers tells its own story. The Evangelical Movement of the eighteenth century in connexion with Wesley and Whitefield, and many others, bears the same witness, while in missionary work to-day preaching and teaching occupy a prominent place. Where the spiritual life has been greatest there the preaching has been strongest, and it is not in the slightest degree inaccurate to say that wherever the priest goes up the prophet goes down, and contrariwise, where the prophet is exalted the priest is seen to be unnecessary. It has often been pointed out that Augustine was prayed for by Monica for thirty years, but the Churches did not attract him. Faustus the philosopher was the great magnet, till at last Augustine reached Milan and came in contact with Ambrose, the great man, the Christian, the great preacher.

Experience to-day all points in the same direction. Where preaching is emphasized and valued by the minister the people come and will come. Nothing, however able and effective in writing, will ever make up for the living voice. Not even the great cause of politics, or any other element in life, will ever supplant preaching. ' Truth through personality ' is the classical definition of

preaching, and carries with it clear testimony to the essential need of the person as the channel of the truth. If people are ever impatient with preaching to-day, it is not with the fact, but with the sort.

The call of the present time on theological students, and on the younger clergy in particular, is to give special attention to preaching. Both in theological colleges and in parochial work we must make preparation for preaching a prominent feature and factor of our clerical life. We must give the best we can in matter and manner. We must work as hard as we can in order to produce the best results. No time, no strength, no thought, no effort, can be too much to devote to this duty. Even if this means the surrender of parochial organizations, the result in the long run will not be harmful, but advantageous. It may be that we need to do less in order to do more. By transferring purely secular administration to laymen, or if we cannot obtain them, by omitting such secular methods and concentrating our attention on the spiritual element of the ministry of the Word, we shall obtain the best and most permanent results of the ministry.

There is perhaps nothing in life to compare with the joy of true preaching. What an exquisite satisfaction it gives to witness for Christ, in proclaiming His Gospel, in teaching His truth, in cheering the lonely, the sorrowing, the desolate, and the afflicted, by some message from on high. Above all, is there anything in the world to compare with the profound and inspiring satisfaction of winning men and women to Christ through preaching, and of ministering to their education as we endeavour to build them up in their most holy faith? Let us be firmly convinced of, and deeply impressed with the absolute necessity, the supreme importance, the profound influence, and the great joy of preaching the Gospel. Well said the great Thomas Goodwin, 'God had only one Son, and He made Him a Minister.'

## SECTION 2. THE NATURE OF PREACHING.

Homiletics is the science of which preaching is the art,

and the sermon is the product. But what is a sermon ? Many years ago the following definition was given in the course of a lecture on this subject :—

‘ An oral discourse, or address to the public mind on a religious subject, carefully prepared, with a definite object.’

This definition consists of five parts, each of which needs careful study.

1. ‘ A sermon is an oral discourse or address.’ This means that a sermon is a speech, not a book, or a treatise, or an essay. No one can doubt that the extemporaneous ideal is the true one. The Latin *orator* was not a reader, but a speaker, and the true idea of preaching is to combine the weight of matter in reading and writing with the ease, fluency, versatility, and animation of speech. To quote Bacon’s familiar words, ‘ Reading makes the full man, writing the exact man, conversation the ready man.’

2. ‘ An oral address, to the public mind.’ A sermon is not a lecture, either scientific or literary, nor is it a forensic oration. It is an address to a mixed class, and therefore ought not as a rule to deal with any speciality, still less with any technicality. ‘ I do admire the vicar’s sermons, mum ; ’E’s so wonderful fluid.’ ‘ I’m so glad you like them, Mrs. Smith ; do you understand them ? ’ ‘ Me, mum ? Oh, no ; I wouldn’t presume to hunderstand ’em, mum.’

3. ‘ An oral address, to the public mind, on a religious subject.’ It is not concerned with politics, or literature, or science. The sermon is essentially Christian, and is to be drawn from the Bible. A definite message should be extracted from the Scriptures. As a matter of history, the sermon is a definitely Christian institution.

4. ‘ An oral address, to the public mind, on a religious subject, carefully prepared.’ It is a serious and dangerous fallacy that preaching is a gift rather than an art. It does not come as a chance effort. According to some people, it would seem as though sermons are made very

much according to the description of Aaron's work with the people's gold. 'There came out this calf.' But we know that unless a sermon obeys the laws of art, and is the result of genuine work, it will be of no value whatever. It was the great Henry Melville who, in reply to the inquiry how many sermons a man could prepare every week, said, 'A clever man, one; an ordinary man, two; a fool, as many as you like.' If our sermons are not the result of downright hard work, they will not be sermons at all.

5. 'An oral address, to the public mind, on a religious subject, carefully prepared, with a definite object.' An essay simply presents truth for consideration, but a sermon adds to presentation the two essential elements of persuasion and action, and unless this definite object is steadily kept in view, the preacher will not provide a sermon. Preaching is God's Word to man through man, and the motto of every preacher should be, 'I have a message from God to thee.' A story is told of a tradesman who was convicted by the sermon of giving short weight to his customers, and as the result of what he heard he went home and 'burned his bushel.' This indicates the true ideal and aim of the Christian sermon.

When these aspects of the nature of a sermon are carefully considered we shall easily beware of the common fallacy which regards rhetoric as equivalent to sophistry and unreality. We often read in newspapers and magazines that a certain pronouncement was 'rhetorical' rather than 'logical,' as though rhetoric meant making the worse appear the better cause. Rhetoric, properly understood, means the art of fluent speech (*ῥέω*, to flow), and there are four things included in every true consideration of the term. (a) There must be composition, or the expression of thought in words with clearness, force, and grace. (b) There must be elocution, or effective delivery of what has been prepared. (c) There must be an appeal to the understanding in order to convince of truth. (d) There must be an appeal to the will in order to persuade it to obey the truth presented. When we get all these elements in



mind we have some conception of what is implied in a sermon.

### SECTION 3. THE PREPARATION FOR THE SERMON.

‘Some men prepare their sermons ; other men prepare themselves.’ Lyman Beecher (or his son, Henry Ward Beecher, for the story is told of both) was once asked, ‘How long did it take you to prepare that sermon of this morning ?’ ‘Forty years,’ was the reply. The sermon is only properly made in proportion as the life is being enriched. A well-known American preacher has suggestively and strikingly said that it takes three men to preach a sermon ; the physical man, the mental man, the spiritual man.<sup>1</sup> And each of these three elements of preparation must be included and given proper attention.

The physical preparation is by no means unimportant. Eating is to the body what fuel is to the fire, and just as a fire must not be choked up with too much fuel if it is to burn brightly in a short time, so, if the physical powers are surfeited with eating just before a sermon, the preaching must necessarily suffer. Fresh air, a well-ventilated study, and regular exercise will be found invaluable in preparation for preaching. We will also venture to go further and say that the man’s bodily powers, in view of his work, will be all the more vigorous if he is a total abstainer from alcoholic drink and tobacco. Not least, the clergyman ought to have one day’s rest in seven. It cannot be right for the minister to break the law of the Sabbath, and if he can arrange that his rest day is Saturday, or Friday, he will come to his Sunday’s work at the highest point of bodily vigour. Monday, as the rest day for clergymen, is to be deprecated on the ground that it will make Sunday the weakest and Tuesday the most vigorous day of the week. But if Friday or Saturday be adopted, the Lord’s Day will be the day of fullest power.

Intellectual preparation necessarily occupies a very prominent place, and by this is to be understood the

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Jefferson, *Quiet Hints to Growing Preachers*.



exercise and training of memory, reason, and imagination. Let no preacher think that 'anything will do' for a sermon. If he is not prepared to undertake genuinely hard mental work, he has failed to realize one of the prime necessities of all preaching.

Intellectual preparation will start with a general study of the Bible; this indeed will be the paramount necessity. The preacher must be in the true sense, a 'man of one book.' This study, in so far as it is intended to minister to preaching, will include a careful consideration of the various periods, close attention to the biographies, and a constant study of the books of the Bible. Side by side with this, the preacher will make a point of studying both preaching and preachers in order to become acquainted with the best methods and at the same time to keep up his own ideals. We must not only read the best sermons and the best books on preaching, but take every opportunity of hearing the greatest preachers.

A general study of books will also form an essential feature of intellectual preparation for preaching. This will preserve the mind from falling into ruts, increase our general information and material for sermons, help in the interpretation and application of the Bible, and enable us to enter into sympathy with the men of our time and the tendencies of our age. This general study of books will include as far as possible some acquaintance with History, Science, Philosophy, Fiction, and Poetry, though of course, as temperaments vary, emphasis will be laid on one or other of these departments of life. The value of History is that it reveals God in human affairs; the value of Science is that it will bring God before us in nature; the value of Philosophy is that it will manifest God in the process and progress of human thought; Fiction will have its great value as an expression of human character. No one can read such masterpieces of literature as those of Shakespeare, Bunyan, George Eliot, Hawthorne, Thackeray, and Dickens, without obtaining an added knowledge of that human nature with which we have to deal in sermons. Poetry

will help us in particular with the expression of our thought, and a preacher who draws from such 'wells of English undefiled' as Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson will never lack lucidity and grace.

A study of men must also be included in our intellectual work. Truth must ever be related to life, and a knowledge of men as well as of books will be the sure preventive against mere theorizing. Some one has aptly and wisely said that 'a sermon must have heaven for its father and earth for its mother.' Once again, let it be emphasized in the strongest possible way that we need the keen and most strenuous intellectual preparation if we are to do effective service in preaching. There are far too many preachers who have been described as 'men of thoughts rather than of thought.'

Spiritual preparation might be regarded as so essential as not to require notice, and yet it is necessary to emphasize it as one of the methods of true discipline for preaching. Nothing can make up for the training of the spiritual man. This will come about pre-eminently by the daily devotional study of the Bible, which will give freshness, force, and fragrance to our message. The man who plunges his soul in the pure stream of Bible meditation day by day will find his preaching marked by vividness and purity which will bring joy and blessing to his hearers. Indeed, it may be fearlessly said that such a devotional study of the Bible will do much to settle critical questions for the preacher himself, for when a man has fellowship with God through His Word it gives him a criterion to test everything in the Bible. If a man meets God in the book of Genesis, that meeting will affect every subsequent consideration of that wonderful book.

Devotional reading will also form part of our spiritual preparation, and so long as it is kept really secondary to the Bible, it can do nothing but good for us to see what God is teaching other souls, and to learn every possible lesson of His grace and love. Richard Cecil once said, 'I have a shelf in my study for tried authors; one in my mind for tried principles; and one in my heart for tried

friends.' <sup>1</sup> But of course this devotional study of the Bible and of other books will always be associated, and, if it may be so said, saturated with prayer. As we honour the Holy Spirit of God, Who is the real Author of the Bible, as we trust Him, as we seek Him, and as we pour out our hearts before Him, our spirits will become strong as the Word of God abides in them and we shall become 'thoroughly furnished' for the work of the ministry.

When these three aspects of preparation: the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual, are fully realized, it behoves us to obtain all possible practice in speaking. We should utilize every opportunity of expressing and enunciating what we have learnt and studied, and all the while we should put our very best preparation into everything we do. A true sermon means the expenditure of the entire man. When William Pitt was asked what was the quality most needed for the position of Prime Minister, he answered, the first was patience, the second patience, and the third patience. In like manner, if we are asked what is the quality most essential in preaching we should be inclined to reply, the first is thoroughness, the second thoroughness, and the third thoroughness.

It is in the balance and maintenance of all these three requirements, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, that true sermon preparation will be realized. We must keep on working, growing, learning, meditating, praying, and obeying, and then our sermons will be better and better right up to the end of our ministry, however prolonged it may be.

#### SECTION 4. THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON.

In all suggestions for sermon work it must never be forgotten that individual experience is only valuable for comparison. Every man must be himself and follow the lines of his own temperament. At the same time

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by W. M. Taylor, in *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 55.

it may often prove of service to compare notes with others in order to see what general lines of preparation for the sermon are followed.

1. First, we must get our text. This will best be obtained while we are alone with our Bible. The true-hearted minister will desire and seek to know God's will for His people, and lifting up his heart in prayer and trust he will wait upon God for the message. Nor will he ever be really disappointed in his quest. For a Churchman it seems the most natural thing to start with a careful, prayerful reading of the Lessons and other portions of Holy Scripture appointed for the particular Sunday, and while the mind is intent on these the heart will be seeking God's guidance, and in many instances the answer will come in some suggestion arising out of the Scriptures for the particular occasion. The value of such a method lies very largely in the variety it gives to our sermons, for at one time we shall be led to preach from an Old Testament topic, at another time from a New Testament subject, whether in the Gospels or Epistles, while yet again, the Psalms will yield their fruit to every earnest seeker. From time to time, however, nothing from the Scriptures appointed for the day will impress itself upon the mind, but in answer to continued prayer and trust something else will be shown, and the mind directed in the right channel. There is a profound and genuine sense of spiritual satisfaction in the consciousness that our text has come in answer to faith and prayer; it tends to make us confident that our message is from God.

2. With our text ready, we have to bear in mind and apply the simple and yet great principles of all sermon preparation. These principles are usually stated as three in number,<sup>1</sup> but perhaps it may be permissible to add one more as the final and culminating requirement.

(a) We must 'think ourselves empty.' By this is meant that we must take our text and proceed to ponder its meaning. Our thoughts should be jotted down as

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Boyd Carpenter's *Lectures on Preaching*.

they come, on a sheet of paper, without any attempt at arrangement, but only with an endeavour to elicit for ourselves every aspect of the meaning and message of the text. This effort to think for ourselves will prove of the greatest possible value, and whether it takes a long or short time to 'think ourselves empty,' we ought not to approach any outside help to sermon preparation until we are conscious that to the best of our ability we have exhausted for the time our own mental possibilities.

(b) Then we must 'read ourselves full.' After thinking out for ourselves the bearings of the text, the mind is in the proper state to approach the views of others who may have commented, or otherwise written on the passage. The mind that is 'empty' becomes thereby hungry, and the consciousness of first-hand thought of our own enables us to assimilate in a true sense all that is within our reach in the books of others. Let us read as widely as possible in the books and magazines at our disposal, and incorporate in the work everything that is appropriate to our subject.

(c) Then we must 'write ourselves clear.' After thinking and reading it is essential to put our thoughts into proper order, and this can only be done by writing. Since 'writing makes the exact man,' the use of our pen in sermon preparation will be an indispensable requirement. When we have arranged our outline and method of treatment we should write out our sermon in full, for the very exercise of writing will give clearness and precision to our thought. The eye is a great help to the mind, and the very sight of what we have written will enable us to correct our material in a way that would be quite impossible apart from writing. These are the three principles which are usually emphasized in all books on sermon preparation, and it will be seen that they refer exclusively to the purely intellectual aspects of the sermon. For this reason we venture to add a fourth principle to the foregoing.

(d) We must 'pray ourselves keen.' When the intellectual work has been done, or, rather, all through



the process of intellectual acquisition, our work should be steeped in prayer, and then when the preparation is over we must commit ourselves and our work to God in order that our delivery, when the time comes, may be 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' If a man will only observe these four principles in his preparation, he will find that they cover the entire field of need.

3. Some words about methods seem to be required at this point. Sermon preparation should begin early in the week. It is injurious to ourselves, as well as wrong to our people, to allow our week to be crowded with engagements which compel us to postpone our sermon work till almost the very end of a busy, and, it may be, tiring week. If we begin on Monday morning for the next Sunday we shall soon find the advantage in a variety of ways. Then something, however little, should be done each day. We must never forget the great intellectual law known as 'unconscious cerebration.' The subject once started, is certain to germinate, and in ways of which we know nothing, material will be gradually collected, and mind and heart will be preparing themselves all through the week as we give attention to our work day by day. Then we must endeavour to discipline our mind to think distinctly and connectedly. This is easier said than done, and yet unless some effort is made we shall find our thoughts only desultory and of no practical value. Further, as we are thinking and reading, we should take every opportunity of using our pen. It is probably true to say that no great speaker has ever lived who did not make full use of his pen. Writing has a remarkable effect upon our powers of thought and reading, and no clergyman can afford to dispense with the discipline that comes thereby. As Lord Brougham himself said :—

'I should lay it down as a rule admitting of no exception, that a man will speak well in proportion as he has written much, and that with equal talents he will be the finest extempore speaker, when no time for preparing is allowed, who has prepared himself



most sedulously when he had an opportunity of delivering a premeditated speech.' <sup>1</sup>

At the same time, our writing is not for the purpose of committing our sermon to memory. There are very few preachers who can memorize their sermons and deliver them *memoriter* with reality and directness. There is a sense in which the words are absolutely true, 'Take care of the thoughts, and the words will take care of themselves.' If only we ponder and read, and read and ponder, when the time comes for us to deliver what we have prepared, mind and memory will not be found wanting.

4. It now remains for us to consider with care the essential requirements of every sermon. They seem to be four in number.

(a) There must be definiteness of aim. It is said of one preacher that 'he aimed at nothing and hit it every time.' A man should know with clearness and directness what he wishes to elicit from his text and deliver to his people. At every point of his preparation he should rigidly inquire of himself, What do I mean by this? What does the text teach? What do I intend to give to my people?

(b) There must be simplicity and precision of language. All high-flown language should be carefully avoided. Simplicity, lucidity, and preciseness are all that are required of the sermon. A man's wife should not be termed 'the partner of his joys and sorrows,' and we must carefully avoid the temptation to be original in the desire to keep clear of the hackneyed and trite. The Curate who wished to dispense with the familiar 'From the cradle to the grave' did not improve matters by describing life as 'from the basinette to the sepulchre.' We must do our utmost to weigh words, to seek their etymological meaning, and to cultivate familiarity with their true force. For this purpose that valuable book, Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary*, will prove of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by W. M. Taylor, in *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 121.

constant service; indeed, many a sermon even will be derived from that quarry. We must also do our best to cultivate style. Perhaps for pulpit work there are no authors to compare with George Eliot and Froude, because of their simplicity, force, and directness; and one of the finest models for the young clergyman is to be found in the well-known books and tracts by the late Bishop Ryle of Liverpool. It is known that he commenced his ministry in a country parish in the West of England, and determined to model himself on the great Canon Henry Melville of St. Paul's, but he soon found that the country folk were utterly unable to appreciate the rounded periods and florid language employed after the example of the eminent and eloquent Canon. And so Mr. Ryle, to use his own expression, determined to 'crucify his style.' He did so to some purpose, in view of the almost unique terseness, clearness, and force of his inimitable writings. In the course of an article some years ago by the late Ian Maclaren, reviewing his ministry, he gave expression to the following words:—

'Had I another thirty years, I should give more earnest heed to style, and especially I would enrich my mind by daily study of its great masters, so that as a farmer quickens his soil by nitrates, one might enrich his mind by the assimilation of noble language. . . . Nothing has degraded preaching more than tawdry appeals, in which the pathos has no passion, and the argument no force. Evangelistic preaching has seemed to us to be, as a rule, careless to a scandal and almost squalid in style, with vain repetitions of hackneyed words by way of exhortation and with incredible anecdotes by way of illustration. But I am moved at present to judge this difficult and delicate form of preaching with the utmost charity, when I review the glaring deficiency of my own style and the repeated evidence of unfinished work. Let me record my solemn conviction that in the day when he gives in his account the preacher of the Evangel will be held responsible, not only for the truth which he declares, but for the dress with which he clothed it.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *British Weekly*. A fine leading article, evidently by the Editor, on 'The Morality of Style' appeared in the *British Weekly* for July 19, 1906, and it is much to be desired that it could be available for careful study by preachers.

(c) There must be clearness of arrangement. The old-fashioned 'Heads' to Sermons are by no means unworthy of consideration by preachers of to-day. They help the preacher in his preparation, and they certainly help the hearer to follow point by point the various divisions of the sermon. It is quite unnecessary, as we shall see later, to announce these 'Heads' beforehand, but if they are mentioned one by one as they come, it will conduce to clearness of statement which will be undoubtedly effective. But whether we have 'Heads,' or not, there should be something like a logical arrangement of the sermon from commencement to conclusion.

(d) There must be forcefulness of application. A sermon without an application is not a sermon at all, but only an essay. Application is like the bait on the hook. We must be 'fishers of men.' A clergyman once told a friend of mine that he had laboured for eleven years in one parish without knowing of a single conversion. My friend and I knew very well that the man who made this confession was one of the ablest and most acceptable of teachers, honoured and loved by his people, and all who knew him. But, as my friend explained it, 'The fact of the matter is, he provided a splendid meal, but he did not show the people how to eat it.' In other words, he was a teacher, but he did not apply his teaching and lead to immediate acceptance and obedience. Let us never fail to drive home our message and make it as personal, direct, and definite as possible.

Along these lines it may be confidently said that a general preparation of the sermon will proceed. Once again, let us fix it in our minds that no work can be too great, no labour too severe, no trouble too much, no toil too exacting, if the Christian preacher is to do his duty to his God, himself, and his people.

SECTION 5. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SERMON.<sup>1</sup>

Every sermon should have a plan. It is true that sermon outlines, or plans, are not very fashionable in the present day; they are either ignored or else very carefully disguised; and yet they possess a twofold advantage: they are good for the preacher, and certainly good for the hearers. The preacher will be enabled to study much more intelligently if he proceeds along the lines of a carefully worked out plan. He will be helped to keep a proper proportion between the parts of his sermon. His edifice will not be all porch, or otherwise out of proportion. For extemporaneous preaching a sermon plan will be of extreme value. Not least in importance, an outline will provide a constant exercise for the mind in construction. For these reasons a clergyman should certainly practise the making of sermon plans and outlines. As to hearers, no one can doubt that an outline makes a sermon intelligible and attractive. People are able to carry away the main ideas of the preacher if they are put before them in something like outline form. This outline should conform to the regular threefold division of every true sermon; the Introduction, the Substance, the Conclusion.

A. The Introduction is very important. It is said that John Bright always wrote out the introductions to his speeches. Some one has remarked that 'the first five minutes of a battle are decisive.' But whether this be the case, or not, the first few seconds of a sermon are undoubtedly of the greatest importance.

1. What should be the substance of a good Introduction? It should possess four qualities.

(a) It should be arresting, in order to gain attention. An introduction should never be too obvious, and for

<sup>1</sup> In this section it has only been possible to summarize (mainly from Hoyt chaps. vii-ix) what all authorities on sermons require. The three books on this subject to be studied by preachers are Hoyt, Broadus and Phelps (see Bibliography).

this reason it should be made as interesting as possible. When a preacher commences with the hackneyed words, 'The chapter from which my text is taken,' one feels inevitably inclined to settle down to slumber. All the best preachers make their introduction attractive and arresting.

(b) It should be sympathetic, in order to win the goodwill of the congregation. One of the finest books for work among children is called *The Point of Contact*, showing the need of a teacher becoming at once *en rapport* with his juvenile hearers. The same thing is really true in connexion with sermons, and it is of the greatest importance to win the goodwill of our audience by some point at the outset with which they will agree.

(c) It should be appropriate. The introduction must have a close connexion with what follows. If there is no vital relation between the introduction and the substance of the sermon, what is said will not only be futile but harmful.

(d) It should be short. Sermons are sometimes weighted with too long an introduction. The house is all portico, and people are tired before the substance of the sermon is reached. Some of us have very vivid recollections of an able and scholarly preacher whose introductions as a rule used to take at least twenty minutes.

2. What should be the form of a good Introduction ? The only answer to this is that the form must be varied if it is to be good. Sometimes it will take the form of an explanation ; at other times an observation ; and yet again, an illustration. So long as there is variety and appropriateness to what follows we can adopt whatever form we wish.

3. What should be the spirit of a good Introduction ? It should be at once modest and simple. Anything approaching egotism or conscious authority in the preacher will be at once futile and fatal.

B. The Substance of the sermon naturally occupies our attention after the Introduction, and this involves a due and appropriate use of the methods of analysis



and synthesis. The former will be for instruction ; the latter for persuasion. Both are needed and should be constantly kept in view.

1. What is the character of a thoroughly good sermon ?

(a) It should possess unity. Every part of the sermon should be connected with the rest, and our treatment should proceed step by step from the opening to the close.

(b) It should be marked by progress. We should prepare so carefully that we may be able to avoid putting into division 1 what ought to be in division 2.

(c) It should possess clearness. Whether this is done by means of divisions is a matter of opinion and choice. If we have divisions for our sermons it will usually be found wise not to announce them beforehand, for the element of surprise is of great importance in all preaching. If our subject happens to be specially abstract, or theological, it may well be thought necessary to announce our general treatment beforehand, but, as a rule, in our ordinary sermons each point should be announced at its proper place.

(d) It should be characterized by vitality. All the unity, progress, and clearness that our sermons reveal will count for nothing unless they are also possessed with life. The dry bones must be clothed with flesh, the flesh must be vitalized, and the sermon made living for its purpose.

2. What are the elements of the form of a thoroughly good sermon ? The following four elements will probably be found essential to every satisfactory sermon.

(a) There will be propositions. We must state our case, and show our people what we intend to do with our subject.

(b) There will be explanations. We must interpret, elucidate, and justify our propositions.

(c) There will be observations. We shall comment on, and apply our text in all suitable ways.

(d) There will be illustrations. There are very few sermons that will not be greatly benefited by some illus-



trations to let in the light and impress the subject on mind and heart.

C. The Conclusion of the sermon is not the least important section of it. Indeed, it is absolutely essential, for, as we have said, it distinguishes the sermon from the essay or the lecture.

1. What is the character of a good Conclusion ?

(a) It should be short. Let us beware of saying, 'Finally' until we are really at the close of our sermon. When a clergyman uses this often welcome sound about twenty minutes before he actually closes, and when it is followed by similar remarks, like 'Lastly ;' 'One word more ;' 'In conclusion ;' hearers are apt to get impatient and resent such an inaccurate use of language. An American clergyman entertained a number of eminent men at dinner. The guests were speaking in praise of a sermon the host had preached. The preacher's young son was at the table, and one of the guests said : 'My boy, what did you think of your father's sermon ?' 'I guess it was very good,' said the lad, 'but there were three mighty fine places where he could have stopped.'

(b) It should be simple. No oratorical flights are in place at the conclusion of a Christian sermon. Young preachers are often tempted to indulge in a 'peroration,' but it should be avoided as poison, because it will inevitably fail of the effect essential to a Christian discourse.

(c) It should be pungent. That is to say, there must be a direct, personal appeal. Each hearer must feel the force of the words, as though the preacher were saying to him, 'Thou art the man.'

(d) It should be definite. This means that the preacher should not fail to tell his people how to do what is required by the message. Whether it is an evangelistic, or an instructive sermon, this definite presentation of the method of realization must form part of our conclusion.

2. What is the form of a good Conclusion ? Here again, the answer is that it may be, and ought to be varied. Sometimes it will take the form of a recapitulation, but it is not often that a preacher can invest his

recapitulation with that freshness which the subject requires. Every review should be a *new* view, and this is not an easy task. It is probable, therefore, that the more familiar form of application will be the prominent feature in our conclusions. But whatever may be our methods, we must take care that there is a real, forceful, pertinent, and practical ending to our message.

As we contemplate these three parts: Introduction, Substance, Conclusion, we naturally inquire what proportion of our time and material should be given to each. It is difficult to say, but the suggestion has been made that the Introduction should take one-fifth, the Substance three-fifths, and the Conclusion one-fifth of our time. But we must not be slaves to any such rigidity, for from time to time we shall probably find that one-tenth for Introduction, four-fifths for Substance, and one-tenth for Conclusion will be more appropriate to our needs. The one thing essential is that there should be a fair and due proportion between these three parts, and we can test the matter by the manuscript pages of our sermons when written. If only we keep before our minds the absolute necessity of these three parts and do our utmost to make them the very best we can, our sermons will never lack appreciation on the part of our people.

#### SECTION 6. SCRIPTURE IN RELATION TO THE SERMON.<sup>1</sup>

As sermons are essentially a Christian institution, the Word of God is naturally prominent and important in connexion with them. The Bible often speaks of 'the Ministry of the Word,' and the Prayer Book title is 'Ministers of the Word and Sacraments,' never of the Sacraments alone. Added to all this, the Prayer Book itself is full of Scripture, both in the portions selected for use and also in the substance of many of the addresses and prayers. The use of the Bible is essential to the minister merely for style, illustration, and interest; but

<sup>1</sup> See Hoyt, *The Work of Preaching*, chaps. v. and vi.

far more than this, it is essential for his message. All the great preachers have been truly Biblical preachers. No one can read a sermon of Spurgeon's without becoming aware of his intimate acquaintance with the Bible. Holy Scripture was the atmosphere in which he lived and preached. The same is true of all other pulpit giants, like Maclaren, Parker, and Liddon; they were 'mighty in the Scriptures.' No one can exaggerate the value of a prolonged study of the Bible alone for the work of Christian preaching. If the mind is saturated with such portions as the Fourth Gospel, or the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, or the last great section of Isaiah, the result will be nothing short of wonderful in providing thought and experience for the ministry. If our preaching is not Biblical it is certain to be thin, poor, and hesitating, but if it is made up of the Bible it is sure to be rich, strong, penetrating, and satisfying both to preacher and hearers. Preaching that is not Scriptural cannot be regarded as Christian preaching. But at once the question arises, What do we mean by Scriptural preaching? Various aspects of the subject call for attention.

### *I. The Use of a Text.*

It is the invariable custom to employ a text as the introduction to sermons. It is a little difficult to discover the origin of the use of the term. 'Text' means 'something woven,' and we may at least apply it to suggest the importance of the message being woven with the Word of God. Shall we continue to observe this old custom of giving out our text? Almost every preacher would answer this question with a hearty affirmative. A text will give a sermon the authority of a Divine message, and this is the most important part of our work. The hearers will also thereby be helped to study Scripture for themselves and will be enabled to recall the sermon as they give attention to the text. But perhaps the greatest value of the text lies in its effects on the minister himself. It will give definiteness to the

entire sermon, keep the preacher strictly to his subject, enable him to concentrate attention on the aim of the moment, and in the course of his ministry the use of texts will afford him opportunities for providing the necessary variety in his subjects as he endeavours to bring out of his treasure things new and old. For these and other reasons it is not too much to say that the employment of a text should be continued as in every way of the greatest possible advantage to preachers and hearers.

## II. *The Choice of a Text.*

Several considerations should weigh with us in the actual selection of a passage of Scripture for our message.

1. It should be a genuine message. The text should be based on the true meaning of the passage, so far as we can derive it under the guidance of the best available scholarship. Any other use than the true exegetical meaning will need the greatest possible care. Preachers must not fail to distinguish between interpretation and application, and if our sermon does not deal with the original meaning of the passage, but is used in some secondary way, the fact should be stated and the people told what the passage really does mean in its original idea. Serious injury is likely to be done if we misuse Scripture by not giving the proper interpretation. A clergyman once delivered a series of sermons on Popular Sins, and when he had to discuss the subject of Smoking he took as his text, 'Do thyself no harm.' It is probable that he did himself untold harm by such a deplorable misuse of the Word of God. Care should also be taken about any human words that are found recorded in the Bible, and we should ask ourselves before using such words as our text whether they are true. If a clergyman takes his text from the speeches of one of Job's friends, it is essential to discover whether the words are themselves true apart from any particular use made of them by the friends, for we remember how they were rebuked by God for giving Job a wrong impression. Of course

there are words spoken by man which are true in themselves, as, for example, the words of the guards sent to apprehend our Lord : ' Never man spake like this Man ' ; or the enemies of Christ, ' Who can forgive sins, but God only ? ' In such cases we are quite safe in taking the words as our text, even though Divine inspiration only concerns the accuracy of the record. On one occasion a minister took as his text the words of Satan : ' Skin for skin ; yea, all that a man hath will a man give for his life ' ; and after announcing his text he commenced in a sensational way by saying, ' That's a lie.' It was a striking way of calling attention to the fact that not every word found in Scripture is a word of and from God.

2. It should contain a complete message. There is a real danger of using the text as a ' peg ' on which to hang certain thoughts which may be useful in themselves but have no real relation to the Scripture passage. A text ought not to be employed as a mere motto, or even as a point of departure. Our duty is the elucidation of the text, and we ought not to select our subject first and then ransack the Bible for a text to fit it. It is only very rarely that any clergyman need go outside the Bible for the subject of his preaching. A deacon once preached from the words, ' Nevertheless afterward,' and although he had much to say that was helpful about the discipline of life, it certainly seemed incongruous for so young a man to take so pretentious a subject and with so unsatisfactory a text. As it has been well put, we must be particularly careful not to use our text as a ' pretext.'

3. It should never be in any way incongruous. There must be no eccentricity, no humour, and of course nothing approaching buffoonery. Some authorities go as far as to say that there is no humour in the Bible, that the prophets and apostles were too deeply concerned with the realities of life to indulge in pleasantries. Whether this is so or not, the preacher must be particularly careful in his use of passages of Scripture for his text. Even a passage like ' Ephraim is a cake not turned ' (Hos. vii. 8) will need all possible care and reverence.



4. It should be as suggestive and striking as possible. How wonderful is the freshness of Bushnell's sermon titles; They are sermons in themselves. Who but a genius like Bushnell would have entitled a sermon on Cyrus from Isaiah xlv. 5, 'Every man's life a plan of God?' Another suggestive illustration of the same value of freshness is found in the use of the text 'See thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount' (Heb. viii. 5).<sup>1</sup> No one can read Matheson's *Devotional Meditations*, *Moments in the Mount*, without being aware of the great helpfulness of the themes. If our text should happen to be familiar we must do our utmost to invest it with some novelty and freshness. The glorification of the obvious is one of the greatest needs of the ministry, and every man should strive to excel along this line. Perhaps the finest illustration of investing with freshness a familiar text is found in Dr. Maclaren's great sermon on John iii. 16. (a) The Lake: 'God so loved the world.' (b) The River: 'He gave His only begotten Son.' (c) The Cup: 'that whosoever believeth.' (d) The Draught: 'have everlasting life.' We cannot all be Maclarens, but we ought to give our very best attention to the need of investing with newness the most familiar texts.

5. It should be guided by three things.

(a) By our past sermons. There should be as much variety as possible and the avoidance of repetition. Dr. R. W. Dale tells us that he kept lists of sermon subjects pinned up in his study, so that he might be able to see at a glance what subjects he had been taking for weeks and months past.

(b) By the present needs of our people. We must consider what we believe to be their requirements, and our texts should as far as possible be such as can be divided and treated intelligently and suitably for our flocks by our own personal predilections. What grips our own spiritual life is pretty certain to impress our people, and if the Word of God is vital in our own experi-

<sup>1</sup> Hoyt, *ut sup.*, p. 135.



ence it will inevitably become powerful as we proclaim its message week by week.

### III. *The Interpretation of a Text.*

It is our bounden duty to find and give the proper interpretation of the text as preachers of the Word of God. This will mean study, and unless we are prepared for hard, strenuous, intellectual work we have not yet conceived the true idea of preaching. The interpretation of the text demands a knowledge of the language, whether in Hebrew or English ; some acquaintance with Eastern customs so far as they are employed in the passage ; and certainly an accurate knowledge of the context on both sides of the passage from which we propose to preach. For example, no one should preach on ' Lord, increase our faith ' (Luke xvii. 5) without careful reference to the thought of forgiveness in the context. No sermon should be preached on Nicodemus (John iii. 1) without observing the connexion in the Greek and the R.V. with chapter ii. and the special point illustrative of Nicodemus' character in the unusual emphasis on the word ' man.' No preacher should dream of using ' Touch not ; taste not ; handle not ' (Col. ii. 21) without a thorough knowledge of the situation which led to those words. To separate them from the context and use them on behalf of temperance is to do plain violence to Holy Writ. The use of the Greek will often save us from error, even though it may occasionally spoil some useful sermons. Thus, no one could possibly exalt the ordinance of preaching from 1 Cor. i. 21, if he looked at the verse in the original.

We must also beware of spiritualizing Scripture. Teaching by types is of course legitimate and necessary, but it needs a good deal of intellectual care and not a little spiritual common sense. It would be particularly wise to avoid preaching from the Song of Solomon while we are young in the ministry. I happen to know of a deacon who preached from the text, ' I am sick of love,'

and I should imagine that his hearers were sick in another way. A preacher once had to preach on the subject of temperance, and emphasized quite rightly the importance of Christian people opposing and fighting the drink traffic in every possible way, but it did not seem quite a happy use to make of the text, 'Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord.'

Not least of all, we must insist on verbal accuracy in our interpretation of texts. There must be no twisting to obtain our point, however important that point may be. Unless there is intellectual honesty on the part of the preacher, there will soon be intellectual disgust on the part of hearers who are just as capable to consider the bearings of Scripture as he himself is. There is scarcely any more clamant call in the present day in connexion with preaching than for a thorough, intellectual, genuine interpretation of the Scriptures we use.

#### IV. *The Adherence to a Text.*

The subject should grow out of the text, and usually there will be no difficulty in accomplishing this. To choose and work out a subject and then prefix a text to it, is likely to lead to the production of an essay, not a sermon. The text should be the germ and the sermon the product. If only we carefully expound the text, discovering its meaning, and pronouncing it in its natural divisions we shall be thereby enabled to keep closely to the text all through the sermon. It was a sad and sorry testimony of the hearer who sarcastically remarked of his preacher that there was so little connexion between the text and the sermon that if the text had been infected with fever the sermon would not have caught it. The application as well as the subject and substance of the sermon should be strictly based on the text. Our message is presumably the Word of God, and it must be applied to our hearers. This will prevent us from giving them any mere personal exhortation, still less any oratorical declamation. When subject, substance, and

application are thus kept in close adherence to the text, we shall accomplish our purpose as 'ministers of the Word.'

#### SECTION 7. VARIETIES OF SERMONS.

When a man is called to minister to the same people week after week for several years, it goes without saying that his messages should have all possible variety. Unless this is so, intellectual and even spiritual ruts and grooves are inevitable, and both preacher and people will feel monotony. The following are some varieties of sermons that should be kept in view.

##### I. *Textual.*

By this is meant a sermon that arises definitely and directly out of a single text, and if we cannot find a text to fit the topic it is probable that we shall be well advised to change the topic itself. The fulness of Scripture is such that even the longest ministry may be maintained by sermons that come from Scripture. Before using a text out of its ordinary meaning we must pay attention to the context. Thus if we should be taking Isaiah lxi. 3, 'Beauty for ashes,' as a text on the sermon of the transformation of sorrow, we ought first of all to look at it and expound it in the light of Eastern customs and the circumstances of the return of the Jews from exile. And in all textual sermons we ought to endeavour to divide our texts so as to give unity and definiteness to our message. The following may be suggested as examples of textual preaching:—

Genesis xlii. 21. The three elements of repentance: Conscience, 'we are verily guilty'; Memory, 'in that we saw the anguish'; Reason, 'therefore is this distress come upon us.' I remember Dr. A. T. Pierson calling my attention to this when we were travelling together from Dublin to London, and comparing notes on Bible study and sermons.

Matthew vi. 33. The Kingdom of God : What ? How ? Why ?

Luke xix. 42. Opportunity : Given ; Limited ; Lost.

Acts x. 43. The Great Offer : The One Way ; The Strong Confirmation ; The Simple Means.

1 Corinthians xiii. 13. Faith, Hope, Love. Why all three are permanent ; Why Love is supreme.

Colossians i. 21-23. Alienation ; Reconciliation ; Presentation ; Continuation.

Colossians i. 27, 28. Our Message ; our Methods ; our Motive. Many other instances of this method will be found in those invaluable volumes of Expositions by Dr. Alexander Maclaren. The only trouble is that when we have looked at one of Maclaren's felicitous and inimitable treatments, we not only wonder why we did not see it ourselves, but we find it difficult to avoid a similar treatment when we are called upon to preach from the passage. Who that has read his sermon on Luke xxii. 28 can ever forget his natural and suggestive divisions ? The Lonely Christ ; the Tempted Christ ; the Grateful Christ.

From a different point of view Dr. Joseph Parker was equally felicitous in textual preaching, and in his *People's Bible* will be found many of his fertile suggestions. It is not everybody who would be able to avoid the incongruous in taking such a text as 'Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters' (1 Chron. ii. 34), and deduce therefrom the great principle of compensations in life. In Dr. Parker's *Ad Clerum* there are many illustrations of his striking treatment. Thus on Job xiv. 10, 'Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ?' The treatment is : (1) If he is a good man, he is where he desired to be, where he is prepared to be, and where he will remain. (2) If he is a bad man, he is where he did not desire to be, but where he is prepared to be, and where he will remain. On 1 Peter v. 7, we are reminded of a traveller with three bundles or burdens : (1) Past Memories ; (2) Present Difficulties ; (3) Future Fears. All these we are to 'cast upon' the Lord. On one occasion I

heard Dr. Orr give a brief address on the subject of the rich fool (Luke xii. 16-21) who, it was said, made three mistakes. (1) He mistook his body for his soul. (2) He mistook himself for God. (3) He mistook time for eternity. It is difficult to think of any more satisfactory, suggestive, and complete treatment of this passage.

Courses of Textual Sermons are also very useful from time to time. The following may be suggested as illustrations of what is meant.

Matthew ii. 1-10. The Light. (1) Sought by the Wise Men; (2) Ignored by the Jewish Authorities; (3) Opposed by Herod; (4) Welcomed by Joseph, Mary, and the Magi.

Luke ix. 57-62. The Three Temperaments. (1) Impulsive; (2) Cautious; (3) Vacillating. Or, Bunyan-like, following the suggestions of the late G. H. C. Macgregor: (1) Mr. Too-Quick; (2) Mr. Too-Slow; (3) Mr. Too-Soft.

## II. *Expository.*

On almost every hand to-day we are urged to make our sermons more expository because our people need instruction in the Word of God, but those who proffer this advice are by no means clear as to what is meant by expository preaching. Dr. Maclaren's textual preaching is essentially expository, even though it deals with one verse only, because it is thoroughly Biblical and arises immediately out of the text. But usually by expository preaching we are intended to mean the use of some passage of Scripture to be explained verse by verse and applied to our hearers. There are serious dangers for most men in attempting anything of this kind at a time of worship, as distinct from a Bible Class, because the treatment is liable to lack unity as well as to be protracted to too great a length. If inquiry be made, it will be found that there have been very few really expository preachers in the Christian Church; expository, that is, as distinct from Biblical preachers. Spurgeon was a Biblical



preacher, so was Moody, but neither of them could be called an expository preacher. Maclaren is the nearest approach to a preacher who is at once Biblical and expository, and his expositions will be found to be the finest models of all expository preaching.

Three requirements should be emphasized in every endeavour to present to our people an exposition of any passage. (1) It should only concern the *salient* features. There are many details that must be resolutely omitted, lest we are too long, and lest we blur the definite impression. (2) It should mainly concern the *spiritual* meaning. Anything historical, or geographical, or oriental, must be kept resolutely subordinated to the supreme issue; it is a sermon, not a lecture. (3) It should always have a *searching* message. The application in an exposition should be emphasized and never omitted. If these three essentials are observed; only salient; mainly spiritual; always searching; there is no reason why many of us should not develop into capable and acceptable expository preachers.

Some examples of this kind of sermon may perhaps be offered.

Psalm xvi. The Life of the Believer. (1) Its Commencement (*vv.* 1-4). (2) Its Course (*vv.* 4-8). (3) Its Culmination (*vv.* 9-11).

Psalm xxiii. The Divine Shepherd, and Seven Reasons why 'I shall not want.' The rest of the Psalm provides the justification for the statement of *v.* 1.

Luke vii. 36-50. Simon and the Woman. (1) Simon the Sinner. (2) The Woman a Sinner. (3) Christ's Attitude to Both.

Luke xv. 11-32. The Prodigal Son. (1) The seven steps down. (2) The seven steps up.

The Prayers of St. Paul.

The Thanksgivings of St. Paul. 'Thanks be to God.'

The Doxologies of St. Paul.

### III. *Biographical.*

As there is so much of human life recorded in the Bible,



more than half of Holy Scripture being given to us in the form of history, the biographical element of preaching should not be overlooked. Its value is evident because of the living interest in other lives, and human character is so vividly and faithfully depicted in Scripture that there are few men and women recorded who do not provide counsels and warnings for the spiritual life. The larger biographies found in both Testaments are a perennial source of helpfulness, and no one can take such subjects as those of Abraham, or Jacob, or Elijah, or John the Baptist, without discovering a mine of wealth for intellect and heart. Not the least valuable point of these biographical sermons will be that we shall be enabled to introduce the experience and make direct personal applications to the lives of our people when they least expect them, and when they cannot charge us with introducing anything merely personal. No one who has tried this method with the suggestive help and guidance of such biographies as those by the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Dr. Alexander Whyte, or Dr. George Matheson, will ever fail to give biography a prominent place in his ministerial preaching and teaching.

The shorter biographies are equally valuable for this purpose. Even though very little is told us of many of the characters recorded, sufficient is very often found in a short space to indicate lines of thought and reveal developments of character. Thus the three chapters in which Nicodemus is mentioned lend themselves admirably to a sermon on the spiritual development of the 'ruler in Israel,' as (1) the Secret Inquirer, (2) the Timid Advocate, and (3) the Open Confessor. The passages connected with Barnabas can be easily and naturally grouped under five headings, giving to us so many aspects of his character and service. The same is true of the Mother of our Lord, whose spiritual life may be comprised in five definite periods.<sup>1</sup> Such a book as Dean Howson's *Companions*

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the author may venture to refer to his own little book, *Methods of Bible Study*, for further illustration of these statements.

of *St. Paul*, will provide ample material for several truly helpful sermons. The one great need in all this biographical teaching is to make the men and women live over again, to show the reality of their experiences, and to bring them out of the framework of old days into living contact with modern experiences. When this is done biography will prove one of the most attractive features of the Christian ministry.

#### IV. *Topical.*

By topical preaching is not meant preaching that deals with 'Topics of the Day,' but subjects found in Scripture associated with various texts rather than with one only. The subjects of Scripture are almost endless, but the following may be adduced as examples of this method.

St. Paul's Three Ambitions. 2 Cor. v. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 11; Rom. xv. 20 (see Greek).

The Three Burdens. Sin (Psa. lv. 22); Service (Gal. vi. 5); Sympathy (Gal. vi. 2):

Christ's Visits to Bethany. (1) As Teacher. (2) As Sympathizer. (3) As Redeemer. (4) As Lord.

'Whatsoever ye do . . . do all.' (1) 'To the glory of God' (1 Cor. x. 31); (2) 'In the Name of the Lord Jesus' (Col. iii. 17). (3) From the soul (Col. iii. 23; see Greek).

'Be of good cheer.' Five occasions on which this word (see Greek) was used by our Lord.

'All things are possible.' (1) With God. (2) To the believer.

'I have sinned.' Eight confessions of sin in these words; four real, four unreal.

'So.' (1) 'Loved' (John iii. 16); (2) 'Great salvation' (Heb. ii. 3).

'Wist not.' (1) Moses. (2) Samson.

'Thorns.' (1) Ruin (Gen. iii.); (2) Redemption (Gen. xix.); (3) Restoration (Isa. lv.).

Peter's Three Sleeps. (1) Unripe Experience (Transfiguration); (2) Unfaithful Life (Gethsemane); (3) Unquestioning Trust (Prison).

The Beatitudes. (1) Of the Psalms ; (2) of the Gospels ; (3) of the Apocalypse.

The Four Suppers. (1) Redemption (Luke xiv. 16-24) ; (2) Communion (1 Cor. xi. 23-29) ; (3) Joy (Rev. xix. 9) ; (4) Judgment (Rev. xix. 17).

Justification, in its seven aspects.

#### V. *The Secret of True Scriptural Preaching.*

For all phases of preaching two requirements are absolutely essential.

1. There must be daily Bible Study. First, the Bible alone without any outside helps. Then, and then only, with all available assistance.

2. There must be daily Bible Meditation. This means that we shall read primarily for our own life. What grips us will assuredly grip our people. These two, Study and Meditation, are the secret of perennial freshness and force.

The four varieties of sermons named above will probably cover most of the ground of an ordinary ministry. From time to time it may be found necessary to preach what may be called 'learned' sermons. At any rate it will do no harm to show the people that we are capable of discussing high and profound topics, assuming of course, we can do it. It will also widen our own and their views, and will help us to realize that there are 'more things in heaven and earth' than are dreamed of in ordinary Christian experience and philosophy. But all this must be very occasional, and will necessarily depend entirely upon circumstances and spiritual need. A man who preaches learnedly simply to air his knowledge stands self-condemned and will not fail of being 'found out.'

When we again contemplate all that is implied and involved in these varieties of sermons, we are impressed afresh with the need of constant study, careful reading, and earnest prayer. Granted these three, we shall never be at a loss for subjects ; indeed, the only trouble will be that there will be so much material left that can never be preached.

## SECTION 8. ESSENTIAL QUALITIES IN A SERMON.

Although we have discussed some of the vital requirements necessary for the preparation of the sermon, it seems imperative to consider still more fully some of those essential features of substance and form which go to make up the true sermon.

I. *Every Preacher should have a Dominant Theme.*

Our theme is a Person rather than ideas or truth in the abstract. It is a weakness of many a ministry that it concentrates attention on ideas. Dr. Dale once confessed that for years he had been thinking only of the truth he preached, and not of the people to whom he was preaching. 'Christianity is Christ,' and we must never forget this in our preaching. It was the Person of Christ Who constituted the theme of Apostolic preaching ('Whom we preach,' Col. i. 28). And it was the Person of Christ as crucified (1 Cor. ii. 2), not the Cross, but Christ crucified. And it was also Christ as Lord (2 Cor. iv. 5). This great truth is found exemplified in all the earliest preaching. While there are various relationships between Christ and the soul, it is always the Person of Christ, whatever may be the relationship. Philip preached Christ (Acts viii. 5) and Jesus (Acts viii. 35). The disciples ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts v. 42), and Paul preached Jesus as the Messiah (Acts xvii. 3). All doctrines and duties are to be linked to Him. It is only thus that a sermon becomes living, personal, and not merely intellectual and abstract. Truth is always to be associated with Christ; 'Truth as in Jesus.' And our ethics must always be associated with His love, His grace, His spirit. It is only in the presence and power of Christ that our sermons and addresses, however orthodox, will kindle spiritual fire in the soul. In those fine articles in the *British Weekly*, to which reference has already been made, in which Ian Maclaren reviewed his ministry shortly

after his resignation of his Liverpool church, we read the following :—

‘I now clearly see every sentence should suggest Christ, and every sermon, even though His Name had not been mentioned nor His words quoted, should leave the hearer at the feet of Christ. In Christ there is an irresistible charm ; without Him the sermon may have beauty, it will not have fragrance. With Christ every one is satisfied, although men may differ widely about Christian creeds and Christian customs. After Him every human soul is feeling, and in Him alone all human souls meet. . . As it now appears to me, the chief effort of every sermon should be to unveil Christ, and the chief art of the preacher to conceal himself.’

It is recorded of a congregation which had an earnest, able, but very learned preacher, that while valuing his teaching they longed for a more definite presentment of the Person of our Lord. One Sunday morning when the preacher reached the pulpit he saw on the bookboard a small piece of paper with these words : ‘Sir, we would see Jesus.’ The good man realized what it meant, took the hint, and proclaimed the Lord Jesus in all His fulness. The effect on the congregation was immediate and great, and before very long the preacher found another piece of paper on the pulpit bookboard with these words : ‘Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.’ Since then more than one pulpit has had attached to its bookboard or lectern the words, ‘Sir, we would see Jesus,’ and I know from personal experience that the suggestion has been passed on to quite a number of places as indicative of the supreme aim of the preacher in every sermon.<sup>1</sup>

## II. *Every Preacher should have a Clear Message.*

By this is meant a portion of Divine truth, selected, prepared, and delivered under the guidance and in the power of the Holy Spirit, and adapted to present needs. Unless there is some definite truth from God for those to whom we speak, the sermon will fail of its distinctive

<sup>1</sup> See also the article by Dr. Denney on ‘Preaching Christ’ in Hastings’ *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*.



purpose. A story is related of a Scottish minister who was given to weeping during the delivery of his sermons. A visitor had been a worshipper in his church on one occasion, and observing the minister crying, inquired of a member of the congregation the cause of the tears. The whispered reply was, 'If ye was standin' up there and had as little to say as he has, ye wid greet yersel'. The message must be clear first of all in the preacher's mind, and then clearly expressed on the preacher's lips. Otherwise it will never be clear to the hearers.

### III. *Every Preacher should have a Definite Aim.*

Knowledge is not an end but only a means in preaching. Herein lies the difference between the essay and the sermon. We have to convince the intellect, to stir the heart, to quicken the conscience, and to move the will. Matthew Arnold's well known phrase, 'Light and leading,' aptly expresses what sermons ought to be. Sermons are intended to lead as well as to illuminate. Cicero said that the be-all and end-all of eloquence is *actio*.

What then is our aim in sermon work? It has always one or more of these three ends. (1) Salvation; personal and present; (2) Sanctification; full and constant; (3) Service; hearty and devoted. Under these three aspects of Christian teaching, perhaps the aim of every sermon can be put. They should be ever in view, and we must never rest content in ideas, however interesting, true, or important. It is recorded of a French doctor that he performed a certain surgical operation a great many times, while an English doctor had only performed it on eight occasions. The Frenchman was asked how many lives he had saved. He replied, 'None, but then the operation was so brilliant.' The Englishman saved seven out of the eight. All the brilliance of our sermons will count for nothing unless we are enabled to 'save some.' A Briton and a Boer went out shooting deer for food. The Briton took a case of cartridges with him, the Boer only took one. 'Why,' asked the Briton, 'do you only



take one cartridge ?' 'Because,' was the reply, 'I only want one deer.'

It is this definiteness of aim which gives point to such phrases as 'a word in season' (Isa. 1. 4); 'food in due season' (Luke xii. 42); 'present truth' (2 Peter i. 12). In an article which appeared in the *Sunday School Chronicle* some time ago, the following words seemed to go to the heart of the problem :—

'An ignorant man may draw great draughts of spiritual strength from the higher life, when a more mentally alert man may be spiritually meagre and barren. Why? Because the mind, wholly absorbed in its ideas, is not tuned to the Infinite. The freer and humbler soul expects to meet the Saviour, is conscious of His nearness, speaks as in His presence. It is not the full mind is any hindrance; far from that. It is the mind averted from Christ, or the mind wholly occupied in its own processes, that fails to bless.'

One point in particular may perhaps receive special notice. It has been said that there are few lives into which some shadows or sorrows have not come, and that for this reason the message of comfort, which means in the true sense of that old word, an inspiration to strength, courage, and consolation, should not be often away from our messages. To quote Ian Maclaren again :—

'The review of the past has convinced me that while preaching has various ends, the chief ought to be comfort. It is useful in its way to explain the construction of the Book of Isaiah, and to give the history of Hebrew literature, but it is better to minister the consolation of Isaiah's fifty-third chapter to the weary heart. . . . The critical movement has not only affected students in their studies, but also preachers in their pulpits; and while I have ever pled for full liberty in criticism, and have used that liberty myself, I am free to acknowledge that I would have done more good if I had been less critical and more evangelical. And by evangelical I mean more heartening and more comforting. People are interested in an expository discourse; they are lifted by a consolatory discourse. Life we may take for granted is hard enough for every hearer, and every man is carrying his own burden. . . . My conclusions on this point are (and I offer them with confidence to younger men) that the people appreciate literature in your style but do not desire literature for your subject, and that while they do not undervalue information on the

Bible, they are ten thousand times more grateful for the inspiration of the Book, and that our preaching should be more according to the words of Isaiah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem."

#### IV. *Every Preacher should occupy a Right Attitude.*

It is very helpful to observe the various names given to the preacher in the New Testament. He is a 'herald' (1 Tim ii. 7); an 'ambassador' (2 Cor. v. 20); an 'evangelist' (2 Tim iv. 5); a 'witness' (Acts i. 8); a 'teacher' (1 Tim ii. 7); a 'prophet' (Eph. iv. 11); and an 'encourager' (παρακαλέω, 2 Cor vi. 1). When the Apostle uses the words, 'we beseech you,' we readily enter into his spirit as he endeavoured to present his Master to others. He also uses three words in 1 Corinthians xiv. 3 which need careful study by all preachers: Edification, Consolation, Exhortation, thereby appealing respectively to the feeling, the intellect, and the will. When we gather together the aspects of truth underlying all these titles of the preacher, we realize that he should be a man of conviction, a man of sincerity, a man of sympathy, and a man of authority.

#### V. *Every Preacher should employ True Methods.*

Here again the New Testament will be our best and safest guide. When we study 'the preaching of the blessed Apostle Paul,' we cannot fail to notice the various words that he uses in connexion with his message. Thus we read of him as follows: 'Opening and alleging that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer, and to be raised from the dead, and that this Jesus is the Messiah, Whom I proclaim to you.' 'Opening,' 'alleging,' 'proclaiming.' He expounded the Scriptures, he placed the truth carefully before them, and proclaimed the Person of his Master as the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. In his work at Corinth another word is used. 'He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks (Acts xviii. 4). 'Reasoning,' 'persuad-

ng.' Thus he appealed to mind, heart, and will. In Rome, we are told that he preached the kingdom of God, and taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness (Acts xxviii. 31). 'Heralding,' 'teaching.' Here are the two aspects of the preacher's work; announcing his Master 'to them that are without,' and instructing believers in Christ. At Colosse we learn yet another method of the Apostle, for we read of him 'admonishing and teaching every man in all wisdom' (Col. i. 28). The admonition was for warning and the teaching was for instruction; the two sides of Christian teaching. The minister must be Salt and Light.

But the finest method of all is that of the Perfect Teacher, as illustrated for us in His dealings with the Woman of Samaria. That chapter should be pondered again and again by every Christian preacher who desires to know the deepest secrets winning the soul for Christ. We observe that our Lord took four steps towards the possession of that life. (1) He first attracted her *heart* by asking for a draught of water, and thereby predisposing her to listen without prejudice to anything else He might have to say. (2) He then arrested her *mind* by giving her food for thought as to the living water and the difference between that and the water in the well. (3) When the woman's interest was aroused, and her desire stirred to ask for the living water, our Lord made His searching appeal to her *conscience* by telling her to go and call her husband. When the woman fenced with this awkward and unwelcome inquiry, and endeavoured to divert attention to a religious custom on the merits of Jerusalem and Samaria, our Lord kept her to the point and insisted on the necessity of spiritual reality and no mere locality in worship. (4) Then at length when the poor soul was broken down, unable to make any further resistance, our Lord assured her *soul* by the present and personal revelation of Himself as the Messiah. The very truth that was hidden from the Jews and refused by our Lord to them, was given gladly to this weary, convicted sinner, who so badly needed Him and His grace. Heart, mind, conscience, soul; to these

four elements of human nature every sermon should make an appeal. Probably the subject will from time to time lead to more stress being laid on one or other of the elements, but not one of them must be out of sight in any sermon that can be called really Christian.

The real difficulty will be found in regard to preaching to the conscience. It is not difficult for a preacher to win attention and sympathy; nor is it very hard to provide food for thought and set the mind to work; but the great problem will be to press home the truth upon the conscience, and to prevent the sinner from shielding himself from Divine conviction by any side issue such as the woman attempted. While Nathan was telling David that exquisite story about the rich man and the poor man we can see how the deepest sympathy of the King was stirred, but it was when the dagger went home, 'Thou art the man,' that his conscience was touched, and all else that the prophet desired was realized. So, in our preaching, we must drive home the truth to the conscience, for it is only as the conscience is wakened and convicted that men will feel their need of a present salvation, a present Saviour, and will be ready for the message of a personal Christ by which our sermons, as we have seen, must always be marked.

It is not to be supposed that these five qualities—a dominant theme, a clear message, a definite aim, a right attitude, a true method—exhaust all the essential features of a sermon, but at any rate it may be fairly said that, given these requirements, God's blessing cannot fail to follow the word preached.

## SECTION 9. DELIVERY.

The intellectual and spiritual preparation of the sermon, though very important, is not everything, for the finest material will fail unless it is properly delivered. Public speech is intended to be effective, which means that it must effect something as a means to an end. What then

are the elements necessary for the effective delivery of a well-prepared sermon ?

1. The Spirit of the delivery needs attention, first of all. It goes without saying that the speaker should be in earnest, for without this all else counts for nothing. He should also be fearless. Nothing mars a sermon so much as a hesitating or nervous delivery, as though the preacher was not at all sure of the truth of his own words. All the great prophets of the ages have been men of courage, and they never feared the face of man as they declared the message of God.

'Oh ! a glorious gift is prudence,  
And they are useful friends  
Who never make beginnings  
But where they see the ends.  
But give us now and then a man,  
That we may crown him king,  
Who just will scorn the consequence,  
And just will do the thing.'

But the fearlessness must be blended with tenderness. However courageous a man may be, his fearlessness alone may suggest severity and a disregard of the feelings of his audience. He must blend tenderness with his courage if he is to be an effective speaker. Then with earnestness, clearness, fearlessness, and tenderness, happily harmonized and blended, he must pour over it all a spirit of trustfulness. His message is not his own but his Master's, and he must so deliver it as to feel and let other people feel that he looks to God for the blessing and the power.

2. The Manner of the delivery comes next, and it will be in the manner that the spirit is very largely expressed. The following elements seem essential to all true speaking :—

- (a) The preacher must be humble and not self-assertive.
- (b) He must be bright and yet not light.
- (c) He must be winsome without undue expression of feeling, or overflow of emotion. Any such excess of feeling is apt to be attributed to what, for want of better words, may be described as 'gush' or 'oiliness.'



(d) He must be reverent, as befitting his theme.

(e) He must be natural in gesture. Everything about his movements should be seen to be spontaneous and free, not studied and artificial.

3. The Voice calls for special attention.

(a) The utterance should of course be distinct ; enunciation good, with vowels and consonants properly pronounced. The old rule cannot be too often emphasized : ' Use your lips and spare your throat.'

(b) The expression should be correct. While it may be inevitable that the preacher should have certain indications of the locality from which he comes in the accent that he puts upon words, yet his speech should be free from all vulgarisms.

(c) The pitch of the preacher's voice should be varied, and he should take especial care not to be too loud to be heard. If Milton can speak of that which is ' dark with excess of light,' it is only too possible for a man to speak so loudly that he cannot possibly be heard by his audience.

(d) The tone should of course be sympathetic, possessing and expressing a personal quality without which all the orthodox doctrine and all the literary grace will count for very little.

4. The Method of delivery is one that admits of more difference of opinion. Shall we read, or shall we speak ? If the sermon is read, the manuscript ought to be thoroughly known, so that the preacher may be as free from it as possible. To this end it should be clearly written, so that there may be no hesitation in the course of reading. If the sermon is spoken rather than read, the manuscript should first of all be analysed into notes which can be placed in the preacher's Bible, or else he should dispense with notes altogether, which he will find far the better plan. The one thing to be avoided is *memoriter* preaching, unless it be felt necessary to memorize the beginning and the ending. This method of preaching will prove burdensome to those who adopt it, and will almost certainly tend to artificiality and lifelessness, for the man will be constantly thinking of what is coming next, and be attending

to his memory rather than to his message and his people. Great preachers, like Chalmers, have read their sermons, but most of the outstanding preachers favour the spoken utterance. The value of the written sermon lies in the clearness of thought, the precision of language, the balance of treatment thus afforded, together with the permanent use that can be made of the manuscript. And yet, however well a man may read his sermon, he cannot be so sensitive to the needs of the congregation, and his delivery will be hindered to some extent. Canon Liddon's method in St. Paul's was the perfection of reading, and yet hearers could not help being conscious that the sermon was being read. The advantage of the spoken sermon is that it gives ease and vigour of style, affords an opportunity of the expression of the personal element, and leaves the whole man free to bring himself and his message to bear upon the people. And the disadvantages are that it tends to diffuseness, to occasional superficiality, to inaccuracy of speech and to disproportion of treatment. The true way seems to be to write the sermon in full, as though it were to be read, and then to analyse it and preach either with or without notes. This method combines the advantages of both methods with a minimum of the disadvantages. But whatever may be the method adopted we must take care that our sermons are written in the style of speech and not of essays, and that they are the entire personality of the preacher. For those who think that preaching without notes is an utter impossibility, the careful study of Dr. R. S. Storr's *Preaching without Notes* may be warmly commended, while a similar work dealing almost entirely with extemporaneous preaching is *The Use of the Eyes in Preaching*, by Neville.

5. The Aim of the sermon should be kept in view all through the delivery. The preacher has a definite object and it should never be overlooked. As we have seen when considering the preparation, he is concerned not only for the presentation of truth, but for its acceptance and practical use. In the course of delivery this aim should be

constantly before us. Archdeacon (now Bishop) Crossley once propounded a conundrum at a Diocesan Conference in Melbourne: 'Why is a parson like a camel?' He gave the answer: 'Because he can go on and on and never know how dry he is.'

6. The Rules of delivery are few but important. They may be summed up by saying that all speech should be in the key of 'B natural.' The speaker should be himself and his best self. There is much to be said for the old familiar advice; 'Begin low, go slow, rise higher, take fire, wax warm, sit down in a storm.' At any rate there is sufficient truth in the suggestions to enable us to see what is required. Some years ago the Dean of Canterbury, in presiding at a meeting where the speakers were limited to ten minutes each, gave them three pieces of advice which he had read in a German periodical. He first read the German and then gave his audience the terse, colloquial English rendering: 'Stand up; Speak up; Shut up.' Mr. W. T. Stead offered some practical counsel to public speakers a little while ago which is well worth while passing on:—

'1. Never speak without having something to say. 2. Always sit down when you have said it. 3. Remember speech is dumb show when it is not audible. 4. Think definitely, pronounce clearly, stand naturally, and do not speak too fast. 5. Welcome articulate interruption, no matter how hostile. 6. Two things should never be lost—your temper and the thread of your discourse. 7. Remember that the eyes are as eloquent as the tongue. 8. Never hesitate to let yourself go, at the right time. 9. Never read your speech, but always have heads of discourse handy. And never forget Cardinal Manning's words of wisdom to myself: "Be full of your subject and forget yourself."'

Sir Squire Bancroft, in the paper at the Church Congress in 1907, to which reference has already been made, asked the pertinent question why most of the sermons to which he had listened had been forgotten? He attributed it to the bad delivery, because while the theology and erudition were all that was desirable, the men who spoke were so devoid of the art of public speaking as to leave their

words wasted and worthless. The first duty of a preacher, he urged, is to make himself heard, and the second to be impressive and convincing. And he actually advocated the rule that every Curate should pass an examination before being allowed to mount a pulpit, because 'a bad preacher will empty a Church more quickly than a good preacher will fill one.'

It may perhaps be thought that in giving expression to these suggestions about delivery, they are more suited to the platform than to the pulpit, and also that too high a standard is being set for ordinary speaking, but the subject is so important that it seems essential to emphasize its value in every possible way. Without any desire to discourage any earnest worker, but on the contrary with every desire to be of service, we are confident that granted personal sincerity, genuine character, and conscientious work in preparation, very much can be accomplished in the matter of delivery, by imitating the highest models, and by a quiet, steady, resolute observance of the various principles and methods which govern acceptable speech.

#### SECTION 10. SERMONS TO DIFFERENT SECTIONS.

While the main principles of preaching apply to all sermons, it is useful, if not essential, that a preacher should study as carefully as possible the art of 'putting things' before particular classes and sections of his congregation. A few illustrations may indicate what is meant.

##### I. *Sermons to Children.*

This is a kind of work which is well worth cultivating, however great the trouble. What should be the characteristics of a sermon to children?

1. It should be short. Fifteen minutes will be quite long enough.

2. It should be straight. The lessons should be definite and not too numerous. Perhaps two points will be ample, though one carefully stated and elaborated might be found better.

3. It should be simple. By this is to be understood that it is child-like, not childish. Language for children must

necessarily be simple, or else it will fail of its purpose. We once heard a speaker warning children of from nine to twelve against 'compromising their position.' A preacher once asked a number of children to tell him the meaning of the word 'analysis.' Silence reigned supreme after the question was asked, and the preacher was compelled to give the answer himself. He said that analysis was 'synonymous with synopsis.' On another occasion, at a large Children's Service, the preacher beamed upon his young flock and said benignly that the scene before him was 'one of unparalleled sublimity.' It was soon one of unparalleled restlessness. And at yet another children's gathering the clergyman, in appealing for gifts to send Bibles to children in India, told the boys and girls that of course the Bibles would be in the 'vernacular.' It was a pity he did not himself use the 'vernacular' on that occasion.

4 It should be illustrated. The illustrations or anecdotes used for children need the greatest possible care.

(a) They should be true, or else parabolic. Preachers must beware of using any anecdote about which they are at all uncertain. Moral honesty is absolutely required on this point.

(b) The illustrations should be *ad rem*, or else they will fail of their purpose.

(c) They should not be overloaded with detail or else their object will be lost.

(d) The moral should not always be kept to the end, but either introduced elsewhere, or perhaps left to the application of the children. It is a well-known fact that children are only too quick to see the application of what is being told them. Some years ago a well-known Scottish preacher was addressing a large gathering of boys in Glasgow, and after telling them an interesting story, he said, 'Now boys, the moral of this is,' when a young ragamuffin cried out, 'Never mind the moral, sir, gie us another story.'

Object Lessons are a source of perennial interest to children. A lead pencil, a house, a penny, are but a few



out of many such objects that can be utilized to convey spiritual truths. At the same time it will need a fair amount of masculine common sense to avoid a misuse of objects for moralizing purposes.

Preachers to children cannot do better than study the sermons and addresses of those who have been specially used of God in this work. Perhaps to this day there are no volumes to compare with those books of sermons well known thirty years ago, by Dr. Richard Newton of Philadelphia. Some of us were almost brought up on such admirable books as *Rills from the Fountain of Life*, *Bible Jewels*, and many others which are full of fine illustrations and admirable methods. Of more recent sermons, the volumes by various authors in the series known as 'The Golden Nail Series' will be found very suggestive, and any volumes by the Rev. James Learmouth should be noted by speakers to children. Another volume worthy of consideration is *Little Sermons to Children*, by the Rev. R. C. Gillie. From these and other similar volumes every earnest true-hearted preacher who desires to work among children will be enabled to learn 'how to do it.'

## II. *Sermons to Men.*

This is a day of special services and classes for men, and there are few clergymen who do not desire to be of service to the men of their flock. My honoured friend, the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, in arguing for the fundamental importance of work among men rather than among children has a great deal to say for himself and his position, for most assuredly if we can lay hold of the men we go far to lay hold of their children at the same time. It is only possible in our space to make a few simple suggestions on this subject, and we must refer our readers to books that deal specially with the subject. Preachers should not think that Men's Meetings always need to be addressed on the subjects of Gambling, Intemperance, and Purity. While these subjects are important and essential there are many other topics of equal importance and definite

bearing for the manhood of our land. For a long time it was my happy privilege to conduct a weekly men's service in a London parish, and there were very few Biblical subjects which could not be adapted and applied to men. We should not shrink from teaching as well as preaching, and personal appeal. Men need instruction as well as inspiration and invitation, and if the same men are in the habit of coming to a meeting week by week the need of teaching is all the more imperative. They will value it and will rejoice in the opportunity of hearing modern topics and Biblical truths put in such a way as to appeal to their intelligence.

Three characteristics seem to be required in all addresses to men: (1) Thought; we must give the men something to think about. (2) Sympathy; we must express our thought in terms of brotherly sympathy. (3) Directness; and we must make a definite appeal to the men to accept our thought and to live it day by day. Above all, our addresses to men should invariably be concerned with the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour and a Master as well as a Teacher and an Example. It is all very interesting and useful to speak of the 'Ideal Man,' and to preach the Christian ethic, but men also need the Christian dynamic, and this is only possible as they receive into their heart and life a personal Saviour, a personal Friend, and a personal Lord. As a preacher to young men, few excelled the late Dr. Thain Davidson of Islington, afterwards of Ealing, and his volumes of sermons, which are still available, are admirable models of how to preach to young men. For actual work amongst men, especially in Men's Services, nothing could be better than *Fishers of Men*, by the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, and *Bible Class Work and Warfare*, by the Rev. Frank Swainson. Once again, let it be said that work for men only will be found among the most fruitful methods of genuine service in any parish.

### III. *Sermons to Boys.*

In some respects this is perhaps the hardest of all

preaching, because it is so difficult to define and express what precise religious experience ought to be expected from boys. We are so apt to read back into our boyhood the spiritual experiences of maturer age, that we find it almost impossible to set due limits on what is to be regarded as the religion of boyhood. One thing is perfectly certain in all preaching to boys: we must be manly. While we are good, we must not be 'goody-goody.' Here again, it is essential to make a personal and present Christ a reality to boys, and in particular to emphasize Divine grace as a present power. Some years ago the Head Master of Eton, the Hon. and Rev. Edward Lyttelton, called attention to this important feature in all work among boys. We are too apt to preach an ideal which they are to realize in the future when they become men, and the result of this is that we are only too apt to lose them during that terribly difficult period from thirteen to seventeen, when boys as well as girls are 'where the brook and river meet.' The only way to overcome this difficulty is to lay the greatest possible stress upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the present Saviour of boyhood, and the gift of the Holy Spirit as the present and momentary secret of victory over sin, and holiness of heart and life. Mr. Arthur C. Benson has some fine suggestions in his *Upton Letters on Preaching to Boys*. He pleads for homeliness, simplicity, directness, shrewdness, and incisiveness. He thinks that holiness, saintliness, and piety are virtues which are foreign to the character of boys, and the ideas often imply sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy. There is sufficient truth in this to make us very careful about our ideal and our actual holiness which we present to boys. Mr. Benson is only too correct when he deprecates for boys what he calls 'feminine religion; a religion of sainted choir boys and exemplary death-beds.' All these dangers can be avoided if Christ is a living reality to the preacher, and if the preacher is able to recommend his Master by that godliness and manliness which finds expression in that highest of all Bible descriptions, 'a man of God.'

IV. *Mothers' Meetings.*

Addresses to Mothers will almost inevitably fall to the lot of even the most junior Curate, for he will be asked to speak from time to time at the weekly Mothers' Meeting, which is an essential feature in every well organized parish. What is the poor young fellow to do, especially if he has never had the faintest experience of talking to working women, or even of knowing anything about the life of the working classes? He will be well advised if he limits his addresses for a long time to come to subjects directly connected with the Gospel. He must not dream of lecturing the women present on matters of household hygiene, and he should avoid in every possible way any advice on the bringing up of their children. A young unmarried preacher dealt on one occasion in the course of a sermon on the training of children in the home. He was full of counsel, eloquently expressed. A few days afterward he met a lady who heard the sermon, and she expressed her pleasure at his method of treating the subject; adding, 'I should like to see your nursery.' 'My dear madam,' replied the preacher, 'I am not married.' 'I thought not,' said the lady. We must neither lecture, nor hector the women who come to Mothers' Meetings, for it is not our place and province, and we shall inevitably do harm rather than good if we attempt it. One thing will always be welcome and admits of universal application. Our addresses at Mothers' Meetings should not fail to contain the note of comfort in them. The joylessness and monotony of life among the poor, especially among poor women, should not be forgotten. We have only to try to realize something of the day's life of a working woman, with husband going to work and coming back at regular times, with children going to and from school and requiring attention, to enable us to see that if we can introduce into their lives a little of the brightness of the glad tidings of the Gospel we shall be doing a very real work for Christ.

V. *Evidential Sermons.*

This class of sermon will of necessity be only occasionally preached. It appeals to very few, and many of the congregation will probably prefer not to have doubts and difficulties brought before them. Christian evidence work is usually best done in connexion with Bible and other similar classes, but from time to time evidential sermons in Church will be of use, if only to show that the preacher is in touch with the times and is not afraid of difficulties. When there is any special outbreak of scepticism, and men are talking on every side about particular books or pamphlets, it is imperative that the preacher should let it be known that he too is considering these problems and is not averse from dealing with them. He must of course be sure of his ground and know his subject thoroughly. It will be fatal if a man endeavour to discuss evidential problems without having given them the attention that they deserve and demand. He must also be sure that he is putting the case with clearness, lest people should get an entirely wrong impression of the aim and purpose of his sermon. There is something much more than mere sarcasm in the remark attributed to the verger of a University Church who had heard all the sermons of the last forty years and thanked God that he was still a Christian. Preachers of evidential sermons must show that they are sympathetic with what is really 'honest doubt.' There are obvious difficulties in life, problems that are insoluble, and unless the preacher is prepared to show sympathy with these questions it would be in every way better for him to leave evidential work alone. If, on the other hand, he knows sufficient of his own heart and mind to enter kindly into the difficulties of other men, the fact that he preaches on these subjects will draw men to him and enable them to count him as their friend. The supreme need in every evidential sermon is to link on the subject to personal contact with the living Christ. Discussions of Christian evidences are only too apt to be merely intellectual and abstract, and



while the preacher may obtain an intellectual and logical victory and convince the minds of his hearers, he may fail to lead them on to the acceptance of Christ as their Saviour. Christian evidences in the fullest sense of the term are never purely intellectual, and moral and spiritual experience must always be regarded as one of the prime factors of the Christian religion. When, therefore, we feel led to preach on any subject of apologetics, let us beyond all else associate our theme with a personal acceptance of, and adhesion to, the Lord Jesus Christ.

## VI. *Pastoral Sermons.*

This aspect of preaching will necessarily form a prominent part of the work of the settled pastorate. The ministry to believers occupies an important place in the New Testament, because of the purpose of God for the life of every Christian. The ascended Lord is said to have bestowed the gifts of ministry for a very specific purpose, and when we read that purpose in the Greek we see the pre-eminent importance of a pastoral ministry, 'for the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministering, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.' That is to say, ministerial gifts are intended to 'perfect' or 'adjust' the saints, that they in turn may do the work of ministering, and thereby help forward the upbuilding of the Church, the Body of Christ. It will therefore always be an essential part of ministerial preaching, so to teach and train Christians that they may become evangelists and workers for Christ. The New Testament lays the greatest possible stress on 'edification.' Everything in the Christian Church, Scripture, worship, sacraments, and work, is intended in some way or other to promote 'edification.' There is literally nothing provided for in the Christian Church that is not intended to subserve this very definite purpose. The Christian minister must therefore keep this aim ever in view. He must preach the living Christ in all His fulness as a doctrine and as an experience. He must emphasize labour for Christ, and show that in the

New Testament every communicant was a worker, and every worker a communicant. And thus by 'feeding the flock' he will accomplish far more than he can ever dream of doing by his own unaided efforts, because the Christians themselves will go forth, some in this way, some in that, to do work for God that will both win men for Christ and build up the members of His Body.

#### VII. *Evangelistic Sermons.*

Although these have been kept to the last for fuller consideration, they are by no means least in importance, and it is probably true to say that evangelistic sermons are never more required than in the settled ministry of an ordinary pastorate. During the last few years it would seem as though God has been teaching His people to depend less and less upon special Mission Services, and to make more and more of the ordinary ministry for the purpose of evangelization. While it is possibly too much to say that every minister should be his own evangelist, since spiritual gifts are diverse and distinct in the New Testament, there is sufficient truth in the statement to lead every clergyman to ask himself how far he has endeavoured not only to build up the Body of Christ, but to 'do the work of an evangelist.' Some time ago a friend told me that he had been for nearly a year in regular attendance at an Evangelical Church where the preaching to Christians was everything that could be desired, spiritual, strong, fresh, and Biblical; and yet during the whole of that period he had never once heard a sermon to the unconverted, or any appeal to the hearers to accept Christ. And yet there must be in every congregation a large number of people who have never yet really accepted Christ for themselves. They have been brought up as regular Church-goers, they are interested in Christian truth, and all the while they may be without a personal share in spiritual blessings. It is for such as these that evangelistic sermons should from time to time be attempted. What are some of the elements of ordinary evangelistic work?

1. A clergyman should not fail to teach what our forefathers called the three Rs : Ruin by the Fall ; Redemption by the Blood ; Regeneration by the Spirit. If these notes are lacking in our preaching we shall never be evangelists.

2. We must not hesitate to divide our people into two classes : the Saved and the Unsaved. It is not for us to go beyond this and differentiate, but we must insist upon the fact that in every congregation these two classes are represented, and, as such, are known to God.

3. We must take care to offer Christ for present acceptance. It is unwise, and may easily be dangerous, to advise people to 'go home and think about it.' Moody once did this in Chicago, and that very night the great fire burst out. The people never had the opportunity of coming back to hear him the next Sunday, and he himself said that from that time forward he never advised people to go home and think about it. We must press Christ upon our hearers for present acceptance.

4. From time to time when we are contemplating evangelistic sermons it will be found particularly useful to have the offertory before the sermon, for there is nothing more distracting at the close of an earnest appeal than the work of collecting the offertory.

5. For the same reason it will be found useful to omit the Ascription and to close direct with prayer and without a hymn. This is often impressive, and prevents the influence of the closing words of the sermon from being dissipated.

6. Whenever we feel led to have after-meetings we must beware of any stereotyped plan. Let us trust the Holy Spirit more than we do sometimes, and let us believe more firmly in the power of the Spirit to bless and use the Word preached. Variety of method in the conduct of after-meetings is essential.

(a) Sometimes while people are on their knees we may give them the opportunity for silently surrendering to Christ, and then after a moment or two of silence close the meeting.

(b) We may lead them verbally and audibly in prayer,

as appropriate to our theme ; and then after a moment's pause bring the gathering to a conclusion.

(c) Sometimes, though perhaps very occasionally, we may give an invitation to people to stand, or to raise the right arm as an indication of their wish and willingness to accept Christ. But this method, as it is the most common, is perhaps the least trustworthy, because the people who ought to stand often do not do so.

(d) I have personally found one method of great value as a change. It is the suggestion that the people should take with the preacher the following steps, on each of which a few words of comment and appeal, as they are kneeling, should be made. (1) I must ; (2) I can ; (3) I may ; (4) I will ; (5) I do. This may be varied by the use of the hymn, ' Jesus, I will trust Thee,' though taking the verses in a somewhat different order, and if the hymn should be sung verse by verse, kneeling, it would be particularly valuable to make the proper emphasis by suggesting an inversion in the singing : ' Jesus, Thee I will trust ' ; ' Jesus, Thee I may trust,' etc.

These are but bare suggestions, such as can alone be included in our present space. But they may serve to show the supreme importance of these phases of ministerial work. Dr. A. T. Pierson's admirable book, *Evangelistic Work*, should be pondered by all who wish to ' do the work of an evangelist.' And some words which were uttered not long ago deserve to be written in letters of gold over every preacher's desk : ' Preaching which is not evangelistic will soon cease to be evangelical.'

## SECTION 11. MATERIALS FOR SERMONS.

It has become proverbial that we cannot make bricks without straw, and all the foregoing references to preparation and delivery have necessarily presupposed the provision, possession and use of adequate materials for the work of the pulpit. It is to the acquisition and preservation of these materials that we must now address ourselves.

## I. *Materials Gathered.*

What are the main channels through which a clergyman may fairly expect to obtain the necessary materials for use in sermons ?

1. First, and most important of all, must come his own study of the Bible. Nothing can make up for this, whether we think of intellectual consistency or spiritual force. Dr. Maclaren once told a gathering that he owed everything to his study day by day of a chapter in the Hebrew and a chapter in the Greek. No ministerial life can ever be satisfactory, and no ministerial work will ever be properly performed unless there is this constant, definite, first-hand, thorough study of the Bible. Our methods of study will vary from time to time, but it will prove useful to have some system and order year by year. If, for instance, on our return from our summer holiday we determine to take up some book of the Bible, whether Old or New Testament, and give it all the attention in our power, we shall soon find how it will enrich our mind, widen our outlook, and stimulate our spiritual life. The greatest and most acceptable preachers of all ages have been men who through personal study have become 'mighty in the Scriptures.'

2. A study of the best Commentaries will prove fruitful in connexion with sermons. One of these should always be on hand. Emphasis is laid on the 'best,' which means those that help us to understand most thoroughly the text of our Bible. Who that has worked through a volume of Lightfoot, or Westcott, or Plummer, or Swete, or Armitage Robinson, or Vaughan, or Ellicott, will ever feel other than profoundly thankful for the ripe scholarship and deep experience which enable the student to see the force of word, and tense, and phrase, and to get at the very heart of the Divine meaning ? Any one of these Commentaries, with their minute, accurate exegesis, is an education to a clergyman.

3. The best books of theology should also receive attention. As a rule, dogmatic theology is thought to be



uncommonly dry, uninteresting, and abstract, but this cannot be said of some of our modern works on the subject. It is impossible to do more than mention a few by way of illustration, but it would be possible to feel deeply sorry for the man who found no interest in Denney's *Death of Christ*, and *Studies in Theology* ; Dale's *Christian Doctrine* ; Liddon's *Divinity of our Lord* ; W. N. Clarke's *Outlines of Christian Theology* ; W. A. Brown's *Christian Theology in Outline* ; and not least, Litton's two great works, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, and *The Church of Christ*. Such books as these will put iron into our convictions as well as give freshness to our theological outlook. We are not to be supposed to endorse everything that may be found in these books. They are only mentioned as illustrations of what can be read and should be read by every clergyman.

4. The best books of devotion will occupy an important part in our ministerial life. Sermons, as we have seen, can never be wholly intellectual. 'It is the heart that makes the theologian,' and it is the heart that will make the preacher. By 'best' in relation to devotion, we mean books that will suggest thought as well as stimulate to meditation. It is a great mistake to think there is any incompatibility between earnest thought and earnest devotion. Books like those of the late Dr. George Matheson will show what is meant. We shall probably find ourselves disagreeing with Matheson's interpretations again and again, but they compel us to think, and this is a great virtue in any book. An author of an equally helpful kind, and always true to the cardinal points of New Testament teaching, is the Rev. W. M. Clow, whose *The Cross in Christian Experience*, *The Secret of the Lord*, and *The Day of the Cross*, will rejoice and inspire the heart of every one who reads them.

5. The best volumes of sermons must not be overlooked. Of course there is danger here, especially if a man has an assimilative mind and a retentive memory, but he must resist the temptation to incorporate unduly, because of the absolute necessity of studying the finest possible

models of sermon work. For this, I put Alexander Maclaren high above every one else, past and present. For a combination of gifts ; exegetical insight, homiletical power, spiritual insight, illustrative fertility, and literary grace, I do not know of any preacher to equal him. Not far short of Maclaren is Dr. J. H. Jowett, of New York, any of whose volumes will be found abundantly helpful to preachers. From another point of view, the volumes by Dr. W. L. Watkinson will be found truly helpful for their suggestive thought, their acute analysis, and above all for their wealth of apt illustration. I took the trouble once to make an index of all the illustrations in one of Dr. Watkinson's books, and was astonished to find how much space was needed for it. Dr. Joseph Parker and Bishop Phillips Brooks will also prove a mine of wealth to the preacher, nor will it be time wasted to give attention to some of the more important of the Puritans, like Howe, Owen, and Goodwin. Even though their style may be regarded as heavy, their insight into Divine truth and their marvellous facility for homiletic analysis cannot help being of value to a preacher. Dr. Alexander Whyte is never tired of speaking of Thomas Goodwin as still our greatest commentator on St. Paul. Volumes of sermons by English Churchmen, though helpful to read, are not as a rule so useful in providing materials of expository and homiletic suggestion. But of course every man will naturally favour this or that preacher, according to his own mental and spiritual temperament. The names now mentioned are simply offered as the testimony of one who has found their work abundantly helpful to mind and heart.

6. Books of sermon outlines will, if studied, have to be used with the greatest possible care. It is always valuable to see how another man treats his subject, but intellectual honesty must be kept constantly in view, or else we shall have to preface some of our sermons, or some of our sermon outlines with : 'Alas ! Master, for it was borrowed.'

It is believed that by means of these channels every

preacher will be able to provide himself with ample material for all the sermons of the longest ministry. Once again let it be said that the first of these channels, the personal study of the Bible, must be kept paramount, and every other method made strictly subservient to it.

## II. *Materials Stored.*

It is one thing to amass materials, it is quite another to keep them in so convenient a form that we may be able to avail ourselves of their help even after some period of time. Many a man has read, and noted what he has read, and yet has not been able at the 'psychological moment' to find the material through a lack of method or system for storing the results of his reading. What then are we to do? The following suggestions are made as the result of a good deal of personal experience and not a little outlay of money in order to arrive at some practical results. If only beginners are warned against the mistakes and failures of the writer, the suggestions will not have been in vain.

1. A clergyman should index his books. This at first may seem somewhat remote from the present subject, but in reality it has a definite and practical bearing on it. The card-index system is in every way the best, and even though a man may only have a few books there is no reason why he should not commence the work of indexing at once. A few cards with a small tray to hold them will suffice for a start. The books should be indexed under three heads, Author, Title, and Subject; and there is no reason why all three should not be kept together in one tray in alphabetical order. The use of the guide cards will help to find readily what is required. The young clergyman who is only just commencing his library should not think this work of indexing unnecessary until he obtain a larger number of books. If he commences the work at once, and then adds to it as his books increase, it will be no labour, and the results will prove their value all through his ministry.

2. Then he should commence a series of cards on which he enters under the appropriate texts anything that he may read from time to time. This series of cards should be kept in Bible order, and as anything is read it should be placed on the cards. In process of time it will be found that everything a man has in his study will be available for reference by means of this index. Thus, if he feels led, say, to preach on the subject of Genesis xxviii, or any verse in that chapter, he turns to his card under Genesis, and the whole available material will be found ready for reference. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this method of recording the results of our reading and study. As time goes on, and cards increase, it is possible to obtain cases, or sections of drawers according to need, but until it is found possible to gauge with fair accuracy what extent of card index is likely to be required, it will be wise to keep the cards in the drawer of a desk. It is well known that there are systems of card indexing which allow of a constant addition to the cases as required.

3. A notebook for extracts is also very necessary. There are books and magazines belonging to other people which we read from time to time, and from these we are often desirous of making extracts. In the old days this was done by means of a familiar book known as the *Index Rerum*, which was a manuscript book divided up according to the letters of the alphabet, with so many pages assigned to each letter, but this does not prove convenient, for the simple yet adequate reason that it is impossible to say beforehand precisely how many pages will be required for a particular letter. The result is that in many cases we have too many pages for one letter and too few for another. The only possible note-book for these extracts is one which has an alphabetical index in front, and then pages which are, or can be, numbered. The result is that if we read anything on Temperance, we can put it on page 1, and then index it under T, and if afterwards we read anything on the Atonement we can put it on page 2, so long as we index it under A.

By these means we can utilize every page of the book, and have all that we need for reference in the index. Of course, if it is preferred to index this material on cards, there is no need to have the alphabetical index in the book, but only an ordinary well-bound quarto size note-book in which the pages can be numbered.

4. The question of newspaper cuttings is one of the greatest problems of a clergyman's life. After putting several methods to the test and rejecting them for one or other reasons, the conclusion has been forced upon me that the only real way to preserve these helps in a conveniently available form is by means of what is known as the Envelope system. A number of large-sized manilla paper envelopes should be obtained, and the subject of the cutting put outside. If these envelopes are kept in alphabetical order, and from time to time a fuller and more detailed index is made of subjects which allow of various departments, or aspects, it will be found that the cuttings are ready for use, as they are in no other system. Here again, speaking from personal experience, it is imperative to commence in the early days of the ministry, and even before Ordination, if we have begun to gather these cuttings. A little attention paid to this week by week will prevent arrears, with all the trouble and sometimes the disappointment that arise if the work is left over. There is so much that is permanently valuable in newspaper cuttings that it is a great pity if a man is unable to preserve and arrange his material in a way suitable for use in sermons and addresses.

5. The preservation of sermons which are reported in newspapers is also of value. From time to time our weekly papers and monthly magazines contain sermons by leading preachers which are not always available afterwards in book form, and many a suggestion for study and preaching will be found in this way. The best method of preserving is again the envelope system, or else by means of cardboard boxes with springs for holding the papers as in a file. These envelopes, or boxes, should be arranged in the order of the books of the Bible, for this



will be found in every way the easiest and most convenient plan for reference.

6. The preservation of pamphlets is also not to be disregarded. There is much material available to-day in booklet and pamphlet form which will be of true service to a clergyman. After several experiments and many inquiries, I have been led to the conclusion that the best possible way for preserving pamphlets is by means of binders with long pieces of wire at the top and bottom which can be turned inwards, and in which the pamphlets can be safely held. When the pamphlets in any particular case are indexed on the inside cover they are readily available for use. It is a bounden duty to call attention to this simple and admirable system, particulars of which can be obtained from Miss Vickers, 13 Maxilla Gardens, London, W. The cost of the covers is very small and the convenience is very great.

7. It is difficult to describe the method of storing which we have purposely left to the last. From time to time in our reading and study we have suggestions both of texts and subjects for sermons. What are we to do with them? By some preachers these hints are recorded in commonplace books which are looked over from time to time, added to, and then in due course used. But the trouble is that there is no system in the paging of such a book, and an important topic may easily be overlooked and lost. We have therefore found again by definite experience that the best way of preserving this material is by using pieces of glossy manilla paper, 9 inches by 5, indexed in the order of the books of the Bible. Whenever an idea or a subject presents itself, one of these pieces of paper is taken, the notes jotted down, and the paper inserted in the proper place under the text which it is proposed to treat. These papers can be looked over from time to time, and as the result of that process known as 'unconscious cerebration,' the materials can be added to and developed. Then when the time comes for a sermon to be prepared on any of the topics, the rough paper is naturally torn up, because there is no further use for it.

This provides against the trouble and inconvenience of having a note-book in which the pages still remain, even after the material is used. Sometimes this method of storing sermon-material is called the 'stock-pot.' In house-keeping arrangements we believe that such a receptacle is of the very greatest importance, and the additions to it go to provide the foundation of the soups that are served from day to day. A clergyman will find these notes a veritable 'stock-pot,' for they will hold him in good stead on many an occasion when he finds his mental powers tending to droop, and in need of some fillip from other days and other men.

As the reader reviews these seven methods he will probably think them far too elaborate for ordinary use, but he ought to be assured that they are by no means so elaborate as they appear. When once the plans are adopted it is surprising how easily they work, and how satisfying and gratifying it is to feel that our reading can be stored for future use. And even though it may be years before we need the material for sermon preparation, it is ready at hand with a minimum of trouble, and the thoughts and illustrations which we felt to be of value are at length to be utilized in our work of proclaiming the everlasting Gospel.

## SECTION 12. OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

No one can question the splendid possibilities of open-air preaching. It affords an occasion of testimony for Christ to many who never enter a place of worship. Every Church should make the most of this opportunity by suspending indoor week-evening meetings during the summer months. There might easily be at least three open-air meetings each week; one on Sunday, and two on the week-day evenings. They should be held at different places in the parish, at any rate on the week evenings, though perhaps it is best to have the same place permanently on Sundays. To those who are responsible

for the management of open-air work the following considerations may be commended.

### I. *Carefulness.*

All the arrangements should be thought out and planned with care. The music should if possible be a special feature, though it should never be forgotten that many open-air gatherings are held without much, if any, singing. Still, when singing is available there is no doubt as to the value of the help ; and while the music is never elaborate it should always be good. The accompanist should know his tune-book thoroughly, and the choir, even though small, should be as efficient as it can be made. A platform (not a chair) for the speaker should be used if practicable ; it gives a vantage ground that will prove distinctly helpful. An arrangement can be made for utilizing the platform as a box for the harmonium and hymn books. For a hymn book for use in the open air there is nothing to compare with *Sacred Songs and Solos*, as the choice of bright, telling, and thoroughly Gospel hymns is wide and varied. Solos sung at an open-air meeting should be very few and far between, and never permitted unless the singer's voice is clear and penetrating, with a distinct enunciation of the words. There is nothing more trying than to hear a thin feminine, or tenor voice in the open air which does not carry more than a few yards. A soloist ought to be able to sing.

### II. *Thoroughness.*

It is fatal to think that anything will do for open-air speaking. On the contrary, the very best is absolutely essential. Those who are called upon to speak at these meetings should be urged to prepare thoroughly, and to give the people that which is really worth hearing. A definite message of God's truth well steeped with the elements of reason and persuasion should characterize every open-air address. Of course a simple personal testimony to the grace of God is quite different. If any

workers should be found to have rambled on without any special point in their address, they should not be asked to speak again unless they are prepared to put some preparation into their messages.

### III. *Shortness.*

All prayers should be short. Passages of Scripture read should be short, addresses should be brief, and hymns should not be too prolonged. Twelve or fifteen minutes will be found enough for an address as a rule, because it is not so easy to hold an audience in the open air as indoors. The best speakers are always the shortest, and those who have least to say generally take the longest time to say it.

### IV. *Naturalness.*

As a rule, it will be found helpful not to announce the text as though it were a sermon, but instead to plunge in at once by some illustration or incident. Indeed, it will be wise to make the address as unlike an ordinary sermon as possible. The speaker should not shout, but allow his voice to sound at the usual pitch. Penetration, not volume, is what is really required. Of course the speaker will have to dispense with all notes and deliver his message purely extemporaneous. Anything else would be fatal, for the attention of the audience would not be held.

### V. *Definiteness.*

The one aim of open-air work is to win men for Christ, and everything must be strictly subordinated to this purpose. Speakers should not range from North to South, still less endeavour to give the Christian system of doctrine complete in one address. One point driven home, or at most two points, will usually be found enough. The arrow must be sent home, pointed, barbed, and ready for use by the Holy Spirit.

VI. *Earnestness.*

A speaker in the open air should be cheerful and yet serious, with no attempt at cheap wit, or unworthy humour. If a man feels led to preach on the dark side of God's truth, and refer to the future consequences of sin, he must pray to be faithful without being stern, to appeal rather than to denounce, to be loving and not hard. The issues at stake are so serious that a man needs much grace and wisdom from on high to say the right thing in the right way.

VII. *Tactfulness.*

There is scarcely any form of Christian work in which the leader needs 'sanctified common sense' so much and so often as in open-air preaching. When the crowd has gathered it is not wise to continue the singing of a hymn, but to stop at once and go on with the preaching. If the crowd should show any indication of moving the speaker should be ready to close at once, ready with his application to drive home the message immediately. If any opposition should arise it will need to be dealt with wisely and firmly. No discussion as a rule should be permitted unless the meeting is intended for this purpose, as is the case with the Christian Evidence Open-Air Gatherings in Hyde Park and elsewhere. Ordinarily, however, it will be found in every way wise to ask the objector to speak privately after the meeting in order that the point raised may be discussed. Workers should not be allowed to do anything in the way of tract distribution or personal appeal during an address. All this should be done either during the singing of a hymn, if opportunity affords, or, still better, at the close of a meeting, after the benediction has been pronounced. The choice of tracts and books demands a good deal of wisdom lest inappropriate, and therefore ineffective, literature should be given.

These hints will probably be endorsed by all who have had experience of open-air work, and it ought to be added



that the Open-Air Mission will be found, at any rate in London, though often in the country as well, a very real help in this form of service. During my London incumbency we had visits from members of the Mission regularly during the season, and it is possible for Churches to obtain thereby the help of experienced workers in addition to their own staff. Some books on the subject will be found included in the list at the end of this volume, and it only remains to be said that together with these suggestions the open-air preacher should seek to be filled with the spirit of trustfulness, believing that his Master's Word shall not return void.

### SECTION 13. SOME GENERAL COUNSELS.

It is of course quite impossible to cover in our present space the whole field of sermon work, and the reader must necessarily be referred to authorities on preaching for a complete treatment of this pre-eminently important subject. But there are a few considerations that still remain to be noticed by way of conclusion.

#### I. *The Use of Illustrations.*

No one doubts for an instant the supreme value of 'letting in the light,' illustrating our sermons. Sometimes the illustrations may be in the form of similes to adorn our style, but for the most part they will be incidents or other forms of illustration for the purpose of explanation and persuasion. The value of an illustration will lie in the following fourfold characteristic: (a) It must be clear; (b) it must be telling; (c) it must be attractive; (d) it must be brief. The illustration must be to the point, or else it will do harm rather than good. If we favour the use of anecdotes we must take care that our stories are true, and speaking of anecdotes, it would be worth while avoiding that which is hackneyed, and keeping as closely as possible to that which is fresh and suggestive. An interesting article appeared some

time ago in the *Christian World* entitled 'S.D.W.S.P.I.,' with a sub-title, 'A Sorely Needed Society.' The meaning of the initials was 'A Society for Doing Without Some Pulpit Illustrations.' The article recorded a conversation held between a number of preachers, and one after another gave his opinion as to the illustrations that might be allowed a rest from use. Among them was the story of a gentleman who was engaging a coachman, and asked all the applicants how near they could drive to a precipice close to his house; the story of Havelock on London Bridge; the Dutch boy who stuffed his hand into a hole in the dyke; the incident of Napoleon and the English drummer boy; of George Washington and his axe; of Michael Angelo and the marble block, were cited as examples of illustrations to be avoided. Hackneyed quotations were also referred to. Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life;' Browning's 'God's in His heaven;' Tennyson's 'Flower in the crannied wall;' Bailey's 'We live in days, not years;' Lowell's 'Truth for ever on the scaffold.' Ministers who have been in the Holy Land were to be warned that there are some advantages in *not* having visited Palestine, and allusions to pictures like 'Diana or Christ' or 'The Doctor' were thought to be somewhat too familiar for use at present. No one can question the value of these suggestions, and it is to be hoped that every clergyman will constitute himself a member of this very valuable Society.

Literature will of course provide many illustrations for sermons, so also will fiction, history and science. One of the most striking features in the sermons of Dr. W. L. Watkinson is the marvellous fertility and felicity of his scientific illustrations. Dr. Jowett and Dr. Maclaren are scarcely inferior in this respect. Illustrations must always be kept strictly subsidiary to their purpose. Some one has well said, 'Don't construct your ornament, but ornament your construction.'

Illustrations are best gathered by reading and by cultivating our powers of observation. We may occasionally find it necessary to buy books of illustrations, but

there are obvious dangers in such a plan, and by far the best way is to keep our eyes and ears open and make our own compilation. One thing is certain, that our people will often remember our sermons by some illustration which we have been enabled to include in it.

## II. *Preaching old Sermons.*

This is a question that comes up in ministerial life from time to time. There is no reason why old sermons should not be blessed quite frequently. George Whitefield used to say that he never felt satisfied with a sermon until he had preached it about twenty times. But we must be particularly careful to prepare them over again and let them pass through the alembic of our present experience. Bishop Temple in an address at our ordination advised us to burn our old sermons every ten years for fear we should be tempted to preach the man and his experience of ten years ago. Bishop Whittaker of Philadelphia once told of a young clergyman whose pastoral charge had fallen to him out in the thinly populated end of a Western State :—

‘Riding the circuit of his tiny churches, he never imagined that the auditors of one town ever sat under him in another, and so he had been delivering everywhere the same sermon, and it seemed to take well ; just how well that preacher never guessed until one Sunday he was stopped at the church door by an old negro. “ Pardon me, suh, fer a moment,” he said, with a respectful bow. “ I jus’ wan’ to say that I suttinly have enjoyed dat sermon. De fust time I heard it, suh, I liked it, and de secon’ time I liked it better, an’ as I been follerin’ you aroun’ hit jus’ keep growin’ on me like. Now, suh, I’s sorter in de preachin’ business my own se’f an’ it jus’ occurred to me dat you gwine to wear out dat sermon some fine day, an’ den I wants to buy it. When you git ready to sell it, suh, I stan’ to give you fifty cents.” ’

## III. *Plagiarism.*

This is one of the perennial problems of the pulpit, and it must be confessed that the position is one of genuine

difficulty. We must preach, and we ought to read, and yet we are warned of plagiarism, and so we fear to read. Our work presses upon us, our body is weary, our mind is dull, we call spirits from the vasty deep, but they do not come. What then are we to do? If we use other men's materials improperly, we are despised and thenceforward always suspected, and yet if we fail to use the work of others we and our people will be all the poorer. How are we to define plagiarism? It has been defined as the adaptation of other material without any attempt at mental assimilation. The story is told of a preacher who was given to making extracts from leading preachers, and he did not realize that just under the pulpit he had as one of the congregation a fine sermon-taster. When these various extracts came out, the man in the pew gave audible utterance to the author's name, saying from time to time, Tillotson, Barrow, Jeremy Taylor, Simeon. At length the preacher heard these expressions, and was much irritated, and leaning down he said, 'Sir, if you don't keep quiet, you must leave the church.' The man at once remarked, 'His own.' Originality is thought that has not been conceived by any one else, and this is of course quite out of the question and impossible for ordinary preachers. True originality in preaching is really a new presentation of old thoughts so as to show our own work. There is nothing finer in a preacher than his ability to 'glorify the obvious,' and to give at least some freshness to familiar truths. How, then, is a man to use the material of other men properly so as to avoid plagiarism and at the same time to provide himself and his people with all possible intellectual nutriment?

1. We must think hard and long before reading. It is only by and after the exercise of our own mind that we are enabled properly to approach the minds of others. There is probably far too much reading to-day and far too little thinking.

2. We must think out fully all that we read. There is not enough *independent* thinking at the present time.

But if we read, pencil in hand, ready to criticise and discuss at every point, we shall make the most out of the books at our disposal.

3. Above everything else, we must keep mind and heart close to the Bible for devotional purposes. This is the secret of perennial freshness, for a man who puts the Bible first, and steadily maintains his quiet time day by day for personal, direct meditation will not only possess in himself a fount of real interest for his people but will thereby be enabled to make the best and truest use of all that he reads. Whenever there is any phrase or sentence that comes direct from another mind we must of course acknowledge it, but we must also take care not to allow our sermons to be a mere cento of quotations from other authors, strung together by our own effort.

#### IV. *The Power of Interesting through Preaching.*

Archbishop Magee is said to be responsible for a brief description of the three types of preachers. 'There are some whom you *cannot* listen to; there are some whom you *can* listen to; there are some whom you *must* listen to.' Sermons should 'grip' their audiences, and in order to do this they must be characterized by the three essential features of all acceptable speech: *placere, docere, movere*. A young preacher once asked an older man how he could interest his people. The reply was 'Give them something to interest them.' But in order to do this the preacher must himself be interested in his subject. The very word 'interest' seems to suggest the secret: '*interesse*,' that is, there must be something 'between' the preacher and his hearers. He must get in touch with them. The famous John Gregg, Bishop of Cork, said, 'First, throw the subject into yourself, next, throw yourself into the subject, and then throw yourself and the subject into your hearers.'

But the question still remains as to how this is to be done, and the answer is that it is probably more personal



and moral than anything else. The better the man the better the preacher, and no personal development, whether intellectual, social, or moral, will come amiss. (1) There must be more labour in thinking out our subject. No work ought to be regarded as too great, no trouble too severe for the pulpit. (2) There must be more courage in speaking out our subject. The man must be faithful whether people hear, or whether they forbear. (3) There must be more earnestness in living out the subject. The life as well as the lips must speak, and lest any one should feel that this is impossible it should never be forgotten that what is known as personal magnetism is not a gift, but a grace. Some time ago a College President had to choose a man as a member of his staff. One person was recommended to him as possessing every qualification. He was entertained at the house of the President, who, after the man had gone, asked his wife her impression. It was given with reluctance: 'He could never lead the boys.' The President had formed the same opinion and the man was not chosen, for notwithstanding all his scholarship and his beautiful character he lacked personal magnetism. But how is this magnetism possible? It may be said without hesitation that it is due to: (a) a healthy body; (b) a youthful soul, full of true sympathy and enthusiasm; (c) a Christlike spirit desirous of living and labouring for the Master. No man need have any fear about interesting his hearers if only he will endeavour to 'dwell with the King for His work.'

## V. *Books on Preaching.*

Theological students and young clergymen frequently inquire as to the best books for use in connexion with speaking and preaching. As the subject has long been one of keen interest to the writer, he has endeavoured to collect most of the important works on this subject, and at the end of this book a list will be found. Amid so much that is valuable it is difficult to make distinctions,

and yet in order to be of some service to younger men we will venture to put *above the line* those books which we know best and to which we owe most. It would be impossible to say how much the writer owes to the suggestions and counsels provided by these great 'Masters of Assemblies.'

## VI. *The Deepest Secret of All.*

As we draw these considerations to a close it is impossible to avoid repeating and emphasizing the truth that the most important factor of everything is the man behind the sermon. 'Thou must thyself be true, if thou the truth would'st teach.' St. Paul told Timothy to take heed to himself before he spoke of taking heed to the doctrine. Some one has truly said that 'a sermon gets to be a sermon, and not an essay or lecture, by being made and delivered in the power of the Holy Ghost.' Sir William Robertson Nicoll was preaching some time ago on this subject, and urged his hearers who had the work of preaching and teaching not to go forth until they were clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost, saying, that 'we cannot deliver the saving message with converting power unless we are clothed. Some shining robe must cover our poor, weak, frail personalities':—

'Study is needed, preparation is needed, but when all is said and done it is this clothing, this robe of light that we must seek first, and without which we can do nothing. Have you not known it to be so again and again? You have listened to famous men, and to what are called great sermons, and they have not touched you. You have heard broken words from those whose natural gifts were small, and you will never forget them even in the new country. Why? Because they were spoken in the power of the Holy Ghost.'

To the same end are the words of a well-known American Professor who, in addressing the students of the Bible Teachers' Training School in New York some time ago, spoke as follows:—

‘The future sphere of the pulpit is along the line of devotional inspiration, to elevate the spiritual part of man to a dominant position in his life, to make his religion not occasional but constant. This can be done only by men in the pulpit who have so entered into the spirit of the Gospel that it clothes them with ambassadorial rank and makes them able to speak with regal authority. Such men can be found only among those who stand close to the Bible and whose allegiance to that Book is based upon a knowledge of its contents more profound than anything which intellectual astuteness can discover.’

For all this we must have our times of retirement and solitude. If we are to come forth with power we must have what the old Puritans used to call the spirit of ‘recollectedness,’ the habit of communion with God. In spite of its familiarity we will dare to call renewed attention to the story of Christmas Evans, the great Welsh preacher, whose absence in the vestry after the time for commencing the service was a great perplexity, until some one went to the door, and heard him pleading with God, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ In a few moments he came forth clothed with power, and preached in demonstration of the Holy Spirit of God. A seer is one who sees, and it is the man of spiritual vision who will do the true work of preaching. ‘Solitude is the mother-country of the strong,’ and we shall never be strong preachers unless we take time to wait upon God. Then we shall go to the pulpit, and our heart’s desire and earnest prayer will be :—

‘When telling of Thy salvation free,  
Let all absorbing thoughts of Thee  
My mind and soul engross.  
And when all hearts are bowed and stirred  
Beneath the influence of Thy Word,  
Hide me behind Thy Cross.’

## CHAPTER III

### VISITATION

#### SECTION I. THE PLACE OF VISITING.

IT is generally thought that pastoral visitation is an integral part of our ministerial commission, based on the words that it is the office of the Deacon 'to search for the sick, poor, and impotent people of the parish,' and of the priest 'to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world.' The Priest is also asked to use 'both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole.' These references show that the ministerial work is undoubtedly pastoral (Acts xx. 20 ; Eph. iv. 11, 12), and for this phase of our duty it would seem as though visiting were essential. Certainly if we may use the illustration of the physician we see at once the need of visitation and consultation. Church of England people as a rule expect their clergy to visit, and this gives us our opportunity. The position of the Church is thus a rare and fine occasion for genuine work, and yet it must not be forgotten that, as an article in the *Guardian* some time ago said, 'This particular form of clerical work is almost peculiar to the Church of England, and, if we mistake not, to comparatively modern times.' Every one knows that in Nonconformist Churches regular pastoral visitation is exceedingly rare, and the Roman Catholic clergy do not visit, in the Anglican sense of the word. Nonconformist ministers visit their own people, but of course feel no obligation towards others, while the Roman Catholic clergy with their use

of the Confessional do not need to visit in order to keep in touch with their flock. The writer in the *Guardian* further pointed out that the Ordinal lays very little stress, indeed no stress at all, on regular house-to-house parochial visitation. But, as it will be seen, it emphasizes the importance of visiting for specific purposes related to the pastoral work of the parish.

There is no doubt, however, that visitation, when properly carried out, is closely related to a man's preaching. It acts and reacts on what he says. Intercourse with his people will enrich his preaching, making it real, practical, sympathetic, and alive. The life of the preacher in the week will either deepen or remove the impression of the sermon. His people will naturally want to see and know whether he is the same in and out of the pulpit. It is also in many cases more likely that they will come to hear a man whom they meet in the week. There is a constant danger of a clergyman coming under the category of the Scottish pastor who was said to be on weekdays 'invisible,' and on Sundays 'incomprehensible.' But this is not to deny the necessity of allowing exceptional men like Spurgeon, Beecher, and Talmage to exercise their great preaching gifts apart from pastoral work. It must also be frankly confessed that in many instances it will prove a mistake to think that a Church Army Captain or a Scripture Reader will be more acceptable to the poor than will a clergyman. A friend of mine sent a member of his staff to visit a man in the parish, and when he himself saw the man next time, he was told quite frankly that 'it's no use sending the likes o' we to the likes o' we.' However unreasonable it often is, there is no doubt that people like and expect to see their clergyman.

But it must never be forgotten that the old adage, 'a house-going parson makes a church-going people,' is only a half-truth, and sometimes not that. There are many parsons who are 'house-going' who do not thereby get hold of people for their church. The other half of the truth is, 'A preaching parson makes a church-keeping



people.' If it should be said that 'a visiting parson makes a fat church,' it is equally true that a 'visiting pastor often makes a lean pulpit.' If there is to be a choice, people will much more readily excuse poor visiting than poor preaching, and it is imperative that our pulpit work should not be allowed to suffer even from pastoral visitation.

The relation of preaching and visiting is of course a difficult one in regard to the time and strength required. While what has been said about the value of visiting in enriching the preaching is perfectly true, there is another side which must not be forgotten. If a man spends his time in visiting to such an extent that his time in his study suffers, he will experience an intellectual and a spiritual deadness when he comes to prepare his sermon which will inevitably affect the reality of his preaching. A man who visits morning, noon and night, will find himself at the end of the week physically fagged, and intellectually unfit to brace himself for the effort required to prepare a proper sermon. He will then have to fall back upon helps, hints and scraps from other sources, which will inevitably do moral and spiritual harm to himself and his people. The man who is to preach acceptably must never allow anything, even pastoral visitation, to interfere with those hours which should be given religiously to the work of study. Some time ago the letters of the late Dr. Marcus Dods were published, in which it was seen that during an early pastorate he devoted himself specially to the work of visiting. And yet as an acute thinker, the Rev. Arthur Hoyle, in the *Methodist Recorder*, well pointed out, if Dods had continued that type of ministry he would never have written his important works. Mr. Hoyle also remarks that if a man feels called upon to give himself to the work of visiting he cannot be expected to do proper justice to his study work.

'The love of his books will go from him, and at the end of ten or fifteen years he will be done for. We shall never have great

teachers, great preachers, that way. Such an one may have a great experience of the people ; he may be loved and honoured, he may have done more work than some others who have taken another line—on all that I say nothing at all ; but it is as sure as anything can be, that if he has not his times of meditation, and of prayer, his lonely wrestlings with the truth, and his feeling after God, he will be nothing accounted of when he stands forth, and he will have nothing to say to the man who has a grave problem or a desolating burden.'

If we keep the New Testament proportion in view we shall find that the emphasis is laid upon preaching and teaching, and everything else must be regarded as secondary. The absence of reference in the Pastoral Epistles to regular pastoral visitation may be fairly urged in support of the statement made above by the *Guardian*, that this particular form of clerical work is almost peculiar to our Church and is also comparatively modern. The proclamation of the Gospel to sinner and to saint is the supreme work of the ministry, and as it demands strenuous preparation of spirit, soul, mind, and body, it is obvious that nothing must be allowed to weaken it. But if visitation is kept strictly subordinated to preaching, it will prove one of the most unfailing helps of ministering to those who are familiar to the preacher, whose life he knows, whose interests he appreciates, whose joys and sorrows are his own, and whose life in Christ and for Christ is his constant thought and prayer.

## SECTION 2. THE PURPOSE OF VISITING.

The primary aim of all our visitation must be spiritual and not merely social. Of course the social element must enter into it, but it certainly must not predominate. If we are to be guided, as surely we are, by the Ordinal, the intercourse contemplated between a clergyman and his people is almost wholly spiritual, and is intended to be constantly directed towards definite spiritual objects. Mere social visiting, to quote the *Guardian* again, 'can be very easily overdone . . . it is very easy to multiply visits, with no spiritual gain unless the clergy have a

clear idea and a steady resolve.' A clergyman once said that his people would do anything for him except come to church, and it is worth while remembering the words of a practical layman who remarked that, 'If the parson spent less time in the houses and more time in the study, it would be better for the people.' We must beware of gaining a reputation for attending afternoon teas. Spiritual work is practically impossible on these occasions, and we may be perfectly certain that the comparative absence of visitation among Nonconformists and Roman Catholics is due to some extent to the belief that visitation is not so potent a spiritual influence as it is sometimes made out to be. The character of our visiting is a real test of spirituality, and there is an almost constant risk of a clergyman losing his spiritual power by excessive social visitation. Our work is mainly and primarily that of teaching spiritual truths and ministering spiritual realities, and anything that tends to rob our life of spiritual force is to be guarded against and avoided. Of course this does not mean that we shall necessarily feel it incumbent to offer prayer or read the Scriptures every time we visit, but our message and our work ought never to be far away. It is significant that the poor soon notice if a clergyman comes again and again without speaking some spiritual word. Our visiting may fail either from being made too official, assuming the position of a priest or spiritual director, or else by being made too social, adopting the attitude of 'a good fellow' only. We need to blend the true elements of the pastor and the friend in all our social efforts on behalf of our flock.

What then are we to do, if after a good deal of time and strength spent on visiting we do not find any increase in our congregation, or any apparent benefit to the people to whom we have paid social visits? We are inclined to answer this question by quoting the *Guardian* once more: 'A clergyman who finds that successive visits produce no further pastoral intimacy, but that rather all his attempts to reach it are avoided, may well give up the social relations which have proved so barren. It

is no part of his ministerial work to spend his time in afternoon calls on people who have shown that they will not allow him to be their pastor.' Visiting among the poor is decidedly different, and there is much more opportunity for a clergyman to get in close spiritual touch with them by reason of a variety of circumstances. But the same principle may be said to apply even here, that a man must be constantly on the watch lest the social element predominate over the spiritual, and tend to shut out the very idea for which he was ordained. The difficulty of correlating the spiritual and the social will of course prove a real one in many cases, but real or not, our duty is clear: we must visit; we must fulfil the duties laid upon us by the Ordinal; we must 'show ourselves friendly;' and yet in all, and above all, we must be men of God, ever keeping in mind the great principle that, whether publicly, or from house to house, it is ours to testify 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.'

### SECTION 3. THE TIMES FOR VISITING.

The average extent of visiting can hardly be more than twelve hours a week, made up between afternoon and evening work. This would mean visiting on five or six occasions, and two hours at a time. In the afternoons, it is probable that from two to two and a half hours can be spent, and in the evening hardly more than two hours. At least one evening a week, and if possible two, should be devoted to visiting, even though it may mean the omission of or non-attendance at parochial meetings.

Various authorities have endeavoured to strike an average of the cases that a man can visit in a week. The Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. Chavasse) has suggested forty a week in town, and twenty in the country. The Dean of Lichfield (Dr. Savage), in his little book, suggests an average of thirty a week. The late Bishop of Wakefield (Dr. Walsham How) favours thirty-six to forty. But

it is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to give anything like a correct average. All that can be suggested is that a visit should not be too long. A minimum of five minutes and a maximum of twenty would make a very good and useful average rule. One man cannot possibly visit from house to house more than from 1,500 to 2,000 cases per year, and when he finds himself, as he often does, in a parish very much larger than this, he had far better first of all look after the aged, the sick and the infirm, and then visit only as many as he can of the rest. Any slipshod visiting just to cover the entire area of the district, or parish, will be altogether futile.

In the afternoon it will be wise not to arrive at a house before 2.15 or 2.30, when the children will have gone to school and dinner will have been cleared away. In the evening, visiting should not commence earlier than 6.30, especially if the working men do not reach home till some time after 5, and it is usually not wise to visit after 9.30. Care must be taken not to appear at meal times, and certainly never at the children's bed time. Archdeacon Taylor speaks with point of a poor woman who described the Curate as 'a kind gentleman, but I'd rather he would not call on the children's tub-nights and sit here while I'm a washing of 'em.'<sup>1</sup> In a word, the times for visiting will, as a rule, be best discovered by the visitor himself, as he gradually gets to know the people and circumstances of his parish.

#### SECTION 4. VISITING THE WHOLE.

It is only possible to offer a few general suggestions based almost entirely upon personal experience, but they may perhaps suffice for comparison with other methods, and other needs as they arise.

##### I. *How to Commence.*

On going to a new parish it will be wise, if not necessary, to start with the Christian workers of the parish

<sup>1</sup> S. M. Taylor, *Ministers of the Word and Sacraments*, p. 184.



or particular district. A new Curate should get to know them first and to visit them, making them his friends, and trying to stir up their interest on behalf of his new work. Then it will often be possible to obtain names through them. It will also prove of great value to make the acquaintance as early as possible of the Day School teachers, if there are Church Day Schools in the parish, and to obtain addresses of the children from them. If there should be no Church Schools it would not as a rule be difficult to make the acquaintance of Council School teachers, and to obtain from them a list of at least some of the children who live in the parish. The new Curate should also give earnest and special attention to those who may be called the official workers of the parish; the Scripture Reader, the Parish Nurse, the Bible Woman, and any District Visitors. The names obtainable from these sources will prove invaluable for the commencement of the work of visiting.

## II. *Visiting the Women.*

This work will necessarily be done in the afternoon, for the obvious reason that the husbands are at work. It is recorded of two old college friends who met after their priest's examination, that they compared notes of each other's experiences during their deacon's year. 'What have you been doing?' said one to the other. 'Studying the Fathers,' was the reply. 'Oh!' said the other, 'I never find them at home; I have been studying the mothers.' This latter work often falls to the lot of the young Curate and will tax his powers in no ordinary way. Perhaps the greatest needs are sympathy and cheeriness. Life is dull, drab and monotonous for working women, and any real interest that we can show in their life will be useful and appreciated. As far as possible, we ought to work towards meetings and services. It is particularly useful to have and present a card, well printed, tastily got-up, giving a list of the chief services and other suitable gatherings. We are accustomed to

leave our cards when visiting the rich, and this will answer a similar and a still more useful purpose when visiting the poor. At the foot it should have a line : ' Presented by,' with the curate's name, and this will be specially helpful to leave if the person happens to be out when we call.

We must carefully watch against listening to gossip about neighbours, for if we do not keep a still tongue and a balanced judgment the result will almost certainly be disastrous. The young beginner in visiting will also do his utmost to get to know the husbands of all the women he visits. In some instances this will prove an obvious safeguard. An interest in the children will also be of great service, though particular care may be necessary in certain cases. It is said of a Curate who felt it his duty to make some remark about the children, and found it difficult to be sincere when the baby happened to be small and somewhat attenuated, that he hit upon a formula which he was able without verbal untruth to use on every possible occasion. He greeted every mother by saying, ' Well, that *is* a baby.' There is a similar experience told of another clergyman who, during one of his visits, was ushered into a room where the baby was lying in a cradle. He thought that it was one of his duties to praise the baby in order to interest the mother, and so he went across to the infant and exclaimed, ' Oh, what a heavenly smile,' adding some other more or less appropriate remarks concerning the qualities of babies, of whom he knew little or nothing. But on this particular occasion his eloquence was wasted, for the mother in her superior knowledge replied, ' She's got the wind, sir.'

In jotting down particulars of cases as a help to our memory in the course of visiting we must be very careful to do it out of the view of neighbours.

### III. *Visiting the Men.*

For this work the evening is of course absolutely essential, and three characteristics of dealing with men must be constantly kept in view. We must be manly, brotherly

and godly. This is only another way of saying once again that the key of our life must be 'B natural.' A Professor of Pastoral Theology once asked a question of his class in an examination paper, How can clergy get the closest in touch with working men? As he invited the students to be frank in their replies, one of the men put on his paper, 'By being less of the priest and more of the man.' We must try to get into touch with the interests of our men. Dr. W. M. Taylor tells a fine story of Edward Irving and an infidel shoemaker. Patent leather had then been recently invented, and as Irving's father was a tanner he himself knew all about this new product. When he called upon the shoe-maker and endeavoured to engage him in conversation, the first question was, 'What do you know about leather?' Then, as he discovered that Irving did know about leather, he remarked, 'You are a decent sort of fellow, do you preach?' The very next Sunday the infidel was at Irving's church, and when others present wondered at his being there and asked the reason, the shoemaker replied, 'He is a sensible man, he kens aboot leather.'<sup>1</sup>

Interest in the children will also prove fruitful in work among the men, and any kindness we can show to them will prove a sure way to the father's heart. If at all possible, we ought to work up to a Men's Meeting, or a Men's Discussional Bible Class, to show them that the church and its gatherings are for them, and to let them see that their manhood will find its complete realization only in fellowship with Christ and His people. We ought to have an especial eye for young men, as we do our visiting, and we shall find that the work will prove infinitely more fruitful than a succession of meetings where perhaps we are only called upon to preside or to 'make a few remarks.'

#### IV. *Visiting the Rich.*

This is confessedly a very difficult part of the work, and

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Taylor, *The Ministry of the Word*, p. 276.

for several reasons it will almost certainly fall mainly to the Vicar to do it. Yet it ought to be done, because the 'poor rich' are in as great need of Christ as any others. The problem is to let it be known that the clergyman comes, not merely as a neighbour, but in his spiritual character. As we have already seen, five o'clock teas are no opportunities for pastoral intercourse, and some other methods must be discovered. We must also beware of gaining a reputation for dining out. If it comes to be known that the Vicar, or Curate, is constantly dining out, while the poorer people of his parish are attending Bible Classes or Temperance Meetings, it will not produce the best results of spiritual influence. Besides, unless the dinner is a quiet family affair, it is almost certain that the clergyman will be asked to take in some lady who has nothing whatever to do with his parish, and whom almost certainly he may never meet again, except under similar social circumstances. If the clergyman knows that a family belonging to his church will be having a quiet dinner alone, the occasion may be made a fine opportunity for social, and even pastoral intercourse. Or what is often better than this, the clergyman may go in after dinner for a little chat in the drawing-room and family prayer at the close of the day. Another method in certain cases would be to go to breakfast and to conduct family prayer either before or after that meal. Invitations to breakfast are fairly common in certain places, and might well be made still more frequent as opportunities for spiritual as well as intellectual intercourse. It will also be found useful in some cases to be 'At Home' on one afternoon a week, and though this may prove not always, or often directly influential spiritually, it may easily lead to opportunities for definite spiritual work. Then again, an occasional meeting for the gentlemen of the parish or congregation after dinner at the Vicarage will be found useful. An ordinary invitation card may be sent announcing tea and coffee at 8.30, and a meeting at 9.15, when some leading man, clerical or lay, might be asked to introduce some general topic of spiritual interest.

This would be followed by discussion, and in due course the gathering would be closed with a brief word of prayer. This kind of meeting has proved on several occasions a useful opportunity for the gentlemen of the parish to get to know one another, to come in contact with their clergyman, and also to obtain some spiritual influence from a meeting such as has been suggested. Of course there are obvious difficulties in the way of arrangement, but these are to be faced and met as effectively as possible. The one thing to be borne in mind is that the clergyman has to take the social status and circumstances of his well-to-do and rich people as he finds them, and to make as full use of them as he can for the purpose of doing his Master's work.

#### V. *Visiting Public Houses.*

This is a particularly difficult and trying phase of pastoral work. But it is not impossible, given the necessary wisdom, courage, and grace. Whatever views we may have as to the unrighteousness of the drink traffic as a system, we ought to remember that in many cases the occupiers of public houses are to be considered quite apart from the systems with which they are associated. At any rate, they should not be boycotted as social and moral lepers, but every effort should be made to keep in touch with them and to be of service. It is often possible for a clergyman to make a friend of the proprietor of an hotel, or a public house in his parish, and also to get in touch with the barmen and barmaids. Of course this will all mean tact, and what is called 'sanctified common sense,' but from personal experience, and acquaintance with those who have had more experience, it can be truly said that the task, however difficult, does not constitute an insuperable problem.

#### VI. *Visiting Special Cases.*

The visitation of the bereaved is a rare opportunity. Their hearts are softened and they will be further drawn



out by the clergyman's sympathy. Here, if anywhere, is the occasion for making a clear distinction between 'pity' and 'sympathy.' Pity is feeling *for* a person; sympathy is feeling *with* him. Moody tells the story of taking his little daughter with him when he went to visit a woman who had lost her own little child by drowning. Moody offered prayer and expressed his sympathy in a sincere way, and yet there did not seem to be much power in it. As he went back, and they were walking along the river-side where the accident had taken place, his little girl said, 'Father, suppose it had been me.' This went like a dagger to Moody's heart, and he turned back and went to the woman with sympathy this time, not with pity, and spoke and prayed with her, and then cried with her in her trouble. No one can estimate the value of loving Christ-like visitation at the time of bereavement.

The aged will also call for and repay all the attention that we can give them. Let us make much of these Fathers and Mothers in Israel. There are some clergy whose thought seems to be only for the young. Let us take care of the old as well. They will repay us by their prayers, and our ministry will be all the more fruitful as we try to smooth their pathway and cheer them along with the assurance that 'at evening time it shall be light.'

The visitation of servants is another real difficulty, because of social limitations. But it is one that should be faced, for it would cause untold harm if the servants felt that the clergyman was only interested in their employers. Very often the clergyman is most welcome downstairs, and a call will be valued and remembered. He should work through the mistress of the house first of all, and ask, if convenient and agreeable, to be permitted to make the acquaintance of any of the servants who may come to his church. Then if the household is a large one he would naturally work through the head servants, and try to get into touch with all those in the household who may be regarded as his flock. There are few classes of people who will be found more responsive

to spiritual teaching and personal influence than the servants in our houses, especially in our large country and town mansions. It was one of the greatest joys of my life to see the large number of servants at St. Paul's, Portman Square (Portman Chapel), for it showed how greatly they had valued the teaching of my honoured predecessors and the spiritual opportunities of the Church. It was always a regret to me that I could not do more than I did on their behalf, but I shall not soon forget the frequent and close opportunities afforded at Confirmation seasons.

The visitation of Dissenters will probably face the clergyman more or less in his parish work. If he happens to be in a very large parish he will almost certainly find no time for regular visitation of members of other Churches, but if he can find time in his journeying from house to house he should certainly make no difference in his calling so far as Dissenters are concerned. Courtesy on the part of the clergyman will not only be a Christ-like act, but will do much to recommend the Church with which he is associated, and Nonconformists will often heartily appreciate any readiness to help in need, or to show sympathy in the time of sorrow. Without any change, or even lowering of convictions on either side, the clergyman as a servant of Christ can do much to recommend his Master by the way in which he approaches disciples of other communions than his own.

#### SECTION 5. VISITING THE SICK.

##### I. *Chronic Cases.*

In every parish some of these will be found, and it is imperative that a new beginner in the ministry should get a list as quickly as possible and keep it before him. This will mean a regular visit, whether weekly or monthly. We must never forget that these chronic cases are shut off from Church privileges, and will be only too glad of a visit from the clergyman. It goes without saying that we must be cheery and look on the bright side of things.

Who can ever forget the story of that 'Great-heart' Phillips Brooks nursing the baby in the tenement house while he sent the poor tired mother for a little change and breath of fresh air? We may not all be able to do this, but the principle is obvious. Scripture and prayer are quite easy with chronic cases, for they will naturally expect us to minister to them in things spiritual. Very often we may pass on some thoughts or the outlines of a Sunday sermon, and if we can possibly do so, it will be found of immense help to sing some hymn. I have the most vivid recollection of visiting a poor crippled helpless young fellow in my first Curacy, who was able to play the concertina, and the hymns we sang together were as great a joy to me as they were to him. Of course with such cases we shall pray *extempore*. Parts of the Visitation Office can be utilized, if we wish, but it will be found as a rule far better to use what is called 'free' prayer. Chronic sickness is a golden opportunity not to be let slip, and we must either set apart one afternoon for this work, or else in some way take great care that our visits are paid with regularity and fair frequency. We shall find among these poor chronic sufferers some of our warmest supporters who are 'helping together by prayer.'

## II. *Special Cases.*

From time to time the clergyman will be summoned to special cases of illness. He should go as quickly as possible when he is called, lest he should forget, and the need slip from his mind. If we have to visit women it will need wisdom and care, and when at all possible, some one should be present, at least for the first visit or two, until we are known to them. If the sick case is that of a man it will be found to be a rare opportunity of influencing him for Christ. If the children are sick let us make the opportunity of taking them flowers, or pictures. In all this we must work as closely as possible with the doctor and the nurse, and we must not mind going again and again, if for any reason we cannot get in when we

pay an ordinary call. For hospital visiting it will be found advisable to avoid going on visiting day. A clergyman can gain an entrance at any time, but the friends of the sick person can only visit on the proper days, and it is a pity to rob them of the only chance they have of getting their full time with their sick friend.

### III. *The Dying.*

In large poor parishes sudden calls to death-beds are occasions that test very severely a young clergyman's spiritual life. He may often find himself at the bedside of one of whom he knows nothing. What is he to do? It will never do harm, and it will always do good, to make the Atonement as prominent as possible. The clergyman must be faithful at all costs, and, as far as he can, he must probe the conscience and find out any sin. But if for any reason all this is impossible, he may rest assured that the quiet, simple, clear, positive statement of the Atoning Sacrifice for personal acceptance by faith will do its own work, and God's Word will not return to Him void.

If the dying man or woman is a Christian it will be found useful to emphasize the promises of God. Physical weakness often leads to spiritual depression and fear, and the earnest Christian may be tempted by Satan to question and doubt his own acceptance of Christ. This is the time for dwelling upon the positive Divine aspects of truth, and especially upon the 'everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.' The teaching of such passages as Romans viii. 28-30 and Hebrews vi. 13-20 will come as balm to the soul, as we lovingly and earnestly show them that 'God is faithful.'

### IV. *The Communion of the Sick.*

In administration, we must as far as possible observe the rubric which requires two to be present with the sick person. This will not often cause difficulty, but if from

time to time it is found impossible to obtain two, then we must be satisfied with one, or even with none, for in such cases necessity is above rubrics, and we must not allow the sick person to be robbed of what will be a genuine comfort. But although this is said quite frankly, we believe that it will be only on the rarest occasions that the presence of a friend or two will be found impossible. If the patient is not near death it will be wise to use the ordinary service for the week, rather than the special service for the sick. The Collect of the latter service tends to assume that the person may not recover, and for this reason the ordinary service, with the use of the Collect Epistle and Gospel, will be far preferable. It will not always, or even often, be possible for a sick person to bear the entire Communion Service, and a convenient method of taking the service is to open with the Introductory Collect and Lord's Prayer, pass on to the Collect for the day, using the Epistle and Gospel if they can bear the length, and then go straight on to 'Ye that do truly,' etc. Here again, circumstances will guide. We may find it necessary in certain cases to disabuse the mind of the idea that the Communion of the Sick is a *viaticum*, while at the same time we lay all possible stress on the privilege of fellowship with Christ and anticipation of the 'Marriage Supper of the Lamb.' We shall of course do our best to make sure that those to whom we are about to administer the Holy Communion are really trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

It will be wise to take everything needed with us when we go to the houses of the poor. Our private Communion Service together with a supply of bread and wine should always be available. When going to the houses of the rich it will probably be found necessary to take with us the vessels only, though even here our own supply of Communion wine may prove convenient. Whether we are to administer robed, or otherwise, should be allowed to depend on the preference of the sick person, unless we ourselves happen to have any conscientious reason against administering in our ordinary dress only. As a rule,



it will be found that private Communion is much less formal and much more truly helpful if the clergyman is not vested in the robes used in church. But this is a matter for perfect liberty.

If there should be any danger of infection we should not only fulfil the rubric of ministering 'last of all to the sick person,' but endeavour to leave only just sufficient wine in the cup for the sick person to consume. From time to time we shall doubtless find the necessity of calling attention to the third rubric in the Visitation Office, which tells us that if a man is unable for any reason to receive the Sacrament, the clergyman is to instruct him

'that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and stedfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed His blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his Soul's health, although he do not receive the Sacrament with his mouth.'

The more the great truth of spiritual feeding upon Christ in, or apart from, the Sacrament is emphasized, the greater the intelligence and the deeper the spiritual profit when the Communion itself is received.

#### V. *Private Baptisms.*

Here again is a genuine difficulty that will face many a young clergyman. He will be summoned to baptize a child who is in danger of death, under the evident thought that an unbaptized infant will somehow or other be in danger of suffering spiritual loss in the future. An earnest, true-hearted, spiritual man will take every opportunity of showing that baptism, whether private or public, is not a charm, and that the Church of England has repudiated the *opus operatum* theory of the Sacraments. This of course will be done without any reference to ecclesiastical controversy, but simply as a matter of spiritual teaching wherever it should happen to be needed.

The private baptism itself will often be the opportunity of ministering true comfort to the poor sorrowing parents, as prayer is offered and God's Word is taught, and those present are assured of God's favour and good will toward the little child. If only we keep in view the profound principle that baptism invariably refers in the New Testament, and also in the Prayer Book, to *birth* and not to life, to the introduction of an already living being into the new sphere of the Church of Christ, there need be no difficulty about any private baptism. It is an opportunity of assuring the parents that the child has been received into the congregation of Christ's flock, and is undoubtedly included in the great Covenant of Redemption. If the child should recover, care must be taken to see to the public reception into the Church according to the rubric, and this will prove another opportunity of spiritual influence not to be overlooked, still less despised.

#### SECTION 6. SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

The following general suggestions are made, dealing with the entire subject of visiting, though again it must be said that they are necessarily only for comparison with other minds and other experiences.

##### I. *A Visiting Register.*

We ought to make a careful register of our cases, and for this purpose the card system is far better than a visiting book. Cards are easily destroyed when changes are made, and will be found in every way more helpful than the old-fashioned register or book. It will probably be more convenient to have the cards arranged in alphabetical order of people's names, though some clergymen may prefer to have them arranged in streets according to the address. Brief particulars will find their place on the card. For example, the name, the number in the family, and any special circumstances. But all these

details will soon be remembered by the visitor without the need of reference to cards. It is important that the dates of our visits should be entered on these cards, for we are thus able to show, if necessary, when we last called, an important point if any one should complain of omission or neglect. These cards must be kept quite private, locked up in our desk, and not available for examination by landladies. I cannot describe what I owe to my dear friend, who was my predecessor in the Curacy of St. Aldate's, Oxford, the Rev. A. P. Cox, now the Vicar of Christ Church, Cheltenham, for his provision of a book, giving me full details, in his own characteristic way, of all the people in St. Aldate's parish, Oxford. How greatly I valued that book, and what it was to me in my first year or so in that parish, cannot now be expressed. It was a fine testimony to his intimate knowledge of the parish. But the information contained in it was kept strictly under lock and key, and before very long the entire book was carefully destroyed. A special list of the aged and chronic cases should also be kept, with dates of the visits noted. A little system of one's own 'hieroglyphics' will enable a man to indicate on the card whether the people were in or out, whether he had prayer, or Bible reading, and the occasions on which he ministered private Communion. System of some sort, at any rate, is absolutely necessary in connexion with parochial visitation.

## II. *Door to Door Visitation.*

This is to be avoided, even though it may lead to fewer visits being paid in an afternoon. When a clergyman goes steadily from door to door along a street, people see and know of his coming and are 'ready for him' in a wrong sense. It is far better to take a few in each street. Case-visiting or subject-visiting is the true method, only of course we must take the greatest care not to overlook any people that we ought to see. In our ordinary visiting we must beware of having 'pets,' especially as we shall find ourselves welcomed in some houses and regarded

with indifference, or worse, in others. It is very natural for a clergyman to go often to houses where he will be received, but he must beware of favouritism.

### III. *Temporal Relief.*

This in the minds of some is inextricably bound up with a visit from a clergyman, for they seem to think that he is a sort of relieving officer. A friend of mine sent a lady to visit a woman in the parish, and on opening the door and telling her errand she was greeted with the words, 'Well, is there anything 'anging to it?' This is the trouble in many cases; they think that money or other relief is 'anging to it.' If on a first visit we find relief is needed, it should be given in kind, not in money. Indeed, experience shows that money should only be given when the people are thoroughly trustworthy. But it is far better to let it be known that the Curate is not allowed to give relief, and is to report the cases to the Vicar and the Relief Committee. I found on commencing work at Portman Chapel the admirable plan of a Relief Committee, which met every fortnight to consider all the cases, which were then decided on their merits. The Parish Nurse had authority meanwhile to give *interim* relief to all genuine cases which were reported at these fortnightly meetings. In this systematic way we not only provided for all the genuine needs of the people, but were enabled at the same time to dissociate the idea of temporal relief from clerical visiting. Every one in the parish knew that none were neglected, and that all cases would be carefully considered by this Committee. Some method of the kind should be adopted in all Churches, for there is scarcely anything more harmful to spiritual work than the consciousness or hope that the clergyman's coming means a ticket for grocery or coal. There is far too much of a tendency to pauperize the people, and it would be in every way better for spiritual work if the clergyman only very rarely gave relief in person, but arranged for it to be given through some other channel.

#### IV. *Rebuffs.*

It is certain that our visiting will not always be welcome, and we shall experience either indifference or actual opposition. Whenever we are rebuffed we must accept the situation in a true spirit, and make it a matter of prayer, seeking for grace to 'keep smiling.' Above everything, we must respect individuality and never forget that 'an Englishman's house is his castle.' There is a story told of a Scripture Reader who happened to possess a wooden leg, and when he saw any likelihood of a door being shut in his face he quietly planted his wooden leg in the doorway, and so prevented what he expected, and thereby utilized the opportunity for delivering his message. If we may assume this to be true, and it is a story often repeated, it is impossible to avoid expressing deep regret that such action should have been taken. Some of us, if we had been inside the house, would have felt very much tempted, but for the serious results to the man, to bring the door to bear very definitely on the wooden leg. No one has a right to enter our house unless we invite him, and we cannot be too careful in our visiting to remember that the most perfect courtesy should be shown to the poorest, and their self-respect considered. If we find, as we certainly shall, a genuine opposition to our message on the part of some parishioners, a letter written respectfully but kindly will often find an entrance where a visit would be unwelcome, and after a while we should go again and see whether there is any change of attitude. It is a frequent experience of clergymen that opposition to the Gospel does not last for ever, and that persistent, loving, wise effort finds its reward. Only let us 'glorify God in our fires,' and leave the results to Him.

#### V. *Literature in Visiting.*

It is very essential to have at hand a supply of suitable tracts and booklets which we can leave when paying calls. The written message will be heeded when the per-



sonal testimony has been forgotten, and the power of God's Word in the printed page has proved itself again and again. Care must be constantly taken in the choice of booklets and other Gospel statements, because it is only too possible to give indiscriminately, and find that we have made a serious mistake. When a young girl in her distribution of tracts gave an old lady a tract warning young people against dancing, and when a man with a wooden leg received a similar tract, we can see the necessity of wise and careful choice. Then again, sometimes the very way in which tracts and booklets are produced does not commend them for ordinary purposes. No one to whom we may give a tract cares to find some sensational title of a series printed in bold type on the first page, like 'Daggers for Doubters, 6d. a doz.,' or 'Slashes at Sinners, 6s. a 100 post-free.' It would be a great help if any description of series, with price, could be put at the very end of the tract on the last page, and not given any prominence that tends to hinder the message from being accepted. For ordinary parochial purposes there are few series of booklets more helpful than those published by the British Gospel Book Association, 5, Hope Way, Liverpool, while the Religious Tract Society has the greatest possible variety of tracts and booklets suited to all classes and needs. A few such little booklets slipped into our pocket before going out for an afternoon's or evening's visiting will often be an additional message on behalf of Christ. Every clergyman should keep as wide an acquaintance as he can with the many attractive modern varieties of Gospel booklets, and should develop this sort of 'Tractarianism' as much as possible.

## VI. *The Use of Scripture in Visiting.*

Sometimes a request is made for a little handbook suited to the needs of parochial visitors, and it is difficult to suggest anything of the kind. A useful little compilation was available some years ago, called *The Visitor's*

*Book of Texts*, by Dr. Andrew A. Bonar, but now this is only to be had secondhand. It is far more satisfactory, however, for every visitor gradually to make his own list of suitable Scripture passages, for there is nothing like the school of experience to learn what is needed for particular cases. He will certainly need such Psalms as xxiii.; xxvii.; xlvi.; lxxv.; ciii.; and cxxx.; such chapters of Isaiah as xii.; liii.; and lv.; such chapters of the Fourth Gospel as iii.; iv.; xiv.; xv.; xvi.; such chapters of the Epistles as Romans viii.; 1 Corinthians xv.; 1 Thessalonians iv.; with the last two chapters of the Revelation. It will be surprising if these are not used pretty freely and frequently. Then again, the use of hymns in visiting will be found of great value, especially by reason of the power of old associations. Familiar hymns, like 'Jesu, Lover of my soul,' 'Rock of Ages,' 'How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds,' 'Abide with me,' and others, will be most welcome at sick beds and for use with the dying. Very, very often the old words will recall thoughts and places which will enable the clergyman to send home his message. A clergyman was summoned to a tenement house in New York some years ago to the death-bed of a Scotswoman. After trying several methods in vain without obtaining the slightest response, at last he thought of the Scottish version of the twenty-third Psalm, and repeated,—

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,  
 He makes me down to lie  
 In pastures green; He leadeth me,  
 The quiet waters by.

At once the woman opened her eyes, and said 'I learned that as a bairn in Scotland'; and it proved the channel of spiritual blessing to her soul.

## VII. *Infectious Cases.*

In these days of the immediate removal of infectious cases to isolation hospitals, the call on the clergyman

to visit such cases is comparatively slight and infrequent, but as from time to time emergencies arise, the following simple suggestions may perhaps be ventured, based as they are upon information derived mainly from medical sources.

1. Visit, if at all possible, only after a full meal.
2. Avoid getting into the line of the patient's breath.
3. Avoid touching the patient's hand.
4. After a scarlet fever case brush the hair. The fine scales that float from the patient may easily lodge therein.
5. Wash the hands after visiting and use thoroughly a nail brush.
6. If the case is epidemic, keep on an old waterproof and then let it be well aired on returning home.
7. If smallpox, or diphtheria, or scarlet fever, an anti-septic gargle will be found useful. For example, a boracic gargle.
8. Do not visit elsewhere until at least half an hour has been spent afterwards in the open air.
9. Amid all these simple and useful precautions, take allopathic doses of St. John xiv. 1.

#### VIII. *About Ourselves.*

It is as true of visiting as it is of any part of our parochial work, that the man himself is the key to the situation. We should plan our season of visiting beforehand, and never fail to pray before going out. Then let us go in faith and expectation, depending upon the Spirit of God. At each door let the heart be lifted up in prayer and trust. If we feel at all nervous or hesitating, as will frequently be the case, let us seek grace not to show it.

Visiting is the opportunity for cultivating a number of the Christian graces. Brightness of manner should certainly characterize our work. The grace of tenderness will also be required ; not merely gentleness, which refers to manner ; but tenderness, which is concerned with spirit. Gentleness is external, but tenderness is

internal. In this tenderness there will be the true Christian courtesy which commends ourselves and our cause.

The grace of wisdom will also need cultivation. Much tact and 'sanctified common sense' will be required, and the expression of this will show itself in a variety of small ways. The Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. Chavasse) did not think it unnecessary to suggest the avoidance of creaky boots while visiting. And if the clergyman should by any possibility happen to be a smoker, he will be well advised to avoid smoking immediately after lunch, lest his breath should be found disagreeable to some of the sick cases which he has to visit. Non-smokers are usually keenly sensitive in the olfactory nerves, and to these a clerical smoker does not tend to recommend himself or his work. Not the least element of this practical wisdom will be seen in the occasional letter written to one whom our words may not have influenced. It will be found not infrequently that such a letter has been treasured, and used of God.

The grace of courage will certainly be needed, for no one can visit in the true and only way without much faithfulness being required. When men and women are brought to close quarters by means of earnest spiritual visitation, we must not be surprised if opposition is manifested, and this in turn will mean that the grace of patience will certainly be in request in connexion with visiting. There is scarcely a clergyman who has not felt the deepest disappointment in the results of his parochial visitation. At such times a prayerful, trustful meditation of Isaiah xlix. 4-6 will revive the drooping spirit.

All this may be summed up by saying that the one supreme need is spiritual life and power. There is a constant danger of our visiting becoming almost wholly mechanical and formal. We become tired at the close of an afternoon's or evening's work. We have entered into so many experiences, and physical, intellectual, and spiritual vitality has been strained and is liable to be sapped. All the more reason, therefore, for the spiritual life to be maintained at the true height and

strength for this very taxing and exacting work. It may be said without any contradiction that the joys and the sorrows of the ministry will be more definitely experienced in our visiting than in any other department of clerical and parochial work.

In the course of reading I came across a prayer appropriate to pastoral visitation, and as it seemed so spiritually suggestive I ventured to get it printed on a card for distribution among Theological Students and Younger Clergy. I subjoin the prayer in the hope that it may thereby find a still wider field of usefulness :—

Grant, Lord, I pray, that this day I may be made the messenger of Thy mercy to many. Open in my nature deep springs of love and sympathy and understanding, that when I meet with those who are in deep waters, deep may answer unto deep. Bring me into the divine peace, and let me walk this day in the light of Thy countenance, that all the influences of my person and presence may make for helpfulness. Give me Thy comfort for the sorrowful, Thy cheer for the glad, Thy love for the lonely, Thy riches for the poor, Thy peace for the anxious. May children find me childlike, and the strenuous find me courageous, and the aged find me trustful. So use me, I pray, as to quicken life with the sense of its spiritual complement, where every valley is exalted and every mountain brought low. In Christ. Amen.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONFIRMATION

#### SECTION I. INTRODUCTION.

THE season of Confirmation provides one of the finest, if not the very finest opportunity afforded to the clergyman for personal dealing with individual souls. For the most part, the age of the candidates is in our favour, because Confirmation is held at an impressionable time of life. The personal contact with the candidate provides an occasion for individual work of almost incomparable value. Other Churches frequently testify to the need and value of some such opportunity with the young people of the congregation. Be it ours to realize the splendid possibilities of our position and to make the best use we can of them.

We shall do this, first of all, by making sure of our own personal life. Unless the clergyman is spiritually fit for the training of his candidates the whole preparation will suffer. There is scarcely any occasion when the clergyman needs to be more 'thoroughly furnished' for the work of getting into the closest possible touch with individual souls on behalf of Christ. Another way of making the most of Confirmation time is by remembering that the preparation must be very much more than instruction. It must extend to inspiration, for we must ever keep in view the definite object of personal influence. The crowning purpose of Confirmation is the genuine personal contact of the soul with Christ as Saviour and Master.

No absolute law is possible as to the age for Confir-

mation. It will vary with circumstances. The Service speaks of 'years of discretion,' and the force of the word 'hereafter' in the opening address points in the same direction. It must never be forgotten that in the English Church Confirmation has two sides, not one only. The candidate 'confirms,' and 'is confirmed.' Among the poor there will be found frequent need of correcting the impression that obtains too often in regard to the merely passive act of Confirmation. Sometimes when a young girl is asked why she wishes to be confirmed, she will reply, 'Because mother thought I had better be *done*,' as though Confirmation were something like vaccination. A careful emphasis on the twofold aspect of the rite will effectually prevent any such misconception. Most of our English Bishops seem to favour the age of fourteen, and we believe this will be found as a rule a very useful period. Speaking for myself, I would not go below fourteen if I could possibly help it, though I am well aware that in certain cases where Christian instruction and influence at home have been of the right kind, the age of thirteen is quite satisfactory. But generally, I have a strong preference for fifteen for girls and sixteen for boys, since the former develop earlier than the latter. Even though, as it is often urged, boys and also girls go out to work, and sometimes go away from home before these ages and should therefore be confirmed earlier, it does not necessarily follow that an earlier Confirmation would guarantee the necessary discretion and intelligence without which it is impossible for the candidate to enter fully into the real meaning of the Service. But every clergyman will judge this for himself, and will act according to what he believes to be the best way of obtaining the highest spiritual results.

## SECTION 2. THE PREPARATION.

The approach of Confirmation will naturally be introduced by announcements in Church, together with a sermon on the spiritual meaning and importance of the

rite. At the close of this sermon an invitation should be given to candidates to send in their names, and it will be found helpful to follow this with the distribution of a leaflet, stating the hours of the classes, and providing a slip at the foot, which can be filled up, torn off, and returned to the clergy, signifying which hour will be most convenient to attend. Such a leaflet is essential in a large parish where there are several classes, and a variety of needs has to be met.

### I. *The Classes.*

What should be the length of the preparation? At least ten weeks. An experienced and honoured clergyman of my acquaintance is in favour of fourteen, but this appears to me to be a little too long, and it is hardly likely that the interest of the classes can, as a rule, be kept up for just over three months.

For the most part, the boys and young men will be taken by the Curate, and he will certainly be well advised to separate rigidly between the two sections and have distinct classes for them. The girls will naturally fall to the Vicar to prepare, and it almost goes without saying that great care and discretion must be exercised. It has often been proved useful in the case of a young unmarried Vicar to take the boys and girls together, and then to obtain the help of an experienced lady to deal spiritually with the girls. That fine and able pastor, the late Canon Robinson of Marylebone, and then of Birmingham, once told me that he always made a point of having his classes composed of both sexes. In the case of older men being confirmed they should undoubtedly be taken alone, for they are as reluctant to attend a class with young men, as young men are to go with boys. Adult Confirmations are often times of special opportunity, and if all our Bishops realized this they would never confirm an adult with young people, but instead, have a Confirmation Service in a cathedral, or some prominent parish church, for adults only. This

would be of the greatest possible value, not only as a spiritual opportunity, but as a witness on behalf of the whole Church. Some Bishops are already doing this, but it would be a great matter if all adult Confirmations could be kept rigidly separate from the Confirmation of younger people.

In the conduct of the Classes care should be taken to make them definitely spiritual and personal. They should lead up to decision each time, whatever the subject may be. A hymn to open is helpful, if found practicable. The duration of the meeting should not be longer than forty-five minutes, and the gathering should be as bright and hearty as possible. The clergyman should be at the door at the close, to shake hands with the candidates as they leave. He should invite inquiries on any points arising out of his teaching, and, above everything, he should put his very best into this work of preparation, the best that his mind and heart can produce. He will never regret it; he will always thank God for the time and strength given to Confirmation preparation.

## II. *Work between the Classes.*

Two things have to be avoided. We must beware of giving the candidates too much to do, thus making the preparation burdensome, especially to those who, whether in service or in business, have not too much time of their own. We must equally beware of giving them too much writing. Some of them may not be able to write very well, and they will be reluctant to show their lack of knowledge, whether in writing or in spelling. Then again, there is a constant fear of the preparation being merely intellectual; truth for the mind only. Yet something is undoubtedly needed between the meetings of the Class. The instructive side will best be provided by means of that admirable little booklet of Canon Robinson's, *Outline Lectures on Confirmation*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elliot Stock, 1d.

The material is divided into sections, and blank spaces are left for the candidate to find, and answer the text. These Lectures can easily be made the basis of the instruction for the next class, and it will be found that if the clergyman tells the candidates beforehand how much to do, the work will be easily accomplished and will be ample for the purpose. Later on in the preparation the books will be shown to the clergyman to see whether the texts have been found and the work done. The devotional side of the candidate's life between the classes will also need careful consideration. It may be that habits of prayer have been relaxed and something of guidance on this point will have to be given. A very useful little book for devotional purposes is *My Confirmation*, by Everard.<sup>1</sup> A copy given to each candidate, with suggestions how to use it, will prove spiritually helpful. A very useful method, blending both the devotional and instructive aspects of the work between the classes, is used by Canon Howitt, of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He provides a paper of material for study each week, together with a slip to be filled up and signed by the candidate, saying that the information given on the paper has been thoroughly studied, perfectly understood, and personally accepted. I should much like to see Canon Howitt's plan made generally known in England. Another little book, entitled *Preparation for Confirmation*, by Canon Macnutt, is intended as a manual of instruction for candidates, and it would be possible to use this in connexion with our own preparation. The only thing is, that this, though full of useful and suggestive teaching, does not give the candidate anything to do but reading, and I venture to hope that Canon Macnutt will follow Canon Robinson's example in future editions, and omit the verses from the Scripture references in order that the candidate may have the work of finding them from the Bible itself.

<sup>1</sup> Nisbet & Co., 3d.



### III. *Personal Interviews.*

About the sixth or seventh week of the preparation it will be found useful to ask each candidate to send in a brief letter or statement, answering the question, 'Why I wish to be Confirmed.' This is for the purpose of bringing to a point the instructions that have been proceeding, and at the same time to prepare for what is to follow. If the candidate is assured of the absolute privacy of such communications, there will be no difficulty whatever in obtaining a note just telling in brief plain words the reason why the candidate has come forward. This note will then be used as the basis of the personal interview which will come about the end of the seventh week. The clergyman will see if the candidate really understands what is being done. This interview will not be concerned with any mere repetition of the catechism, or any part of it, but will have for its object the personal contact of the soul with Christ, and will lead as far as possible to genuine decision. The interview need not be long, and should close with definite personal prayer. Very often this interview will prove the turning point in the work of preparation. It is so easy and natural to use the candidate's letter as the warrant for a very frank, personal talk, and this in almost every case will prove spiritually fruitful. It is obvious that such personal interviews with those of the opposite sex will need the greatest care and should be as brief as possible. At the same time there must be spiritual faithfulness with a view to decision for Christ. A clergyman will not be unduly encouraged or elated if some of his candidates are quick to respond to his inquiries and appeals. Confirmation usually comes at an impressionable time of life, and in the case of girls and often of young women there are emotional tendencies which are only too apt to be mistaken both by the candidate and the clergyman for spiritual experiences. The counsel and assistance of the clergyman's wife, or in the case of a bachelor Vicar, of some experienced lady worker,

will be of immense help in dealing with this well known and difficult problem.

#### IV. *Close of Preparation.*

The last meeting of the series will necessarily concern itself with certain instructions as to the time and place of the Confirmation, and the distribution of the cards to the accepted candidates. At this meeting cards will also be given to the candidates for their friends, two at least to each candidate, together with the information that a sufficient space will be reserved in the Church for all parents, sponsors, and other friends. This notice will of course be put on the card itself. Among the verbal instructions it will not be found unnecessary to refer briefly but pointedly to the dress of the girl candidates, that it should be neat and not conspicuous, and that there should be no veil over the face, but only a cap with, if necessary, a veil down the back. Candidates from time to time, simply through lack of knowledge, get the impression that a Confirmation veil is almost the same as a bridal veil, and Bishops are known to feel very strongly on this matter. A spirit of expectation should be encouraged and cultivated at this last meeting, and the reality of the Service impressed as deeply as possible on the candidate. If the preparation has been earnest, thorough, and detailed, the realities of the Christian life will be well before the candidates, and they will understand that the approaching Confirmation will be a blessed opportunity of entering into the fulness of blessing in fellowship with Christ and His Church.

#### V. *Confirmation Day.*

It will be found particularly useful to provide a paper containing the hymns and the Confirmation Service arranged in order, together with suggestions for the candidates. These will include instructions as to what may be required in the course of the Service, and above

all, passages of Scripture, and perhaps a Collect or two, for use during the times of waiting. Candidates should be told that they need not remain kneeling all the time of the Service after the actual Confirmation. Physical weariness may often be prevented, if there happens to be a large number of candidates, by remaining seated, while meditating on the passages from the Bible found in the paper of suggestions. It will be found wise to announce beforehand, and on the paper itself, that the church doors will be closed during the opening hymn, and that no one will be admitted to the building afterwards. This will ensure quiet throughout the entire service, and all concerned will feel and appreciate the spiritual benefit.

#### VI. *After Confirmation.*

It is of the greatest spiritual value to make as much as possible of the first occasion of Holy Communion after Confirmation. As far as practicable the candidates should be encouraged to come all together at the same time. In my London parish we had an arrangement which worked so well that I venture to mention its details to others. In our case it was convenient to arrange a special celebration of the Holy Communion for past and present confirmees on the following Sunday evening after the Confirmation. This annual gathering was prefaced by an annual letter to past confirmees, announcing the date of the Confirmation and of this special celebration, and inviting their prayers, and, if possible, their attendance. On the occasion itself the candidates were arranged in the seats on both sides of the centre aisle, near the chancel steps, and they had been instructed beforehand not to come up to the Communion rails until they were invited to do so. The general congregation then communicated in the usual way, and when all was finished, a few words were spoken to the congregation, calling attention to the new members who were then communicating for the first time, and bespeaking

prayers on their behalf. It was very impressive to note the congregation all going on their knees in prayer whilst the new confirmees came up to receive the Holy Sacrament. Thus both congregation and confirmees were enabled to realize the importance of the occasion on which these fresh accessions to full Church membership were made. Those who have attempted something of this special Service will not easily forget its impressiveness. Of course the same arrangements can be made at an early morning, or a midday celebration, according to convenience.

As soon as possible after the Confirmation, and preferably on the Monday evening after the first Communion, the past and present confirmees should be invited to a social gathering. There should be simple refreshments for the first forty or forty-five minutes, and then a brief meeting lasting not longer than another forty-five minutes. At this gathering there should be a short address, mainly on the life and work in front of the new confirmees, and the confirmees of past years who will be present will often find spiritual profit and enjoyment at this meeting. It is an opportunity for reunion, and the clergyman then sees a number of his old friends who have left the parish and gone to work in other parts of the city or country. In this address the confirmees should be urged to take up some definite work ; choir, or tract work, or Sunday school teaching. At the close of this meeting two books should be given to each candidate in remembrance of Confirmation time. One should be of a general character dealing with the Christian life, and the other more specific, concerned with the Holy Communion. For the former purpose I used to find the following books of great value. *After Confirmation : What ?* by the Rev. R. C. Joynt. *Strong and Free* ; a book for Young Men, by Everard. *Bright and Fair* ; a book for Young Ladies, by Everard. *Beneath the Cross* ; Counsels for Communicants, by Everard.<sup>1</sup> For the latter purpose I found the Bishop of Durham's *At the Holy Communion*, and *Pledges of*

<sup>1</sup> All these are published by Nisbet & Co., 1s.

*His Love*<sup>1</sup> very useful, and *The Holy Communion*, by Canon Barnes-Lawrence.<sup>2</sup> The English Church Manual on the Holy Communion, by the Rev. H. M. Lang, will also be found helpful, especially as it contains the Communion Service and hymns for meditation.<sup>3</sup>

### SECTION 3. OUTLINES OF TEACHING.

The following sketch is arranged to cover eleven meetings ; ten before, and one after Confirmation. Two main ideas must be ever kept in view ; instruction and impression. Perhaps the greatest need of all is the endeavour to invest old truths with something like freshness of treatment for the young life that comes before us.

The main lines of preparation may be suggested as follows :—

1. What Confirmation is (2 Lessons).
2. What the Christian life is ; on its Divine side (1 Lesson).
3. What the Christian life is ; on its human side (3 Lessons).
4. How the Christian life becomes possible (4 Lessons).
5. After Confirmation : What ? (1 Lesson).

The detail of this general plan may be seen in the following statement.

1. First lesson. The meaning of Confirmation in general. (a) Towards God ; (b) towards the Church.
2. Second Lesson. The Confirmation Service. (a) Its active part ; (b) its passive part.
3. Third Lesson. The Divine Blessings (first and second questions and answers in Catechism).
4. Fourth Lesson. The human reception and enjoyment of these blessings (1. Repentance).
5. Fifth Lesson. The human reception and enjoyment of these blessings (2. Faith).

<sup>1</sup> Seeley & Co., 6d. and 1s.

<sup>2</sup> Bemrose & Sons, 6d. and 1s.

<sup>3</sup> Longmans & Co., 3d.



6. Sixth Lesson. The human reception and enjoyment of these blessings (3. Obedience. (a) Towards God ; (b) towards man).

7. Seventh Lesson. The human need of grace (1. Prayer).

8. Eighth Lesson. The human need of grace (2. The Bible).

9. Ninth Lesson. The human need of grace (3. The Holy Communion in Scripture and Catechism).

10. Tenth Lesson. The human need of grace (4. The Holy Communion in the Communion Office).

11. Eleventh Lesson. The human obligation. Life and Service after Confirmation.

#### SECTION 4. SUGGESTED METHODS OF TEACHING.

##### I. *The Meaning of Confirmation* (Lesson 1).

The following is necessarily only a bare outline, but it may suggest material for further study.

1. Start by indicating the emphasis placed by our Church on the full understanding of the meaning of Confirmation. See the title, 'Years of discretion.'

2. Show that at baptism we were designated, or dedicated to, and introduced into, the privileges and opportunities of the Christian community after prayer and sponsorial promises to teach what personal Christianity really meant.

3. Confirmation implies that we have been taught this, that we realize its meaning and intend to follow it for ourselves.

4. The Christian life may be summed up in two ways. (a) 'I give myself to God' (Josh. xxiv. 15 ; 1 Kings xviii. 21 ; Matt. vi. 24 ; 2 Cor. vi. 14-16). (b) 'God gives Himself to me' (Luke xi. 9-13 ; John xiv. 14, 16, 26 ; Phil. iv. 13, 19).

5. Nothing less than this is personal Christianity, and it must be faced clearly. Then, when we are right with Christ, we enter into a true relation to Christians.

(a) In the Church of England Confirmation is the gateway to full membership and all privileges. (b) Baptism may be illustrated by the soldier's enlistment, and then, after the necessary training and discipline, Confirmation may be likened to his putting on his regimentals, when he confesses Whose, and what he is.

## II. *The Confirmation Service* (Lesson 2).

1. Part I. The human, or active side.

(a) The opening address, with special reference to 'Hereafter,' 'Openly,' 'Mouth and consent.'

(b) The Bishop's question, specially emphasizing 'Ratify and confirm.'

(c) The candidate's answer, noticing, 'audibly,' and 'I do' (not 'we do').

(d) The summary of this part is: 'I promise'; 'I give myself to God.'

2. Part II. The Divine, or passive side.

(a) The Bishop's reminder; 'Our help is in the Name of the Lord.'

(b) The call to prayer. Every prayer, including a petition for the Holy Spirit. The titles of God should be noted; 'Almighty and ever-living God,' or 'Almighty and everlasting God.'

(c) The implication of the prayers; 'Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants'; a definite work of grace already assumed.

(d) The meaning of the laying on of hands carefully stated; 'To certify them by this sign.'

(e) The summary of this part is: 'I receive'; 'God gives Himself to me.'

## III. *The Christian Life; Divine Side* (Lesson 3).

1. The Church Catechism: Our name (individuality); when given (baptism).

2. The Catechism beautifully and helpfully starts from the Divine, not from the human side (God first).

3. Three blessings are offered.

(a) 'Member of Christ.' Forgiveness and life. Sin separates, Christ unites (John v. 24; John xv. 5; 1 John i. 7).

(b) 'Child of God.' Grace and strength. Arising out of the former blessing (John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; Eph. iii. 14-16).

(c) 'Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.' Protection and preservation. Present and future. Grace and glory. (Eph. i. 13, 14; Phil. iv. 19; John xiv. 2, 3; 2 Cor. v. 1; 1 Pet. i. 4.)

4. Observe the completeness of these blessings. Covering past, present, and future. All possible circumstances provided for. Nothing beyond these.

5. All these are ours because of God's love. The three circles of love: (a) the world (John iii. 16), (b) the Church (Eph. v. 25); (c) the individual (Gal. ii. 20).

6. And all become ours when we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord. In Him all gifts and blessings are included.

7. Dwell wholly in this lesson on the Divine side and not at all on the human. This will encourage and inspire. Give Isaiah xli. 10 as a Confirmation motto.

#### IV. *The Christian Life; Human Side.* (1) Repentance (Lesson 4).

1. Now comes the question; How are these three gifts to be enjoyed as our own?

2. The Catechism teaches three ways: 'Renounce,' 'Believe,' 'Keep.' Repentance, Trust, Obedience.

3. The meaning of 'renounce'; 'to give up,' 'to have nothing to do with.'

4. What are we to renounce? Everything that is sinful, or liable to lead to sin. Three special enemies:—

(a) The enemy above us: the author of all evil; tempts direct by suggestion, especially to unbelief and pride (Gen. iii. 1-5; Jas. iv. 7; 1 Pet. v. 9). Note that all Bible temptations of Satan are against believers

not against people of the world. Satan has no need to tempt *them*. This should keep us from discouragement when we are tempted by him.

(b) The enemy around us : the world. Everything evil, or likely to lead to it, in persons and things around us. We have no difficulty about what is actually evil ; only about what is doubtful. How are we to know what is 'worldly' ? One test will settle almost everything. Either, What would Jesus have done ? Or, still better, What would He wish me to do (Rom. xii. 2 ; 1 John ii. 15-17) ?

(c) The enemy within us : the flesh. Everything in our own hearts. Thoughts and desires. Distinguish carefully between temptation and sin. We cannot prevent thoughts coming, but we can prevent them staying. Luther wrote to his son that we cannot prevent the birds from flying around our heads, but we can prevent them from building their nests in our hair (Rom. viii. 5-8 ; Gal. v. 17-21). On this occasion, but only quite generally, make pointed references or allusions to sins of the flesh. The subject should be dealt with more in detail under the seventh commandment.

5. Strong emphasis on the true meaning of repentance. Not penitence, or sorrow for sin, but, 'Whereby we forsake sin.' This is the key to the Christian position. Without repentance, no blessings of Christ are possible.

## V. *The Christian Life ; Human Side.* (2) Trust (Lesson 5).

1. 'Articles of the Christian Faith,' means particular points of the Christian belief. These are found in the Bible as a whole and yet are summarized conveniently in the Creed.

2. Three parts : belief in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Dwell upon all these sections without undue detail.

3. Words to be explained : 'Holy,' 'quick,' 'Catholic Church,' 'Communion of Saints.'

4. Belief is not everything that is required. From

belief of articles, we have to ascend to trust in a Person. We 'chiefly learn' personal trust. Not belief in facts about God, but trust in God Himself (Heb. xi. 3, 6; Acts xv. 31; Jas. ii. 19; John i. 12).

5. Emphasize the necessity of personal trust: faith is found essential in every department of life. So in religion, it is the only answer to God's revelation if there is to be any connexion between Him and man.

6. Observe in the Catechism the three circles. The world as made by the Father. Mankind as redeemed by the Son. The Church as being sanctified by the Spirit.

7. See especially in each point the emphasis on 'me.'

## VI. *The Christian Life; Human Side* (3) Obedience (Lesson 6).

1. What is obedience? The expression and proof of our repentance and trust.

2. What is the standard of obedience? The Bible as the Word of God.

3. What is the summary of that standard? The ten Commandments.

(a) Observe the outline. God and others:

(b) Note the completeness. Covering thoughts, words, and deeds in relation to God and our neighbour.

4. Call special attention to the beautiful interpretation of the Commandments in 'Our Duty,' laying stress on the positive as well as the negative side.

5. Observe the motive of obedience. 'Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.' Redemption is the reason for obedience.

6. Avoid overmuch detail in dealing with these Commandments which are presumably pretty familiar. Strive to impress the principles involved without going too much into specific applications.

7. On the subject of purity the following suggestions may be made for work amongst boys and young men.

(a) Let every clergyman join the Alliance of Honour.



The Secretaries at Leysian Buildings, City Road, London, E.C., will give all particulars of membership.

(b) Obtain for personal reading *The Cry of the Boys*, by B. M. Barbour, to be obtained from the author, 37, Thomas Street, Banbury (1d.).

(c) Obtain for circulation, wherever necessary, *In Confidence : To Boys*, by the Rev. H. Bisseker (Alliance of Honour, as above, 2d.).

## VII. *The Christian's Need of Grace.* (1) Prayer (Lesson 7).

1. What prayer is. Trustfully telling God what we need, and asking Him for it according to His will. Illustrations of prayer : the telegraph, telephone, microphone.

2. Encouragements to prayer. (a) The promises in the Bible. (b) Examples of men and women of prayer.

3. Stated times of prayer. (a) Regular. (b) Stated.

4. Ejaculatory prayer. Prayer that 'darts' up to God like an arrow. Illustrations from the Bible ; e.g. 'Lord, save me.' 'Lord, help me.'

5. The model prayer : the Lord's Prayer, with its (a) Three petitions for God's glory. (b) Three (or Four) petitions for our needs.

6. Special attention to the 'Desire,' as an almost perfect illustration of what the Lord's Prayer means.

7. In all our lesson on prayer make the matter quite simple, easy, and natural, as the expression of our spiritual life.

## VIII. *The Christian's Need of Grace.* (2) The Bible (Lesson 8).

1. There is no reference to the Bible in the Catechism as one means of grace, because it covers everything and includes *all* means, since grace rests upon Divine revelation.

2. The uniqueness of the Bible. The only Book revealing (a) God's love, (b) deliverance from sin.

3. This is due to Christ the Living Word as (a) God's revelation, (b) God's power.

4. To be read primarily for ourselves and not for others ; see the examples, promises, warnings, precepts, hopes. 'What saith my Lord unto His servant ?'

5. To be read with prayer. Prayer and the Bible are the two sides of communion. Our talking to God and God talking to us.

6. To be read with definite personal application to our own needs day by day. This is the meaning of meditation.

7. To be read daily. Food is needed regularly for the body, and this is the food for the soul. Even five minutes will suffice if we cannot spare more. Quality, not quantity, is to be insisted on.

8. This method of daily personal Bible meditation is the supreme safeguard against all backsliding. The Bible is the mirror in which we see ourselves (Jas i. 23-25), the water to cleanse ourselves (Eph. v. 26, 27), and the food to strengthen ourselves (Jer. xv. 16).

9. The value of regular systematic reading in connexion with a Bible Union. The Scripture Union is in many respects the best because of its brevity and simplicity of choice. Invite candidates to become members and offer to get cards.

10. In all this teaching on the Bible, try as far as possible to make it novel and fresh in treatment.

IX. *The Christian's Need of Grace.* (3) The Holy Communion in Scripture and Catechism (Lesson 9).

1. The teaching must be positive, not negative ; spiritual and devotional, and not at all controversial.

2. The leading ideas from the New Testament. (a) a Remembrance ; (b) a Picture ; (c) a Promise. Distinguish between *knowing* and *remembering*. We cannot remember if we do not know, and we cannot 'do this in remembrance' unless we know Christ as our personal Saviour.

3. In the New Testament observe the various aspects of Christ's work expressed in the Lord's Supper : Christ for us ; in us ; with us ; coming.

4. Then concentrate on the first four questions of the Catechism in regard to the Lord's Supper (a) What it is : a remembrance of Calvary and of its spiritual benefits ; (b) What it does : strengthening and refreshing.

5. In all this teaching on Holy Communion endeavour to fix the minds of the candidates on Him, not on it.

X. *The Christian's Need of Grace.* (4) The Holy Communion in the Catechism and Communion Office (Lesson 10).

1. Start with the last question and answer in the Catechism, emphasizing the three requirements for those who come. This is the human side.

2. Then show how these very three requirements form the substance of the ante-Communion Service. (a) Repentance ; (b) Faith ; (c) Love. Hence the importance of this part of the service as a constant, thorough, and normally sufficient preparation for Communion.

3. Dwell upon the more important points in the Service needing elucidation.

(a) Read the Exhortation to communicants for a fine statement of the spiritual meaning of the ordinance.

(b) Draw special attention to the constant thought of due preparation as seen in the long Exhortation, the short Exhortation ('Ye that do truly'), followed by the Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words. This is how our Church 'fences the Table.'

(c) Dwell on the importance of joining heartily in 'Therefore with angels,' etc.

(d) Show carefully the meaning of the Consecration Prayer, and point out that the manual acts should be followed with open eyes in order to help the mind to 'remember' Calvary. Urge especially the importance of joining in the 'Amen' with which the Prayer closes.

(e) Call attention to the Words of Administration.

The first part is a prayer based upon Calvary ; the second is an exhortation to eat and drink in remembrance, and to feed by faith on Christ. Point out that the relation between the sign and the thing signified is one of parallelism, not of identity. There are two givers : the Lord, and the minister : two receivers ; the body, and the soul ; two methods ; the mouth, and faith. And when we approach with a true and living faith the two acts are simultaneous ; the Lord gives His grace as the clergyman gives the elements, so that we eat and drink the elements *in* faith, and at the same time we feed on Christ *by* faith.

(f) In some cases it may be necessary to suggest quite simply the importance of ungloved hands and of only a small sip of wine.

(g) After the benediction the new confirmees should be told to wait until the Service is actually over by the consumption of any of the consecrated elements that may remain over. A moment or two of quiet in their seats will be in every way reverently and spiritually helpful.

#### XI. *After Confirmation : What ?* (Lesson 11).

1. Either just before, or preferably just after, the special first Communion an address should be given, showing something of what is to be expected from the confirmer.

2. The Christian life must first be emphasized : (a) On its human side of consistency ; (b) on its Divine side of grace sufficient for every need.

3. Christian service must then be taught : (a) A general witness of the life ; (b) some definite form of Christian work in connexion with the Church.

4. Once again the endeavour should be made to put the new life at once brightly, earnestly, and definitely before the confirmees.

#### XII. *Books for Clerical Use.*

1. The very best as a basis is *Our Confirmation Class*, by Bishop Wynne.

2. For the intellectual and instructive side, *Confirmation Lectures*, by Canon Barnes-Lawrence ; *Lectures on Confirmation*, by E. B. Elliott ; *Lectures on Confirmation*, by Dean Vaughan ; and *Confirmation : A Manual*, by L. M. Bagge.

3. For teaching the Catechism, *The Church Catechism simply explained*, by Stowell ; and *Lectures on the Catechism*, by Bishop Rowley Hill.

4. For our work in general, *Confirmation*, by Canon Dyson Hague.

It has of course been impossible to do more than give the barest suggestions for Confirmation work. But it is only right before passing away from the subject to emphasize afresh in the plainest way the unspeakable privilege and great responsibility of this opportunity of coming so closely in contact with the spiritual needs of the young people of our Church and parish. The man who undertakes this work in the right spirit will often feel overwhelmed as he contemplates the solemn possibilities, and yet will find his heart rejoicing again and again in the indications of God's gracious blessing resting upon his prayerful efforts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it may be permissible to say that Part I. of the writer's *Catholic Faith* was originally given in substance to his own Confirmation Classes. And it has been a great satisfaction to learn that several clergymen in England and Canada are able to use it in this way.



## CHAPTER V

### CHILDREN'S WORK

**P**AROCHIAL work among children will always occupy an important place in the thought and interests of a clergyman's life. A Scottish shepherd was once asked how he was able to produce so fine a breed of sheep, and he answered, 'By taking care of the lambs.'

#### SECTION I. DAY SCHOOLS.

If, and as long as, a day school is connected with a parish, the clergyman will be well advised to make the most he can of the opportunity afforded him to provide definite spiritual instruction. To this end he should cultivate the friendship of the teachers as far as possible and show them that he regards them as his fellow-workers. There are few opportunities in the Church of England fraught with such far-reaching results as a union of clergy and day school teachers who are all actuated with the one desire of influencing for God and good the children of the school. A Scripture class should be taken weekly by the Curate of the parish, and it will be well if the class is not always the same ; one Standard may be taken for several weeks, and then another Standard, so as to provide the opportunity for the clergyman to get into touch with as many of the children as possible. In doing this work it is imperative for the young clergyman to know something of the art of teaching and school discipline. Theological Colleges of recent years have been laying stress on this as part of their curriculum, and it has been a very wise arrangement. There is scarcely anything

that tends to make a trained teacher more indifferent to clerical help in his school than the consciousness that the clergy do not know how to teach. It is always advisable, if not necessary, to remove from the minds of such trained workers the idea that deacons and young clergymen, to use Bishop Wilberforce's phrase, are among 'the green things of the earth.'

The Incumbent, if he is at all interested in children and capable of dealing with them, will find it exceedingly useful to have a weekly gathering of all, or at any rate of the senior classes, in one room during the Scripture hour. Or failing this, he should hold a meeting for one school only, taking each department in rotation week by week. This meeting should consist mainly of a few brief prayers, and then a spiritual, personal address, though of course possessing some elements of suitable instruction. If such a meeting is properly arranged and well carried out, it will prove one of the most enjoyable opportunities of children's work that falls to the Incumbent of a parish.

From time to time the clergy will naturally 'drop in' during school hours when the ordinary work is proceeding, and both teachers and children will thus be enabled to feel that the clergyman takes a keen interest in the school and desires to be the friend and helper of all. Once again let it be said that opportunities of day school work should be cherished and treasured as among the finest and most valuable channels of influence.

## SECTION 2. SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

It is most important that the clergy should become imbued with a strong conviction of the value and importance of Sunday School work, for apart from such convictions very little will be done. It is a great mistake to think that 'anything will do' for Sunday Schools, and it is this attitude that leads many people to describe as 'Sunday School' something that stands for what is essentially weak, poor, and almost worthless. As time goes on it would seem pretty certain that clerical

work and influence in Day Schools will become less and less, and this in itself is a reason for making the most of Sunday Schools. Dissenting Churches have fully recognized this, especially because they have not given themselves to day school work, and the general equipment of Nonconformist Sunday Schools is, as a rule, infinitely superior to anything that we possess in the Church of England. This need not be, and ought not to be, if we are alive to the importance of the opportunity provided for us on Sunday.

The purpose of Sunday School work should be regarded as that of personal influence rather than education. A good deal of unfair criticism is directed against Sunday Schools because they do not teach and instruct, though a little thought should suggest that something like one hour a week, with many influences working in the opposite direction, would not be regarded by any educationist as adequate to the work of instruction. Let us by all means provide the very best intellectual opportunities we can obtain, but when everything has been said, Sunday School work will be largely that of personal impression and inspiration rather than that which is purely intellectual and educative.

Clerical association with Sunday Schools will necessarily take a variety of forms. First of all, the clergyman will endeavour to visit his Sunday Schools regularly, and see for himself what is going on. Superintendents and teachers will be glad to have the Incumbent or Curate to open or close the school, and to get into touch with the actual work. Then a clergyman will make a special point of knowing the Sunday School teachers and doing his utmost to work for them and with them. One special point of great importance is a weekly Preparation Class which should be regarded as the indispensable adjunct of all Sunday School work. If the clergyman is able to lead this himself so much the better, but such a class ought to be provided under any circumstances, and regarded as one of the essential features of the parochial organization. It may easily turn out that the post of

superintendent is available for the clergyman, and if he is capable of filling it there are many reasons why he should do so. Of course if there is a competent layman to undertake this work there is no reason for the clergyman to become associated with it, but in the absence of any other qualified person there is much to be said for the personal influence of a clerical superintendency. It will mean a great deal of time and a large amount of hard work, but time and labour will be well spent on so valuable an adjunct to the Church.

One point connected with Sunday Schools has been raised frequently of recent years. Is it possible to associate the catechetical method known as that of *St. Sulpice* with the ordinary Anglican Sunday School? My own impression is that the two ideas are quite incompatible, and that if the Catechism is to be introduced it must be as something quite separate from the ordinary Sunday School work. My opinion on this is strongly confirmed by the wise and conclusive words on the subject written by the Bishop of Manchester in his *Pastors and Teachers*. The Method of the Catechism and the Method of the Sunday School are so entirely different that it seems quite impracticable to attempt to blend the two.

It will be found very useful, if not absolutely necessary, to disconnect the elder scholars from the Sunday School, when they leave the day school and go to work. The gap between the ages of thirteen and seventeen constitutes one of the greatest problems of the Church in regard to young life, and the boy or girl who has left school and commenced work does not like to be regarded as still associated with Sunday School. It will therefore be advisable to form the elder scholars into Bible Classes and have these in a separate building, though still regarded as an integral part of the Sunday School work. In my first Curacy we drafted these boys and girls into Bible Classes which were held in the church adjoining the school. The members met near the lectern for the opening and closing exercises, and then dispersed to different parts of the church for school work. The result was in every

way admirable, and the proportion of young people in the congregation who were retained for those trying years was quite large and most encouraging.

Some books which have been found of the greatest possible use in work among children will be found in the list at the end of the book, but special attention is here called to the great value of the American *Sunday School Times*, a weekly paper which provides invaluable help of all kinds in connexion with work among children. Its Lesson Helps are by some of the foremost scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. Its Sunday School methods are suggested by some of the most experienced teachers ; while its articles on the spiritual life, Bible study, and practical problems, make it of general service to all Christian workers. Not the least interesting and valuable part of the paper is the provision of anecdotes and illustrations week by week for the use of teachers and other Christian workers. If I may venture on a personal word of testimony, I would say that I possess the volumes of this paper for over thirty years, and would not part with them on any account. Dr. H. C. Trumbull, the late Editor, made the paper what it has become, and his work is worthily maintained by his son, the present Editor.

Once again, let it be thoroughly understood that work in and for the Sunday School should occupy a definite place in the plans of every clergyman.

### SECTION 3. CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

From time to time during the year it will be wise and necessary to gather together the children in church for a Sunday Afternoon Service. On at least five special days this seems to be essential. These are the first Sunday of the New Year ; Easter Day ; Whit Sunday ; the Sunday School Anniversary, and Harvest Thanksgiving. It is perhaps unadvisable to have Services much oftener than this, because of the interruption thereby caused to the series of Sunday School lessons, but on these special occasions there is a very great value in having a united



gathering in church, if only to enable the children to realize the connexion between Sunday School and church, and the oneness of all efforts on behalf of young people. There are parishes where children who do not attend the ordinary Sunday School will need some weekly provision, and for them a weekly Children's Service in church is sometimes arranged. On the special occasions above referred to, those who are in the habit of coming week by week will still be able to have their places in church, while the rest of the children occupy the other seats. It is on such occasions as these that sermons to children will be preached, to which reference has been made in an earlier chapter.

#### SECTION 4. WEEKDAY WORK.

Every one with experience of parish work knows well the difficulty attached to work among children on weekdays, and yet something must be done to link Sunday to Sunday, and also to provide an outlet for any personal influence which may result from day school work. One department frequently favoured is that of a Boys' Brigade, or a Church Lads' Brigade, though more recently this work has taken the form of the Boy Scouts' Movement. It may be said concerning these aspects of work that almost everything will depend upon the chief officer. If he is spiritually keen as well as practically experienced the results will be encouraging, but it would be far better not to have any Brigade or Scout work unless we can make quite sure of the officer in command. I have often seen the most diverse results among the very same boys by reason of a change of officers.

Band of Hope work will naturally call for attention, and there is no doubt that when properly conducted a Children's Band of Hope can be made one of the most valuable helps in parochial work. Here again, as elsewhere, the personal element predominates, and the leader must be one who is not merely an enthusiastic temperance worker, but a man (or woman) who knows how to manage

children. The great problem in connexion with Band of Hope work is variety and the absence of monotony, and this will need a good deal of patient thought and resourcefulness. If, however, the superintendent will associate with himself a few warmhearted temperance workers it will not be impossible to provide regular weekly programmes which will prove in every way fruitful for the highest purposes. No Band of Hope worker should fail to consult the *Band of Hope Chronicle*, the organ of the United Kingdom Band of Hope Union, which, by means of suggested Outline Addresses and methods, will do much to keep a Band of Hope out of ruts, and enable it to go forward with vigour and blessing.

Reviewing the whole subject of Children's Work it should be borne in mind that every endeavour must be made to obtain a clergyman with a gift with children and then to allow him a free hand to go his own way. Division of labour is never more keenly needed than in connexion with children's work, and it will be found that the one who undertakes this will have to give to it a great part of his time and strength.

## CHAPTER VI

### BIBLE CLASS WORK

#### SECTION 1. THE IMPORTANCE.

**A**MONG the many departments of parochial work that of Bible Classes stands pre-eminent. Such classes provide a fine opportunity for positive teaching, as well as for free, frank discussion among those who often wish to know more about points raised in sermons which obviously cannot be discussed in church. Bible Classes also have a real importance in connexion with the clergyman's reading, for if he is responsible for such a class he is compelled to study in preparation for it. Then again, Bible Classes in the parish will do much to keep the methods of work on spiritual lines, for with strong Bible work there will be scarcely any room for mere ephemeral work.

#### SECTION 2. MEN'S CLASSES.

My good friend Mr. Watts-Ditchfield, of Bethnal Green, is never tired of emphasizing the special importance of work among men as likely to be more fruitful than anything else, because when the men are won the wives and children will almost naturally be influenced. There is a great deal of force in this contention, more particularly as the results of Day School and Sunday School work during the last twenty years are not too encouraging, to put it mildly, in regard to church attendance and membership. But whether this be true or not, a Men's Bible Class will prove of great value and spiritual blessing.

1. How then should the clergyman set about organizing this work ? A preliminary step is that of advertising the opening meeting by means of slips circulated through the parish, and in the schools, and then perhaps the following suggestions will be found serviceable.

2. The meeting must be regular and punctual ; not longer than one hour. The men ought to know that it will commence and close at the proper time.

3. The meeting should be made as hearty as possible ; the men being welcomed, and greeted at the close. There is a great truth in the simple incident recorded of a poor woman in connexion with a Mission Church. 'What do you do ?' she was asked. 'I smiles 'em in, and then I smiles 'em out.'

4. The clergyman in charge should make a point of preparing with the utmost thoroughness for this work, putting his very best into it, and sparing no time or trouble to make himself efficient and proficient.

5. The subjects of the Class should be varied as much as possible. Sometimes a course may be given on some book, or part of a book of the Bible. Genesis, Joshua, the Fourth Gospel, and Acts, lend themselves particularly to this method. At any time a series of biographical studies will be interesting. The characters of the Old Testament are of perennial fascination. Yet again, a series of topics dealing with current difficulties and problems : Why we believe in God ; in Christ ; in the Bible, in the Church.

6. Opportunity should be given for discussion at these Classes, care being taken to keep it as pertinent as possible, but the fact that discussion is invited will prove of great service in letting it be known that difficulties are not shirked.

7. The visitation of the men in their homes during the evenings of the week will prove of material assistance and support to the Class.

8. The clergyman should let it be known that he is 'At Home' to them at some suitable time of an evening, weekly or fortnightly.

9. It is very important to work through a Committee of the men themselves. This Committee, consisting of some of the earnest members, will undertake a great deal of the work of organization.

10. A Sick and Benefit Club will also be found a useful adjunct to a Bible Class. If, however, a Slate Club should be attached it should be carefully formed on a proper basis with the necessary checks and safeguards.

11. A social gathering, occasionally, on a week evening, especially at the opening of an autumn season, or the commencement of a New Year will be useful, care being taken that the items given are in strict harmony with the character and purpose of the Bible Class.

12. If possible, a summer outing might be arranged, the men paying for themselves by weekly instalments for a few weeks prior to the date.

### SECTION 3. WOMEN'S CLASSES.

A great deal that has been said about method for organizing Men's Classes applies equally well here. A Committee of women will be found valuable, if not essential. Of course the topics and treatment will differ from those used at Men's Bible Classes, but two points may be specially emphasized: (a) The need of clear definite personal teaching; (b) the absolute necessity of 'good cheer' as the predominant note of the teaching. As we have already pointed out, the life of working women is often monotonous and joyless, and the more brightness we can put into our messages for them the better for all concerned.

### SECTION 4. CHILDREN'S CLASSES.

This work will naturally be associated with our general efforts on behalf of children, and will often take the form of a weekly meeting of the Children's Scripture Union. Care should be taken to avoid anything like mere 'talks' or 'addresses.' As Dr. Trumbull well says, 'Telling is not teaching, for teaching is 'causing another to learn.'



This thought should be borne in mind in all Bible Class effort. For thorough doctrinal work among children special attention is called to that valuable series of Lessons for Juniors, by Dr. Eugene and Miss S. G. Stock, *Steps to Truth*. But whatever be the subject of the class we must never forget that it is intended for downright instruction.

## CHAPTER VII

### FOREIGN MISSIONS

#### SECTION I. THEIR PLACE IN THE MINISTRY.

**I**T ought to go without saying that Foreign Missions should occupy a prominent, not to say predominant place in every ministry. In some respects they constitute a test of a clergyman's own spiritual life, because they show whether or not he has the genuine missionary spirit. It is an almost universal experience that there is no contradiction or incompatibility between interest in Home Missions and interest in Foreign Missions. The distinction thus drawn is merely one of convenience, because in the sight of God there can be no 'Home' or 'Foreign' work. 'All souls are mine' is the Old Testament word, and 'Go ye into all the world' is the New Testament counterpart. It has been well and truly said that our great problem is not so much the 'non-Church-going,' as the 'non-going Church,' and it will probably be found in almost every instance that the extent and power of missionary work in a parish will depend largely on the clergyman's own attitude to God's great work of world-wide evangelization. It is unspeakably sad to contemplate the fact that, judging from the reports of Missionary Societies, there are several hundred parishes in England alone where nothing seems to be done for Foreign Missions. It would be interesting, and perhaps spiritually significant, to discover what is collected each year in such churches for 'Church Expenses,' and how these expenses are made up. We happen to know two or three churches where one-tenth of every collection is devoted to the work of Foreign Missions,

and we have yet to learn that these churches suffer financially or spiritually by putting God's greatest enterprise first. Let every clergyman therefore settle it in his own heart that if missionary work is not of much interest to him he should carefully scrutinize his own spiritual life in the light of God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## SECTION 2. METHODS OF WORK.

Assuming that a clergyman enters upon his work as Curate or Incumbent with a keen desire to do all in his power to further the work of world-wide evangelization, the question will often arise as to the best methods of exercising influence and bringing his people to see the claim of the world in the sight of God. What then can such a clergyman do? The following suggestions are made as the result of reading, experience, and consultation with those who are being blessed of God in the furtherance of this work.

1. First and foremost, the clergyman should study the New Testament principles of Missions in order to see what God thinks of them and where He places them. In particular, he will concentrate on our Lord's teaching during the Great Forty Days, and will find that in the five records in Holy Scripture world-wide missions formed the main theme of our Lord's conversations with His disciples. As part of this teaching, He will observe that our Lord places three great truths on an absolute level of equality and importance: the absolute necessity of the death of the Messiah; the absolute necessity of His resurrection; and the equally absolute necessity of repentance and remission being preached in His Name among all nations (Luke xxiv. 46, 47). This passage alone with its solemn threefold emphasis on 'It is necessary' ought to be sufficient to show the place that Missions occupied in the mind of the Risen Christ, and therefore the place that they should occupy in the heart and life of all His servants. The more a clergyman ponders

the great realities of the New Testament concerning the work of Christ for the whole world the more he will find his heart, and mind, and conscience stirred to do God's will.

2. Missionary reading will also prove abundantly fruitful. If the clergyman is interested (and who is not ?) in modern ecclesiastical problems, he will find many of them being attacked, and to a great extent solved, in the Mission Field. The study of a book like Lindsay's *Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries* will reveal the important bearing of Missions to-day on some of the acutest controversies at home, and in the same connexion, that invaluable quarterly, *The East and the West*, and that most useful monthly, *The Church Missionary Review*, will provide abundant material for missionary reading and study. More popular magazines like the *Church Missionary Gleaner* and the *Mission World* of the S.P.G., will enable the clergyman to know definitely what is being done in the Foreign Field.

3. Definite missionary study as well as general missionary reading should find a place in a clergyman's life. There are text books now published year by year by the C.M.S. and other organizations, which will provide a man ample material for a winter's study of some great Mission Field. No one could take up *The Uplift of China* or *The Desire of India*, or *The Reproach of Islam*, without finding his own life enriched in a variety of ways.

It is only in recent years that we have heard of 'The Science of Missions,' for up to a comparatively short time ago no one thought of collecting, combining, and commenting on the data of missionary work. But to-day authorities in various branches of the Christian Church are generalizing on these facts and are producing results which make Christian Missions a much more intellectual reality than ever before. To this survey the Christian minister can contribute much by his interest in and study of missionary principles, missionary facts and missionary possibilities. And in particular, his personal sympathy with and advocacy of missions will be deepened

and strengthened in proportion to the thoroughness he can give to the study of the various missionary fields and problems.

4. Individual private prayer will naturally form an important part of a clergyman's work for Missions. The C.M.S. Cycle of Prayer, or a similar Cycle of some other Missionary Society, will give intelligent guidance day by day, as we endeavour to make our missionary intercession more definite and real. Our reading will influence our prayer, and our prayer will react in turn upon our reading.

5. A Missionary Prayer Meeting will of course be included in the parish organization. It may be monthly, or, if convenient, even oftener. The ordinary Parish Prayer Meeting might be given a special missionary turn on the first or some other gathering of the month. There may not be many people to attend such a meeting, but of its spiritual fruitfulness there can be no question.

6. Missionary meetings of various kinds will naturally be in a clergyman's mind. A Branch of the Gleaners' Union helps to bring together the keen, earnest missionary workers, and these gatherings can be varied from time to time in quite a number of ways. Sales of Work on behalf of Missions are also useful, and of course they will be entirely free of all the unworthy and impossible methods usually associated with bazaars. A quiet Sale of Work undertaken by those who often have no opportunity of giving money to the cause will do nothing but good. An All-Day Working Party for Medical Missions has also proved of real service in many parishes. Particulars of what has been done can be obtained from a little booklet included in the list of works mentioned at the end of this volume. The Annual Meeting of the Missionary Society will be made a special feature, and will undoubtedly help forward the cause if properly arranged.

7. Sermons from time to time by missionaries will also be considered, though it may not always be useless to ask our honoured brethren to give accounts of their work instead of preaching ordinary sermons. There is



nothing that a congregation as a rule finds more interesting than a clear account at first-hand from those who have had personal experience of missionary work.

8. From time to time during the year missionary sermons should be preached by the clergyman of the parish. There would be no collection for Missions, but simply a sermon, calling attention to the work, and perhaps giving information. Archbishop Temple was in the habit of laying great stress on this, and there can be no doubt about the spiritual value of it. It may be found wise not to announce it beforehand lest people who are not interested in Missions may be conspicuous by their absence, and instead of an ordinary sermon dealing with missionary principles some Mission Field might be taken, and the salient points of the history and methods dealt with in the form of an address, or sermon. Such sermons might well be given at least once a quarter, taking morning and evening in turn. These opportunities would be as useful to the clergyman as to his people in leading him to study afresh the missionary problem, and obtain information of missionary work. No one could 'get up' the story of Uganda, or Fiji, or Tinnevely, or the Punjab, without becoming interested himself, and passing on the interest to others.

9. Medical Missions should not be overlooked because of God's wonderful blessing resting upon this twofold effort on behalf of Christ.

10. An endeavour should be made to get people to subscribe regularly for a missionary magazine. A Literature Secretary in a parish will probably accomplish this work best of all, though it will need a clergyman to call attention to the value and importance of missionary reading. If people would only take in such a paper as the *Gleaner*, their interest in Missions would be deepened, and they would be led to more prayer and effort.

11. In several churches Missionary pictures cut out from current magazines are put upon a green baize-covered board, which hangs in the church porch. A notice at the foot of the board would also inform the

reader where the magazines could be obtained. The interest in Missions will often be deepened by such a simple effort.

12. If the parish has sent out any missionaries into the field it would be of great value to have a board in the church with their names, dates, and allocations. Nothing could well minister more to real fellowship in work than this constant reminder of those who had been 'sent forth' in the Master's Name.

13. The clergyman must ever be on the look-out for likely candidates for missionary work, young men and young women, and he should help them along after they are found. Many a candidate would be greatly assisted by the loving sympathetic efforts of a clergyman to give some lessons in Scripture, or the Prayer Book, or even a little guidance in the Greek Testament. For this purpose the arrangements made by the Home Preparation Union of the C.M.S. will prove a genuine help to a clergyman.

14. Work among children must necessarily be given a prominent place in the interests of Missions. The members of a Scripture Union, or Children's Service, or a Band of Hope, should be encouraged to join the Young People's Union of the C.M.S., or some kindred missionary organization. Then with Working Parties and Missionary Addresses in Sunday School and elsewhere, together with the distribution of some children's missionary paper, like the *Round World*, the attention and interest of boys and girls will be awakened and deepened.

15. One of the newest, and certainly the most important forms of parochial missionary work is known as 'The Missionary Study Circle.' A few keen true-hearted workers unite to study seriously some definite Mission, or some missionary problems. The clergyman will often be found the best leader of this band, but of course it is by no means essential that he should do this work if he can obtain the help and guidance of a thoughtful missionary-spirited layman. In any case, however, he will need to show his own personal interest in missionary study whether

he attends the Circle or not. The C.M.S. has developed this work remarkably during the last few years, and every clergyman should write to the Society for information.

16. Last, but not least, let no parish forget the Jews. 'To the Jew first' is a great New Testament principle, and it has its modern applications. As a rule, it will be found that the keenest Bible students in a parish are those who are interested in Jewish missionary work, and although it may not be a popular form of missionary effort, it will well repay the attention that can be given to it. The monthly magazine of the London Jews' Society, *The Jewish Missionary Intelligencer*, will be welcomed by all who have at heart the interests of God's people, the Jews. It is a mistake to call them 'God's Ancient People,' for they are still His people, 'beloved for the fathers' sake.'

There are other methods that will doubtless commend themselves to different clergymen in different circumstances. But perhaps enough has been said to show how true it is that almost everything in a parish with regard to Missions will depend upon the spiritual keenness of the clergyman himself.

### SECTION 3. SOME MISSIONARY BOOKS.

Among the very many books that are now available for use by clergymen and others for missionary study, only a few can be mentioned, but it is thought that they represent some of the latest and best work in this connexion. For the clergyman's own intellectual and spiritual life in relation to Missions, Dr. Mott's book, *The Home Ministry and Modern Missions*, probably comes first. Side by side with this will be the same writer's newer work, *The Decisive Hour of Foreign Missions*. Two books dealing with missionary principles in the light of the New Testament should be carefully studied. They are *The Holy Spirit in Missions*, by the Rev. A. J. Gordon, and *The Key to the Missionary Problem*, by Dr. Andrew Murray. Dr. Eugene Stock's admirable handbook on

Missions will give a vivid summary of what is being done, and will be the means of introducing the reader to further and fuller works. Dr. Pierson's *The New Acts of the Apostles* is a book of first-rate value, written with all the incisiveness and fulness of information characteristic of that great missionary advocate. Missionary biographies are now among the most interesting books that come from the press, and one firm, Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, seem to have made this their speciality. A reference to their lists will show this, and the works are all valuable and informing. As one illustration, mention may be made of a book, *Men of Might in Indian Missions*, by an American writer, Holcomb, giving sketches of the leading Indian missionaries which are of truly fascinating interest. Other biographies, like the *Lives of James Chalmers*, Bishop Hannington, John G. Paton, James Gilmour, and not least of all, Douglas Thornton, will stir the heart and impel to prayer and effort. For work among children, the C.M.S. issues a series of '*Talks*' to *Young People*, which are full of material, well arranged for workers. Nor must we forget the great and valuable *History of the C.M.S.*, by Dr. Stock, and the equally important *History of the Bible Society*, by Mr. Canton. In connexion with a competition instituted by the Editor of the *Christian*, six volumes have been published in Messrs. Morgan & Scott's 'Missionary Series.' They are all of real value, and should be studied by clergy, for their inculcation of missionary principles and their accounts of missionary work. For work among the Jews three books may be specially mentioned: *Israel My Glory*, by Wilkinson; *The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew*, by Baron; *The Jew in Prophecy and Fulfilment*, by Kellogg; and several books and pamphlets published by the London Jews' Society, written by the late Secretary, the Rev. W. T. Gidney. And once more, as essential in view of all the interests of the gathering, every clergyman should endeavour to obtain the volumes of the Reports of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. Other works will readily suggest themselves on this great

and almost vast subject. All that is now suggested is that serious reading is not only available on missionary topics, but is imperatively the duty of all who wish to do the very best for themselves and their people in spreading the Gospel throughout the world. There may have been a time when missionary literature was dry and uninteresting, but if so, that day has gone never to return. Works on Missions in the present day merit the attention of the world's greatest thinkers, and no clergyman can regard himself as well informed if he does not know something at least of what is being written on this great topic.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PRAYER MEETING

#### SECTION 1. ITS IMPORTANCE.

THE Prayer Meeting has been described as 'the big wheel of the Church,' a phrase which well indicates the necessity and importance of this part of parish work. No Church Service can possibly take its place, and unless there is a regular Prayer Meeting, parish work will never be as strong as it might, and ought to be. In a booklet published by the S.P.C.K., called *Prayer Meetings for Churchmen*, which, however, should really be called 'Prayer Meetings for High Churchmen,' there is a striking testimony to the value and advantages of these gatherings. The writer says that the only religious movement of recent times which has neglected Prayer Meetings is the Oxford Movement, and that it is this neglect which has prevented it from appealing to the multitudes to the extent which Methodism and Evangelicalism have done. The rest of the booklet is full of suggestions intended to lead High Churchmen to adopt this organization, and although the counsels are occasionally characterized by suggestions which cannot be accepted and approved by Evangelicals, the booklet itself is a striking evidence of the value of Prayer Meetings as an integral and prominent part of Church work.

The meeting should be held weekly if at all possible, and it will generally be found that Saturday evening is by far the best time. The Prayer Meeting ought to be made the centre of intercession for the parish, and no other parochial or personal engagement should be

allowed to interfere with it. Incumbent and Curate will naturally be there, and on no account will make any other engagement for that hour.

## SECTION 2. ITS CONDUCT.

Very much will depend upon the conductor of the Prayer Meeting, for like everything else, the personal element bulks largely in a meeting of this kind. Perhaps a few suggestions may be found helpful by way of comparison.

1. The time as a rule should be one hour, and never longer. Punctuality in commencing and closing will be found useful in several ways. People ought to know that a Prayer Meeting arranged for eight o'clock commences at that hour, and it will be a great convenience if they get to realize that it closes at nine, or at least 9.15.

2. The hymn book used at Prayer Meetings should be of a devotional type, and *Hymns of Consecration and Faith*, the Keswick hymn book, has the best number of hymns of this character. *Sacred Songs and Solos* perhaps partakes too much of the evangelistic element to be so generally useful. But the Keswick book in its experimental and personal element will prove of devotional service in such gatherings. It is of course interdenominational, but it is full of some of the finest devotional expressions, and no Church Prayer Meeting can fail to be helped by its use.

3. A brief address should as a rule be included, with special emphasis on its brevity! The address should be based on Scripture, and devotional rather than purely exegetical in order to give point to the prayers that are to follow. It is a widespread and false conception that a Prayer Meeting is a place for instruction, and if the leader is imbued with this fallacy, and reads a long passage of Scripture and expounds it at length, he will do more than anything else to kill the Meeting. Out of one hour, not more than ten minutes should be given to the address. Prayer Meetings are not for instruction ;

they are for the purpose of worshipping God in prayer, and praise, and testimony.

4. As a rule, the leader will himself open the meeting with prayer, or else get some one on whom he can depend to strike the right spiritual keynote of the gathering.

5. After the address the meeting will naturally be thrown open for prayer, emphasis being laid on the two essential requirements for public prayer: brevity and distinctness. If those present 'make long prayers,' or speak indistinctly, or with head bowed toward the floor, the meeting will be injured. But if brevity and clearness are assured, the freedom of prayer will be in every way helpful.

6. Variety is one great secret of a good Prayer Meeting. The leader should invite 'sentence prayers.' Sometimes a string of prayers of one sentence, following immediately on one another will prove a most helpful feature. These sentence prayers will help the people to pray definitely for one thing, and will also enable some to open their mouths for the first time in public prayer who would not feel capable at the outset of praying at greater length.

7. Occasionally the leader will find it helpful while the people are kneeling to start a devotional chorus. The singing will prove another element of variety and help to maintain the tone of the meeting.

8. Subjects of prayer should be invited from time to time and requests will be sent in which can be brought before God during the meeting.

9. The conductor must not feel concerned, still less troubled, if there are silences from time to time in the meeting. God often speaks through our silences, and if people for any reason do not feel led to offer prayer, the meeting can still wait upon God in quietness and feel assured of His presence and blessing. The Society of Friends may err in one direction, but let not us as Church people make the mistake of erring in the other.

10. One Prayer Meeting a month, at least, should be devoted mainly to missionary topics unless there is a

separate Missionary Prayer Meeting. At such a gathering special subjects will be announced dealing with various aspects of the Mission Field, including intercession for any members of the congregation who are at work abroad, or missionaries in whom the Church has a special interest.

Once again let it be said with all possible emphasis that no Church ought to regard itself as properly equipped for the spiritual work that it has to do unless it has a weekly Prayer Meeting.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOCIAL WORK

#### SECTION I. THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

**I**T is impossible for a clergyman not to be alive to the social ills of the present day. As he contemplates the men, women, and children who are compelled to live in unwholesome surroundings ; as he sees the ill effects of so-called 'charity' bestowed upon those who are suffering misfortune ; as he realizes that the resources of the country, if only properly developed, are sufficient to afford every man a comfortable living ; as he observes the awful ravages of the drink traffic ; as he is brought face to face with the luxury and extravagance of many of the rich, he cannot but feel that 'these things ought not so to be.' Almost every social problem has its moral aspect, and each of us, as a part of our complex social system, has his own measure of responsibility for the plight of those who are suffering from the social evils of our day.

The clergyman is also fully aware of the fact that a social programme is implicit in the Gospel. Mr. Benjamin Kidd says :—

'The Reformation liberated as it were into the practical life of the peoples affected by it, that immense body of altruistic feeling which had been from the beginning the distinctive social product of the Christian religion. . . . To the evolutionist (the Reformation) is essentially a social development.'

And Macaulay said :—

'The Methodist Revival improved the quality of West of England cloth.'



Or to come to more recent days, we are all fully aware of what men like John Howard did for the criminal code, Wilberforce and Buxton for the liberation of slaves, and Lord Shaftesbury for the protection of workers. It is thus impossible for a clergyman to be indifferent to the great and pressing question of social reform.

## SECTION 2. THE PROVINCE OF THE CHURCH.

But what can a man do in his sphere and office as the clergyman of a parish? While social reform has its undoubted moral aspects which compel the attention of Christian men, it also has its political bearings, and this fact constitutes a call to the clergyman to be careful lest he should appear solely to take sides with his own political party. During the last few years a great deal of attention has been given to the social teaching of the Old Testament prophets, and it has often been pointed out that they were fully alive to the social ills of their day; the Drink and Land questions; the sins of intemperance, luxury, and greed. But we must never forget the fundamental difference in their position. Church and State were then absolutely identical, and the social ills of Jerusalem were regarded as due to departure from God. While, therefore, we may rightly use the principles and standards of the Old Testament in our work to-day, we must never overlook the essential differences of the situation. We cannot possibly expect the same results as they expected, for Christianity has never been in the same authoritative relation to any State. Our main work to-day is the evangelization of individuals through the Gospel. It is the function of the Church to 'view every problem, every question, and policy, and service, *sub specie aeternitatis*, 'i.e. in the light of man's responsibility to God.'<sup>1</sup>

Another tendency in modern thought has led to the identification of the kingdom of God with a regenerated human society. But this is not the New Testament

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, p. 61.

meaning of the kingdom. The outlook of the New Testament is on the future, not on the present, and the Kingdom of Heaven is something far more and deeper than social regeneration. Our duty, therefore, is the constant emphasis on the moral side of social questions which at their foundation are a question of goodness and badness. Mr. Bryce, in his book on *The Failure of Citizenship*, attributes the disappointing results of modern reform to the failure of people to respond to the demand for virtue and an intelligent public spirit. The explanation of this failure he attributes to three great evils: indolence, selfishness and party-spirit. 'The central problem of civic duty,' says Mr. Bryce, 'is the ethical problem.' Great questions are never political for long, they become moral and religious. Christianity emphasizes sin, but the social reformer is only concerned with selfishness; and yet it is when the latter is seen to be due to the former that we shall get men and matters right. Christianity urges personal reform, Socialism cries out for corporate action. One emphasizes regeneration, the other legislation. Now the latter is great and important, but the former is still greater. We must insist on both.

It is nothing new for the Church of Christ to emphasize the necessity for uplifting the material life of the people. In all ages the Church has been the pioneer in care for the orphans, the aged, the destitute, and in provision for the mind and for the body. We must never think that the Church has only just begun to realize the importance of corporate work and philanthropic effort. On the contrary, it is quite possible that Christian men in past days have done very much more as individuals to bring about new conditions than is being done to-day by all the corporate effort of all the Churches.

We must be particularly careful not to identify Christianity with any ideas and schemes of social and economic reform. None of these schemes are final, and if Christianity should be found to identify itself with any of them, the ultimate results may easily be morally and spiritually disastrous. Even Socialism is admittedly not a final

solution, and may give place to some other project. It would therefore be futile for the Church to associate itself solely with certain precise schemes for the betterment of social and industrial conditions. At the risk of being misunderstood, we must call attention to the fact that Jesus Christ Himself was not a Reformer, and He did not organize men to bring about a reconstruction and improvement of human life. What He did was to supply the entire motive force for every aspect of living, and the clergyman will fulfil his duty best by proclaiming those eternal truths of the Gospel which make first of all for individual and personal regeneration, and this in turn will lead to every aspect of social and moral reform in the community.

### SECTION 3. THE WORK THAT IS POSSIBLE.

But it may be asked, Cannot a clergyman do something more than proclaim principles? Is he to be prevented by political fear from entering personally into the question of social reforms which have a definite and direct moral bearing? By no means; there is much that he can do to further the interests of the best social reform. First of all, he should join, and encourage his thoughtful people to join, the Christian Social Union, which, while it does not pledge itself to any particular scheme of social improvement, still less to any attempt at revolution, does lead people to look at the problems for themselves, to examine into the conditions of social life, and to endeavour to solve the problems from a Christian standpoint. A clergyman who will get his laymen and laywomen to attend to work of this kind will do much for the furtherance of permanent reform. Then there is also much that he can do in connexion with the work of temperance. It does not require a man to be a total abstainer to be conscious of the enormous evil of the drink traffic, and it is the bounden duty of the clergyman to endeavour to instruct and influence public opinion on this great problem. His Band of Hope and Temperance

Meetings will be useful in the way of prevention, for by careful instruction on the various aspects of alcoholic drinks he will do much to bring about a better state of opinion and feeling. Only he must be careful that his temperance work is good, thorough, and lasting. No mere temperance entertainments are worthy of attention unless they are constantly and carefully associated with clear teaching and personal inspiration. In these days it is imperative that a clergyman should take a firm stand on all matters connected with the drink traffic. This at least is one of the social ills that has so direct and pointed a moral bearing, that whatever be the risk of being regarded as political or prejudiced, the clergyman must dare to take it and wage warfare to the utmost against this 'enemy of our race.'

Another way of doing social work will be found in active co-operation with the Peace Movement. The great question of International Arbitration is one of the ways in which a clergyman can advocate the great principles of the Gospel in their bearing on social and national life without any risk of political partizanship. It is well-nigh impossible to over-estimate the significance of the present movements on behalf of International Arbitration, and the Churches can do much to bring about a better state of feeling between nation and nation, especially in showing how literally true it is that 'war is hell.' The great mass of working people in the various nations upon whom the greatest portion of the burden of war falls, are feeling that the weight is now heavier than can be borne, and are crying out for relief. If therefore the Christian forces in the nations stand for international understanding and organized good-will, they will be helping to bring about a social reform second to none in importance. This is work that can be done by the clergy in their parishes from time to time without any hesitation.

Beyond these two questions of Temperance and Peace the general problem of active social reform becomes undoubtedly difficult because it is involved with political issues. Industrial conditions, the treatment of pauperism,

protective legislation for workers, the housing of the people, and above all, the land question, are so fraught with economic and political intricacies that a clergyman can hardly be blamed if he contents himself by preaching principles, and insists upon his hearers making their own definite social applications.

But, on the other hand, we must not brand as a party politician the man who sees keenly the moral aspects of social questions, and who therefore believes it to be his duty to throw the weight of his influence on the side of the oppressed, the badly-housed, the poorly-paid, and in favour of righteous dealings between masters and men, corporations and employès. No fear of the charge of politics should deter a clergyman from speaking out on these matters. It is passing strange that so many earnest godly laymen do not see the social implications and applications of the Christian doctrines of justification and regeneration, and it is therefore not surprising if a clergyman feels led to show his people some of the social consequences to which the Gospel pledges us.

The one supreme requirement is that we should proclaim the truth in its fulness, and show in all possible ways that the Gospel is adequate to the solution of every problem, whenever it is allowed proper application. What we have to make sure of first, is that we are preaching a full, spiritual, definite Christianity, starting from the new birth and issuing in the redeemed, regenerated, and renovated Christian life. There is much force in the words of a man who addressed some Christian ministers when he said, 'You Christian ministers preach a social Christianity, by all means; an applied Christianity; but be sure first that you have a Christianity before you talk about applying it.' Given this, the clergyman must then see that no part of life is left untouched by the Gospel.



## CHAPTER X

### THE CHURCH AND AMUSEMENTS

THE question of recreation and amusement as a part of parochial work and organization has become so prominent of recent years that it demands special attention at the hands of all who are, or expect to be clergymen, and the subject has so many and such serious bearings that it seems essential to discuss it in the light of first principles. 'The Church and Amusements.' Much will depend upon what is to be understood by the term 'Church' if we are to decide what comes legitimately within the scope of its life and work.

#### SECTION 1. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH.

In Article XIX. the visible Church is described in a well-known phrase as 'a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered.' We may sum this up for our present purpose by saying that a Church is a Society united to Christ. The object of the Church's existence is fourfold. It is to witness to Christ ; to win men for Him ; to set them at work for Him ; and to keep watch for their souls as those who belong to Him. Or, to put it still more briefly, the Church exists for the two-fold purpose of Evangelization and Edification. It may be confidently stated that everything connected with Church life in the New Testament comes under one or other of these aspects of the Divine purpose.

## SECTION 2. THE PLACE OF AMUSEMENT.

Amusement suggests its meaning at once by its etymology, '*a-muse*,' that is, something that does *not* call for 'thought,' the entertaining, recreative element in life. The question at once arises whether this can be regarded as a legitimate part of the purpose of the Church. Most people think that the predominant and exclusive idea of the Church is to make people '*muse*,' or think, rather than to provide that which is as a rule the very opposite. But we will subject the question to a careful examination.

1. Let us look at it in the light of the New Testament record. We have sketches of Church History during the first thirty years of the existence of Christianity, and we find no place whatever given to the element of amusement.

2. Let us look at it in the light of New Testament examples. We have the life and work of great Apostles and Evangelists, as well as of ordinary members of the Church brought before us, and not a single hint is given that they used or favoured this idea of amusement as an integral part of their Christian service.

3. Let us look at it in the light of New Testament principles. Does amusement evangelize? Does it edify? Christian experience shows that it is frequently antagonistic to these ideas, that it fails to win the outsiders, and often plays spiritual havoc among young Christian converts who ought to be growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord. The fact is that amusement has only quite recently been made part of our Church life, and when we think of the two great purposes laid down by our Lord with reference to His disciples: '*Ye are the salt of the earth*;' '*Ye are the light of the world*,' we cannot help seeing that the element of amusement provides neither the '*salt*' nor the '*light*' intended by Christ.

The real problem is the relation of the spiritual to the social. It is often said, and said with truth, that the Church should be made a home for the people, but it must never be forgotten that it is intended to be pre-

eminently the 'Father's House,' and if the Jews were not to make the Temple a house of merchandise, it may be gravely questioned whether the Christian Church is right in making the House of God a house of play. Whenever the social element is emphasized and made prominent in Church work, it scarcely ever leads up to the spiritual, while, on the other hand, if the spiritual is put first and ever kept uppermost it will provide the right atmosphere in which everything that is rightly social finds adequate expression.

It will often be found that the entertaining element is absolutely prejudicial to spiritual work, occupying time, thought, and strength which should be devoted to other and higher purposes. Wherever entertainments are prominent in a Church, Prayer Meetings and Bible Classes tend to become not only secondary but also non-existent; while on the other hand, where spiritual work predominates, there is simply no room or time for the purely amusing and entertaining. The social atmosphere is easy to create, but the spiritual is more difficult. One thing is perfectly certain, that any element of amusement must constantly be dominated by a strong, pure, rich, spiritual life in our Church, and it may be safely said that where the latter is found the former tends to disappear.

The question of amusement in connexion with the Church naturally raises the further problem as to where the line is to be drawn. Some Churches are content with concerts; others include dances, amateur theatricals, and even whist-drives. The mere mention of these things seems to indicate how far we are removed from the spiritual simplicity of New Testament Church membership. The problem is further complicated when this amusement element is utilized for the purpose of raising money for Church work. One of the most valuable points in the last Charge of the Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Chavasse, was his reference to some of these current methods:—

'He earnestly asked them to exercise the utmost care in the means they employed to raise money for religious purposes. A

sale of work, properly managed, might be a real blessing not only to the parish which needed funds, but to those who worked for it. But lotteries and raffles ought to be entirely forbidden. They were illegal, and they helped to foster that growing spirit of gambling which was one of the greatest curses of the people. Whatever view they might take individually of dancing, theatricals, and of whist-drives, their employment to raise funds for Church purposes wounded the consciences of a large number of the best Churchpeople, and gave a handle to the adversary to find fault. How far such means raised or lowered the spiritual tone of a congregation and brought the kingdom of heaven nearer to it they themselves were judges.'

The Bishop of Wakefield not long ago spoke some earnest words against whist-drives :—

'I have no hesitation in expressing my opinion that it is most undesirable that religious movements should be supported by such methods. They appear to entail no sacrifice, which is the essential condition of a charitable offering. They hold out a fair expectation of winning money on a game as much of chance as of skill. Even if you do not win a prize, the feeling is induced of having helped forward religion, while as a fact you have only enjoyed a pleasant evening. There is an all too prevalent idea among a certain sect of Churchmen of getting back as much as you can out of your charitable gifts. The further fact that they cause scandal to some devout minds and scruple and doubtfulness to many, though not in itself decisive of a moral question, at least forms a plea which no Christian can afford to disregard.'

And in the same way, the Archbishop of York recently laid the strongest possible emphasis on the need of spirituality, and warned his hearers against the danger of Church work becoming unspiritual.

'In the endeavour to be interesting and attractive he was afraid that much Christian effort was on the down-grade. The other day he was passing through a northern town, and he bought a local newspaper. Looking through a long list of advertisements of the services of the churches and chapels, he came across the following subjects: "The Two Dogs: A Social Contrast;" "Why I left the Italian Opera;" "The Call of the Off-shore Wind;" "Palace P.S.A.; First Appearance of the Border Soprano;" and "Lonely Woman-kind: A Growing Danger." It was a positive relief to come to one at the end of the list which seemed to sum up the whole lot—"Humbugs: Spiritual and Religious."'

The extent to which the question of Amusements in connexion with the Church has gone may be seen in a very significant way by an article in one of the London halfpenny papers on 'Hustling in Church.'<sup>1</sup>

'It is scarcely possible that hustling should long be dissociated from religion, or competition long kept out of Church. The approved method, all over the world, for making a thing "go" is to advertise it. Now, Church-going is notoriously not so popular as it once was. Hence, to get people to Church, clergymen are finding it necessary to advertise the attractions of Church-going. . . . These functions will be eminently successful as Sunday entertainments of a miscellaneous sort. But as services of a religious kind they will be failures. That is the point. The craze, so common nowadays, for enticing people to religion by dressing it up in mundane garments can only have one effect—the effect of alienating the truly religious people who go to Church already. The others, the non-religious, may possibly be won for a very short time. . . . These attractions will wear off when the worldly discover that they are merely the bait intended to entrap them into religion. When they have discovered that, they will go where they can get the bait without the trap. . . . Churches are trying to become popular, amusing, exciting. Well-meaning clergymen are endeavouring to meet the worldly man on his own ground. They cannot do it. No Church can compete successfully with a music-hall as such. You can "draw" a few music-hall lovers, indeed, by giving a "variety" atmosphere to your services. But they will come only because the music-halls, properly so-called, are closed on Sunday. And they will go away when the true variety shows, hampered by no religious restrictions, are open again. Meanwhile, other people too, as was said, will go away—those who like Church-going. These like it—to them it is a pleasure as well as a duty—partly for the very reason that in Church they can forget the ordinary worldly things and the habitual hustle of the open street. To introduce the world, and its competitive methods, into their place of rest and worship, will be to take away its power of solace for them. Hence the fact, as a result of hustling in religion, that you drive the religious away and do not permanently retain the hustlers. Hustling is an excellent thing in its place—on Wall Street, in a business office, or in the underground railway. But it ought to be kept to its place. In Church it is a mistake—in policy as well as in taste.'

These words from the secular press carry their own

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Mirror*, April 29, 1908.



sad and searching message to all who desire to keep the Church pure and true to her Master's purpose.

At a Church which shall not be further characterized it was announced that a subscription dance would be given in order to provide funds for replacing one or more of the present unsightly windows with more artistic stained glass. The price of a ticket was 7s. 6d. which would include supper. Now there can be no doubt that quite apart from the idea of a dance, this method of money raising is absolutely wrong in principle. If people want a dance and a supper they should have it as private persons without making any pretence that they are doing Church work by such methods. Whenever we receive back we are not 'giving' in the New Testament sense, and the sooner we revert to the simple spiritual principles of New Testament proportionate giving the better it will be for all concerned.

But it may be asked, what about bazaars? As to this, the same New Testament principles of giving are equally applicable. A wide distinction must necessarily be made between an ordinary sale of work in a poor parish, by people who have only service to give, and the usual bazaar which is frequently considered to be the only possible way of raising a large sum of money for the Church. In a very helpful article some time ago in the *Church Family Newspaper*, Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson had some wise words to say about bazaars. While frankly admitting that a bazaar is well meaning, she expressed her disapproval of it on three grounds. (1) It is a clumsy and wasteful expedient; for the amount of money paid in expenditure if given to the Church direct would go far to meet the financial needs. (2) It is a double-minded and inconsistent expedient; it attempts to do two things at once and does neither well. It is a failure from the philanthropic, and incongruous from the religious point of view, for people who amuse themselves at a bazaar are certainly not fellow-workers with those who are devoting their very life to missionary work abroad. (3) It is misleading and mischievous. It mixes up the two totally different

questions of expenditure on amusement and gifts for the service of God. And Mrs. Carus-Wilson believes that the bazaar, wasteful, misleading, and incongruous, would die a natural death if principles of giving were understood and emphasized. It is the plain duty of every Christian to give proportionately to the service of God without expecting any equivalent for himself. Such giving to the upkeep of his own Church is in no sense charity, 'but payment for services rendered,' and the efficient maintenance of the Church is the common concern of all members and should be dealt with along proper New Testament lines. In 1909, the Church Pastoral-Aid Society sent a letter to its Grantee Vicars, emphasizing the absolute necessity of spiritual methods in Church work, and the wide response of appreciation and approval of the Society's letter was a striking testimony both to the need and the value of true methods of work.

### SECTION 3. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

There is one word used frequently in the New Testament which suggests the special characteristic of all Christian life, individual and corporate. It is the word 'edification' (Acts ix. 31; 1 Cor. viii. 1; x. 23; xiv. 26; 2 Cor. xii. 19; xiii. 10; Eph. ii. 21; iv. 12). 'Let all things be done unto edifying.' Everything associated with Church work in the New Testament has edification for its key-note. The preaching of the Word, the public worship, the two Sacraments, and all service by disciples are intended to conduce towards edification. The same great principle is found in our Prayer Book, whether we think of the Services, the use of Holy Scripture, or the administration of the Sacraments. It may be said without contradiction that there is nothing in the Bible or the Prayer Book that is not intended in some way to 'edify.' When this is realized it soon settles the question of amusement and entertainment. The note of the Bible is that of earnestness, not sadness, and certainly not gloom,

and no [Christian Church should occupy its life with matters that are not in some way included in the great principle of 'edification.' Secular methods not only lower the tone of those who adopt them, but what is worse, they produce a low idea of religion in the minds of those whom it is sought to win. In view of the extraordinary lengths to which the secular spirit has gone in many of our parishes to-day, it is scarcely possible to think that a modern preacher was wholly exaggerating when he spoke in very plain terms of 'the Devil's Mission of Amusement.' Spiritual work by spiritual men through spiritual methods is the one guarantee of spiritual blessing. In the light of New Testament Christianity all unspiritual methods are not only futile, but fatal.

## CHAPTER XI

### PERSONAL WORK

#### SECTION 1. ITS PLACE.

**I**NDIVIDUAL work for individuals ' is the title of a valuable and important book. It suggests what should never be forgotten in the Christian life, that work for Christ is pre-eminently individual and personal. Evangelism in the New Testament is essentially of this character. The first two who became disciples of Christ were led to Him by the personal testimony of John the Baptist. The intercourse of our Lord and His disciples was primarily individual and personal. And although on the Day of Pentecost St. Peter preached to a large crowd, yet very soon in the record of the Acts we find instance after instance of personal efforts at soul winning. Even St. Paul with his greatness as a preacher and an administrator was first of all a personal worker, and his services at Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus illustrate this particular aspect of Christian work.

If this is true of Christian workers in general, it is specially true of the Christian minister, for whatever else he may do, he must never lose sight of the duty of personal witnessing. No parochial organization can make up for this, and no sermons or classes, however important, can take its place. It is one of the sure marks of the true spiritual servant of God, that he will hold himself in readiness to use opportunities of witnessing for his Master and winning men to the Kingdom of God. This will

not mean spiritual bondage and a compulsion under all circumstances to do this kind of work ; on the contrary, it will be but the natural expression of his own loyalty to Christ and his desire to make known what is so precious and powerful in his own life.

## SECTION 2. SOME COUNSELS.

The first essential for personal work is the reality of our own life with God. As personal dealing means the winning of individual souls for Christ, or the helping of individuals who are in Christ, it naturally follows that almost everything will depend upon the spiritual qualifications of the worker. The typical instance of personal work for Christ is found in the story of Philip and the Eunuch, and it illustrates some of the essential requirements of the personal worker.

1. Spirituality. How quick Philip was to see the duty laid upon him by the Holy Spirit, and how responsive he was to the call of God to go towards the Eunuch.

2. Faithfulness. Without any hesitation he went forward, influenced by loyalty to the call of God to do personal work. This is the true Christian aggressiveness which is so striking a feature of all New Testament evangelism.

3. Tactfulness. There is a beautiful point in the original Greek of the first words addressed by Philip to the Eunuch. As they appear in the English version they almost suggest abruptness : 'Do you understand what you are reading ?' But as Philip actually spoke the words, they are prefaced with an exquisite bit of spiritual wisdom, as though he took up the Eunuch at a point in the reading which he heard as he drew near : 'Quite so, but do you understand it ?' Aggressiveness which is not blended with tact will often do more harm than good. The spirit in which we do Christian work counts for a very great deal. Manner as well as matter must always be considered.



4. Definiteness. Philip was content with nothing short of personal contact between the Eunuch and Christ. Taking the Word read, Philip led the eunuch to the Incarnate and Exalted Word. This is personal work, bringing the soul face to face with Jesus Christ and leading as thoroughly as possible to personal decision.

Arising out of our life with God will come a gradual experience of the needs of the human heart and of the best ways of dealing with spiritual difficulties. The deeper and fuller our experience the greater will be the help that we can render. It is this emphasis on ministerial experience that we find indicated in the well known words of the address in the Communion Office, 'discreet and learned minister of God's Word.' The true minister will provide and welcome every opportunity for doing personal work, and in so doing his own spiritual experience of the needs of men will become deepened and strengthened. Pastoral visiting will often be a great opportunity for this personal effort, and for the constant increase of spiritual insight and experience.

As a great help, the personal worker will be only too glad to compare notes with others who have had far greater experience than himself. An old book, but one well worthy of constant attention by all clergymen, is *A Pastor's Sketches*, by Spencer, an American clergyman of a former generation. The knowledge of the human heart and the ways of dealing with individuals revealed in this book will be a constant help and guide to soul-winners. A new book on the same general lines is *Methods of Soul-Winning*, by another experienced American pastor, Dr. H. C. Mabie ; while the book already referred to, *Individual Work for Individuals*, by Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, used in connexion with the companion book by his son, *Taking Men Alive*, by C. G. Trumbull, will be of immense help in the study of ways of working. Of course it must never be forgotten that the personal equation rules everything, and no laws and methods can be laid down. Each man must find out his own work and do it in his own way, and if only he places himself at

God's disposal day by day, seeking for opportunities, and then for grace to use them, he will quickly realize that personal work is one of the most blessed opportunities of making full proof of his ministry.

## CHAPTER XII

### SOME PROBLEMS

FROM time to time questions and problems arise in a clergyman's experience which are not easily settled, and it is often useful to compare experiences. A few of these problems may be considered by way of illustration.

#### SECTION 1. ON TAKING UP NEW WORK.

When a Curate comes to a parish, whether as newly ordained, or from another Curacy, much will depend upon the way he sets out to work during his first weeks. It will be found wise, if not essential, first of all, to pick up the threads of his predecessor's work, and continue for some little time at least the methods already in existence. Only afterwards should he initiate plans of his own when he has been able to gauge the situation aright. He will find it particularly helpful to give attention to the members of the paid staff, the Scripture Reader, the Bible Woman, the District Nurse, and elicit their sympathy while he shows the same to them. They will prove his best friends if only they are enabled to see that he intends to be friendly and closely associated with them.

When a man enters a new sphere as incumbent the difficulty is of course much greater in regard to the work of the parish, because he is at once responsible for what goes on. A wise pastor has suggested that the new man should begin by feeding the flock, because, as it is well known, a man can do anything with sheep if first he feeds them. But to commence by exhortation, still more by anything like lecturing, would probably result in the people not readily entering into sympathetic

fellowship with their new pastor. With regard to changes which are generally thought to be inevitable on the advent of a new Vicar, there are two methods possible. The man may decide at once on what changes he feels necessary and make them, or he may avoid instituting any changes until he has become known and trusted by his new people. The latter is by far the wiser and more Christian method. One thing at any rate should be avoided if the man wishes to glorify God and be the means of spiritual help. He should not make changes gradually, and almost weekly, for some time after his arrival. There is nothing more trying and irritating to worshippers than to find some new method or practice nearly every Sunday they come to Church. It makes them wonder what will be the next change, and how many more are likely to come. Suspicions are easily aroused and not so easily laid, while if the clergyman shows himself to be a man of God, one who loves his Saviour, his Bible, and God's people, it will be found that the congregation will respond to him and rally round him in connexion with the work. A new-comer should never forget old worshippers and valued workers. In these days when we are so apt to worship anything that is called 'up-to-date', we are liable to forget that the Church of England ought to be comprehensive in both directions. While rightly giving attention to the needs of the young, we should not forget the needs of the old, especially those who have been the chief supporters of the Church. It is doubtless difficult to harmonize the claims of both parties, but we do not believe that the task is insuperable if faced in the spirit of Christ and with an earnest desire to work for the best interests of all in the congregation. There is a very real danger in upsetting all that has been distinctive of a predecessor. A well-known American clergyman has pointedly said that a new minister should 'enter into' the labours of his predecessor, not 'stamp on' them. Every man must have his own way, and it is more than probable that our predecessors were not quite so inefficient or old-fashioned as we are inclined to think. At any rate we

are certain that a new incumbent will show his spiritual fitness for pastoral work if he pays careful respect to the past, gives sympathetic consideration to the needs of the old, tried, spiritual members of his flock, and endeavours to bring all classes of needs together in a desire and a determination so to live and work that the worship may be 'in spirit and in truth.'

## SECTION 2. PAROCHIAL COUNCILS.

It is well known that at present the clergy and churchwardens alone have legal status in the administration of parochial affairs, and even so, what is known as 'the parson's freehold' gives the clergyman an absolute control over the worship, and an unfettered jurisdiction over a great deal that concerns some of the most important elements of parochial life and work. And yet in these days of democracy, when the spiritual principles of the New Testament in relation to Church life and work are being more and more thoroughly understood, the clergyman will find it of inestimable value to take every opportunity of consulting his lay people on all matters appertaining to parochial life. To this end a Church Council will be an effective instrument. It should be drawn from communicants, and should consist of men and women. Rich and poor must be on the Council, and the communicant test seems to be the only possible basis of franchise. The methods of election and the proportion of members will naturally vary in different parishes. All that we are concerned with here is to emphasize the value, if not the necessity, of having such a Council. The meetings need not be oftener than once a quarter, and they will provide, in the best sense of the word, 'the safety valve,' for the lay people of the parish will know that they have the opportunity given to them of bringing to the notice of the clergy and churchwardens all matters that affect the best interests of the Church. As long as the Council remains voluntary and purely consultative, it is of course obvious that in matters of serious difference



the clergyman is likely to have the last word, but the very fact of consultation with his people will be a help to him and will tend to prevent him from taking that clerical action which may so easily be attributed to self-will, or something worse. No clergyman who is fully alive to the true principles of New Testament church life, and has a desire to have those principles reproduced in modern days, will do other than welcome with all his heart the existence and work of a Church Council. Those who have had the personal experience of such Councils are grateful for the consciousness of fellowship in service, and of the knowledge that the interests of the community have been as widely represented as possible thereby.

### SECTION 3. NONCONFORMITY.

We have already considered this subject to some extent in connexion with the Ordinal, and it must suffice to add one or two general remarks of a practical kind which may prove of service in the intercourse of parochial life. It goes without saying that the clergyman should always be perfectly courteous to the Nonconformists in his parish, and if he can find out why they are Nonconformists, it will help him to enter into their feelings and spiritual position, and will give him sympathy in dealing with them when occasion arises. It is often possible to unite Churchmen and Nonconformists in social work of various kinds, and a clergyman will be well advised in attempting something of this sort. If he will read the Lambeth Encyclical of 1908, and the Resolutions on this subject, he will obtain a good idea of the Christian spirit in which to approach this whole question. Unless it is absolutely essential in self-defence, it will be wise not to enter upon controversy with Nonconformists. We must agree to differ, recognizing that they are just as conscientious in their position as we are in ours. Of course if they wish to discuss differences, we must be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us, and in such circumstances we shall be perfectly justified in

endeavouring to justify the belief that our position as Church people is superior on several grounds to that of Nonconformity. But we shall often find that the Nonconformist is far more able to give a good account of himself than many Churchmen, and this will be a salutary experience even for a clergyman. One thing beyond all others must be avoided in our relations with Nonconformists, and that is, to imagine that we are the Church and they are in schism. Schism in the New Testament is not a severance from the Church, but a severance *within* the Church, and as we review Church History during the last three hundred years it is perfectly impossible on any fair interpretation to attribute all the blame to one side. This fact ought to make us tender and patient in our dealings with those who are probably perfectly conscientious in their adherence to the Nonconformity of their forefathers. Everything will depend upon the tone and spirit of the clergyman, and if he shows Nonconformists how to discuss differences with fairness and good temper he will do more to recommend his Master and his Church than the mere winning of all the proselytes in the world.

#### SECTION 4. RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER SEX.

Circumstances in parish work frequently lead to the clergyman necessarily being very much thrown into association with lady workers, and this suggests the need of the greatest possible care and circumspection. Both in his pastoral visiting, as we have already seen, and also in connexion with various Church organizations, it is essential that the clergyman should maintain his true position, not merely as a clergyman, but in particular as a Christian man, a man of God. Anything approaching lightness on the part of the clergyman is to be deprecated, while of course, to use the word 'flirtation,' as it often is used in relation to a Christian minister, is to speak of that which is nothing short of deplorable and disgraceful. Almost without knowing it, the clergyman may easily be

led into difficult situations, and for this reason it is essential that he should maintain a life of fellowship with God that will enable him to 'walk circumspectly,' and to give no occasion of stumbling lest the ministry be blamed. As we have already pointed out in other connexions, the great word of the Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy, 'gravity,' is the key to the situation. When a man realizes who and what he is as a minister of Christ, it will enable him to walk carefully and accurately under all circumstances. Difficulties with the other sex may easily be brought about without any fault on the part of the clergyman himself. Human nature is human nature whether it refers to women or men. It is recorded of a Curate that he came to his Rector and said that he wished to leave. He was asked why, and was evidently reluctant to say. 'Is it the stipend?' said the Rector. 'No,' was the reply. 'Has it to do with the work, or the climate, or the surroundings?' 'No.' 'Do tell me, then.' 'Well, it's Miss Brown, I really cannot endure her any longer.' 'My dear fellow,' said his wise Rector, 'Do you not know that Miss Brown lives in every parish?'<sup>1</sup> Whatever the cause or difficulty may be, there is perhaps no part of a man's life in which it is more essential that he should 'watch and pray.' The young unmarried Curate, and still more the unmarried Vicar, often find themselves in circumstances of real difficulty, although they are simply and faithfully going about their Master's work. But prayer for the guidance and grace of the Holy Spirit will not be in vain, and wisdom will be given according to need under all circumstances. If a man will take care of his character God will take care of his reputation. If a man keeps right with God he can go anywhere and do anything that falls within his duty.

#### SECTION 5. THE RELATIONS OF VICAR AND CURATE.

We have already seen something of what is involved in the two positions of Incumbent and Curate in consider-

<sup>1</sup> *Hints to Parsons*, p. 9 (S.P.C.K.).

ing the question in the Ordinal, and very little more needs to be said. It is well known that it is far easier for the Curate to be popular in the parish than for the Vicar, since all the disagreeable things have to be done by the latter. This fact should be borne in mind by the Curate as a special reason for personal loyalty to his Incumbent. Care must be taken on both sides to guard against anything that would bring about severance of heart. The Curate will be tempted to think that his Vicar's ideas and methods are antiquated, or narrow, or obscurantist, and will be inclined to feel like Absalom that if only he were king things would be vastly improved. If such a temptation should come, the young man may well be reminded of Luther's words to his friend Melancthon that 'the old Adam is stronger than the young Melancthon.' It does not necessarily follow that old methods are inferior, or need to be set aside. It is probable that if more spiritual power were put into the old ways of doing work the results would soon be different. The Vicar will also be tempted to regard his Curate as callow, 'green,' and inexperienced, and therefore needing a firm hand, constant control, and careful guidance. If such an idea occurs to the Vicar he should recall his own days and respect individuality, never for an instant seeking to curb or check another man's personality in relation to his work. When some old-fashioned people at Carr's Lane, Birmingham, went to John Angell James to complain of the novelties in the teaching of the young assistant, Robert William Dale, the old man said, 'Leave him alone, he has the root of the matter in him.' We know from history the splendid results of this far-seeing advice. So should it be with the Vicar of a parish in relation to his younger colleague. If, as it may be assumed, he has taken every possible opportunity of assuring himself of the young man's firm adherence to the principles of the Gospel, he should allow him all possible liberty in regard to the departments of work over which he has been placed. When the relations of Vicar and Curate are thus true to God, the experience will be in every way helpful and encouraging. Instances of

both kinds rise to the mind almost instinctively. On the one hand Vicars have been over-bearing and even tyrannical to Curates, and Curates have been self-assertive, irritating, and vain in regard to their work and relations to their Vicar. On the other hand, Vicars have rejoiced to see the evident marks of earnestness and possibilities in their colleagues, and have given them every opportunity of developing their powers, while Curates have looked up to their older colleagues as fathers and friends, thanking God for the inspiration to holiness, and the profit of ripe experience. There need be, there should be, no real difficulties on either side if both Incumbent and Curate are actuated solely with a desire to further the interests of the Kingdom of God, and to glorify God in their ministry.

#### SECTION 6. DIFFERENT SOCIAL GRADES.

In many a Church it is a serious problem how to bring and keep together the Christian people of different social standing. There is a tendency on the part of the rich to avoid all association with the poor, while there is an equally strong feeling on the part of many poor that the Church is not for them, but only for the rich. These distinctions frequently make it difficult for the clergyman to thread his way through the mazes and to do justice all round. First and foremost he should lay the greatest possible stress on the fundamental principles of the Gospel: 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus,' and he should preach in season and out of season that 'in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.' He will be able to do this very definitely, and perhaps best of all in connexion with the Holy Communion; that Sacrament of unity has its very clear and blessed social aspect which should from time to time be emphasized. It is often recalled that on the occasion of the Duke of Wellington coming up to the Holy Table, an officious verger endeavoured to brush aside an old labouring man who was



just in front of the Duke. The old warrior at once prevented him, saying, 'No, no, we are all level here.' The more this is taught and insisted upon the more fully will all right views of the relationships between different classes and sections be understood and experienced. Then again the use of a Church Council will be an additional help in bringing various sections of the people together, because they will all meet as members of the Council who are drawn together on the one basis of communicant membership of the Church. Of course it is impossible to avoid recognizing facts in regard to various social grades, but there is no reason whatever for the clergyman, of all men, to accentuate these. His duty is to accept things as he finds them, and bring to bear upon them the first principles of the Gospel of Christ, and if he himself knows by personal experience the full reality of New Testament liberty in the Gospel, he will neither pander to the rich nor to the poor, but endeavour to emphasize those eternal realities which are as necessary for one as the other.

#### SECTION 7. THE GREATEST PROBLEM OF ALL.

As we draw these considerations to a conclusion it must be evident to every reader that the most important matter connected with the ministry is the man himself. This is indeed the greatest problem of all. Almost everything in the ministry is connected with the personal factor, and calls for the expression of the clergyman's life, and if only this is right, it may be said without much hesitation or qualification that everything else will be right also. It has often been remarked how soon and how certainly people discover whether a man is in earnest. People are very sympathetic with a new beginner, whether as Curate or Incumbent, and they will give him plenty of opportunity to show himself a man, but it will not be very long before they will take his measure and decide as to his reality and power. It may be said without any fear of contradiction that the average judgment of a congregation concerning their clergyman can as a rule be safely trusted. At a

closing address when some young men were leaving a Theological College the Principal said to them, 'Gentlemen, you are now regarded, and you will be for some time regarded, by your congregations as young men of promise, but the time will come when they will expect you to be young men of performance.' In a book of *Hints to Parsons*, the following pointed but true remarks are found :

'You may pretend very skilfully, but you will not deceive them long ;<sup>1</sup> and really this makes four-fifths (or shall we say nine-tenths ?) of the secret of gaining an influence over them. If you are a humbug, nobody will tell you so, they will, perhaps, like you well enough, they won't grumble, but they will simply care less about God, the fire will grow cold, religion will go on dying in the parish.'<sup>1</sup>

And the longer a man stays in a parish the severer will be the test. At first he will obtain a good measure of popularity, but afterwards, when the novelty has worn off, and people have become accustomed to his expressions in teaching, and his methods of work, the call is great for the maintenance of spirituality of life. The prime necessity in Christian work is the ability to 'continue.' 'So Daniel continued.' 'Wherefore having obtained help of God, I continued.' In these words the Apostle gives us the secret : 'Having obtained help of God.' It will only be by the grace of God that a man will find his ministry continuing to grow in freshness and force as long as he remains in the parish. But when the life is true to God, when the grace of God fills the heart, when the Spirit of God controls the life, then indeed does the greatest problem of all find its solution, and the man continues 'strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.'

<sup>1</sup> *Hints to Parsons*, p. 5.



*PART III*

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

The New Testament, as we have seen, has much to say about the ministry with its many aspects, many elements, many demands, many difficulties, many sorrows, many responsibilities, many encouragements, many joys. But perhaps the one word which sums up most of the New Testament teaching about ministry is the Pauline word *ικανός*, which is rendered 'sufficient' in the Authorized Version, and means 'competent,' 'enough.' It describes the ministry which is capable, competent, because it has 'enough' of capacity, power, grace; the ministry which is efficient because it has sufficient. The corresponding substantive *ικανότης*, suggests 'competence,' and the verb *ικανόω*, 'to make competent,' to render efficient by providing a sufficiency.

Now with the view of gathering together the various lines of suggestion made in the foregoing chapters, and of concentrating attention on the essential elements of all true ministerial life and work, character and service, it is proposed to dwell on some of the aspects of an ideal ministry, an ideal drawn largely and indeed almost exclusively from the New Testament. It is well, if not essential, to have an ideal with which to start, if we are to succeed.



## CHAPTER I

### A COMPETENT MINISTRY

IN the writings of John Bunyan, that wonderful gallery of portraits, there are no less than seven pictures of the Christian minister. Evangelist, Interpreter, Great-heart, and the Four Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains (Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere), are all apparently intended to represent the Christian minister. Let us look at the first of these as found in the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

‘Christian saw the picture of a very grave person hung up against the wall; and this was the fashion of it: it had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind its back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head.’<sup>1</sup>

Here are seven elements of a New Testament minister and his ministry.

#### SECTION 1. ‘A VERY GRAVE PERSON.’

At the risk of repetition, because the matter is so important, we will say again that gravity is a leading feature of the requirements of the Christian life emphasized by St. Paul in the Pastoral Epistles. The Bishop is to have ‘his children in subjection with all gravity’ (1 Tim. iii. 4). The Deacon, as we have already seen, is to be ‘grave’ (1 Tim. iii. 8). The aged men are to be ‘grave’ (Tit. ii. 2). In addition there are several exhortations to sobriety and sober-mindedness (1 Tim. ii. 9, 15; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Tit. i.

<sup>1</sup> *Pilgrim's Progress*, R.T.S. Edition, p. 32.

8 ; ii. 4, 6, 12). And the very warnings indicate the same need, because the Apostle specially guards his readers against lightness and shallowness and inexperience (1 Tim. iii. 6 ; v. 13 ; 2 Tim. iii. 4).

No one can doubt the need of gravity in the minister, for his whole work is concerned with the deepest, most solemn, and most 'awe-ful' realities. But gravity does not, and cannot mean gloom, for that is as far removed from New Testament spirituality as flippancy. There is nothing gloomy about New Testament Christianity, nothing even pensive or wistful. The modern pensiveness is wholly foreign to the New Testament. But in like manner there is nothing light or trivial or shallow about New Testament religion and New Testament ministry. The clergyman has to do with eternal verities ; God, Christ, Redemption, Holiness, Heaven. He has to emphasize Sin, Salvation, Grace, Truth. He has to call for Repentance, Faith, Surrender, Consecration, Obedience. He has to warn against Unbelief, Ungodliness, Unrighteousness, Indifference. He has to proclaim Righteousness, Temperance and Judgment to come. Where, then, is the place for lightness ? It is excluded. Where is the place for gloom ? Equally excluded. Where is the place for gravity, earnestness, seriousness ? It is found everywhere. A clergyman will probably often find it difficult to steer clear of both extremes, but he is just as likely to repel by flippancy, as by gloom, and if he obtains the reputation of being jocular, a fine *raconteur*, a first-rate, because humorous, platform speaker, people will expect these things from him more and more, and in the long run will judge him accordingly. A man can be as bright, as joyous, as exuberant as the New Testament allows (and this means a very great deal), and yet with this, he will be restrained, sober, grave, and ever mindful of his Master's business.

## SECTION 2. 'EYES LIFTED UP TO HEAVEN.'

This element of the description refers to prayer in the life of a minister. It has always been prominent in the

lives of believers of all ages, from the earliest Old Testament days to the present moment. Much more so, then, must it be prominent in the lives of Christian ministers. To 'continue instant in prayer' is one of the most urgent needs.

### I. *Prayer in Relation to Spiritual Life.*

It is the means of expressing and maintaining our right attitude to God. The true attitude of the soul is a complex one of submission, desire, trust, and fellowship. Surrender, followed by aspiration, continued by dependence, and culminating in fellowship, is our attitude; and for all this we need and must have constant prayer. Prayer enters into every element and aspect of our hidden life. Would we be right and true and strong within? Let us pray.

Prayer, too, leads to the constant realization of the presence of God. 'His presence is salvation.' The peace of His presence, calming; the joy of His presence, cheering; the light of His presence, guiding; the glory of His presence, irradiating. And all this is made real by prayer.

Then by prayer the will of God is made clear to us. The perceptions of the soul are clarified. The balance of the soul is poised. The determinations of the soul are strengthened. We 'perceive and know what things we ought to do,' and that sure mark of spiritual growth, *αἰσθήσις*, 'perception,' becomes ours in an ever-increasing measure as we 'pray, always pray.'

### II. *Prayer in Relation to Spiritual Power.*

Who does not realize constantly 'the plague of his own heart!' Who is not ever confronted with the terrible fact and awful possibilities of 'indwelling sin!' Yet who does not also know that prayer is power, because it brings power. The heart becomes garrisoned, the conscience is made more sensitive, the will is strengthened, and the soul is protected on every side.

Who does not know, too, the power of temptation and the hideous possibilities of backsliding ! Yet here also prayer spells power, for it arms us against temptation so that 'nothing shall by any means hurt' us. And it guards against backsliding by keeping the crevices of the soul intact, and preserving against leakage.

Who does not also feel at times the tendency to slacken in service, and to regard his work as a burden ! Prayer makes duty light and service delightful. We are 'strengthened with all might,' and become 'ready for every good work,' and then His yoke is easy, and to serve Him is to reign (*Cui servire est regnare*). His service is perfect freedom when prayer lubricates the life.

### III. *Prayer in Relation to Spiritual Service.*

Our most immediate need in this connexion is constant blessing on our own work. We need and long for blessing in it and on it. This will come through prayer, because prayer envelops us in the Divine power, and we go to our work with the seal of God's presence and influence upon us. 'Power' and 'authority' are closely connected in things spiritual, and to be clothed with spiritual 'power' through prayer will assuredly invest us with a moral and spiritual 'authority' from and for Christ that will make itself felt wherever we go, and in whatever we do.

The power that comes through prayer will enlarge our sympathies as we work, enlighten our mind with truth, and ensure acceptance for our message. Prayer will help with the sermon because first it helps with the man himself, and the sermon then becomes the overflow of his experience. In a word, there is no part of our service where prayer is not power.

'Two preachers, speaking once about a simple "Quaker," who had delivered a discourse full of remarkable power, confessed themselves puzzled that a man of such slender ability should produce such a wonderful effect. Said one, "He really speaks as if he echoed God." To which a bystander replied, "You are right, for Brother —— lives so near to God that he hears what the most of us miss."'

This is the conclusion of the whole matter—our *service* will be all right if the *servant* is right.

Another clamant need in service is a deeper fellowship with God's purposes for the world. The 'chief end of Divine revelation' is the extension of the knowledge of redeeming love to all the world, and it is essential to all true Christian life and service that we realize this, and at the same time become conscious of our share in the fulfilment of it. Now, it is by prayer we enter in this region, and view all things from this standpoint. As the soul goes on praying, it soon begins to realize, in an ever-deepening measure, the existence and need of other souls, and it does not rest until within its ken and upon its heart are 'all souls.' Would we enter into the heart of God for the world? Let us pray.

Once more, we shall become deeply assured that our bounden duty, and perhaps our chief duty, for these souls is intercession. We can never forget that in the great ascending climax of our Lord's work, in Rom. viii., His intercession crowns all. Nor can we fail to realize the fact that His continued ability to save completely is based on His eternal life of intercession (Heb. vii. 25).

#### IV. *Prayer in Relation to Spiritual Attitude.*

If these 'things are wrought by prayer' it behoves us to ask how we may obtain the results, what attitude of soul must be taken up? The first will be an attitude of listening: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' The second will be an attitude of trust; believing that God hears prayer. The third will be an attitude of expectation; feeling confident that God answers prayer. The fourth will be an attitude of continuance; assured that, though God delays, the answer will 'surely come' (Hab. ii. 3). The word used for continuance in prayer indicates one of the deepest secrets of the prayer life (*προσκαρτερεῖν*), including *steadfastness* and *earnestness*. Its use in other places gives special point to its association with power (Mark iii. 9; Acts ii. 42, vi. 4, viii. 13).



## V. *Prayer in Relation to Spiritual Requirements.*

It follows inevitably from what has been said that the attitude of the soul depends on certain conditions being fulfilled, and these are four in number.

1. The Holy Spirit must be honoured. He is the ' Spirit of grace and supplication ' (Zech. xii. 10). He intercedes within and renders assistance against our foes (Rom. viii. 26, Greek). He is closely associated with prayer by St. Paul (Eph. vi. 11), and by St. Jude (*ver.* 20). No acceptable prayer can be made which does not find its source in the Holy Spirit of God. But when we pray ' in the Holy Ghost ' we begin to know and feel the power of prayer.

2. The Word of God must be utilized. Prayer is fed by promise. The Bible is at once the fuel and the food of prayer. Holy Scripture is the warrant of prayer, is full of examples of prayer, encouragements to prayer, instructions on prayer, and assurances about prayer. If in prayer we speak to God, in the Bible God speaks to us, and the connexion between the two is close, intimate, essential, and inextricable. No one will pray long without feeling the need of his Bible, because he must know the character of ' Him with Whom we have to do.'

3. Intercession must be prominent. It is a startling thought to realize that Samuel felt it would be a sin against God if he ceased intercessory prayer (1 Sam. xii. 23). And Job found blessing for himself, ' when he prayed for his friends ' (Job xlii. 10). We may well ask ourselves what place intercession has in our present devotions. Does it come last or first ? Is it summarized or detailed ? Is it hurried or extended ? May we not say that a clergyman's spiritual life may be gauged by the place occupied in it by intercessory prayer ? Intercession then must not only be definite but predominant in our life, it must occupy not a small but a prominent part of our daily prayer-life ; and as we enter more fully into the possibilities of prayer, our life of priestly intercession will be a life of ever-extending influence and power for God.

4. Method and habit must be adopted and maintained.

For the attitude of prayer we must have times. Attitude is based on acts, and times of prayer are necessary as the occasions of storage and accumulation of light, power, and grace. And these times must be daily. Not a day should pass without a definite going aside with God for solitary prayer. Our time may not be long, but it must be regular, and so from the act will come the habit, and from the habit the attitude.

And the time must be well spent by method in prayer. Every man will doubtless have his own plan of '*sacra privata*,' but some plan is essential. A loose-leaf book arranged under the headings of Intercession and Prayer, covering a week, or two weeks, or four weeks, is a very helpful plan, giving two pages to each day; one for Intercession, and the other for Prayer and Praise. In association with this, Dr. Andrew Murray's booklet, *Helps to Intercession*, will be a valuable adjunct, while cycles of missionary prayers can also be utilized. Dr. Harford's *Daily* will give suggestions of other methods and topics, but whatever be the method, some systematization of our times of private prayer seems essential, and so far from proving a burden, it will minister to the truest 'liberty of the Spirit,' and leave ample room for the constant outpourings of the soul from day to day. One thing is certain, that in the secret place the clergyman's soul will find its supreme place and power and promise of progress. From the attitude of prayer will come a character settled, sane, strong, and abiding, wherein God's presence will be more and more a delight and God's power more and more realized.<sup>1</sup>

### SECTION 3. 'THE BEST OF BOOKS IN HIS HAND.'

The Minister with the Bible is the obvious suggestion of this part of Bunyan's picture. And much, very much,

<sup>1</sup> For further suggestions on private prayer perhaps the writer may be allowed to refer to chapter ii of his little book, *Life Abiding and Abounding*.

will depend thereon. What are the chief elements in the attitude of a clergyman to Holy Scripture.

### I. *A Deep Conviction.*

‘The best of books.’ The minister ought to be assured of this as one of the unshakeable convictions of his soul.

1. Best, because of whence it comes. It comes from God. If the Bible is not in some sense God’s Book it is nothing to the Christian minister, and if he is not in some way convinced of this, the Book will be and do nothing in his work.

2. Best, because of Whom it reveals. It reveals Christ. Christ is the beginning, the end, the Alpha, the Omega, the sum and substance of Holy Scripture. Apart from Christ the Bible is nothing. The supreme value of the Scriptures is that they ‘testify of Him.’ And if the clergyman cannot see Christ in the Bible and make Christ the sum and substance of his message, he has nothing to do with Christ or the Bible.

3. Best, because of what it does. It brings Salvation. It is the book of Redemption, the book of the Way to God, the book of Grace and Glory. It tells of Pardon for the past, Power for the present, and Peace for the future. And if the clergyman is not able to say, ‘To you is the word of this salvation sent,’ he probably knows nothing about Salvation or the Bible.

This must be the supreme conviction of the Christian minister. The Bible as the revelation of Christ, Christ as the Interpreter of the Bible. God as the Source of its message, the Giver of its salvation, and the Guarantee of its holiness. And when in the power of the indwelling, illuminating Spirit the clergyman proclaims these truths, he soon knows by practical experience that the Bible is the best of books.

### II. *A Daily Companion.*

The Bible is of supreme and vital importance to the life of the minister. All the graces and blessings are mediated through this channel of revelation.

1. Rest of Soul comes through the Scriptures. 'Great peace have they which love Thy law : and nothing shall offend them' (Psa. cxix. 165). There is no more precious experience than that which comes through the regular exercise of the soul with the Bible.

2. Purity of Soul follows from the same source. The cleansing efficacy of the truth (John xv. 2, 3 ; Eph. v. 26) has its blessed results on the thoughts, the motives, the desires of the soul. Nothing can compare with the Scriptures for producing soul-purity.

3. Courage comes through the Word of God in the soul. Christianity can never be popular, or easy ; it makes too many and too great demands. It needs courage, bravery, fortitude ; and for these there is nothing like the power of Holy Scripture. In the face of difficulty, discouragement, depression, despondency, and temptation to despair, the Word will hearten and cheer, and send us afresh on our way rejoicing.

4. Inward power is another result of this 'best of books.' It is easy to preach ; it is not so easy to live. The Christian secret of true living is *αὐτάρκεια*, 'self-sufficiency,' and yet not self-sufficiency, but 'Christ-sufficiency,' for it is 'not I, but Christ.' 'I can do all things,' says St. Paul ; true, but 'in Him Who strengtheneth me.' When a man has tasted of the good Word of God it is not surprising if he knows the meaning of 'My grace is sufficient (*ἄρκει*) for thee.'

5. Outward power is from the same source. There are temptations to be overcome, and duties to perform, and for these the minister needs power, Divine power. His motto should be *Resistere, Insistere, Persistere*, and this is only possible through the Scriptures. 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you' (1 John ii. 14).

6. Clearness of vision is not the least important and essential element of the ministerial life which comes inevitably from the Bible. It is a mark of a maturing Christian that he 'knows.' All the latest Epistles emphasize this (*ἐπιγνώσις*, Eph i. 17 ; Phil, i. 9 ; Col. i. 10 ; 2 Pet. i. 2,

ii. 20 ; 1 John ii. 3, and *passim*). The 'little children' in Christ may rejoice in the possession of sins forgiven, and a knowledge of the Father. The 'young men' may glory in their strength. But 'the fathers' are marked by 'knowledge' of the Eternal One, and than this there is nothing higher (1 John ii. 12-14). Spiritual insight is one of the most precious, most essential, and most potent elements in the life of a Christian minister, and it comes from God through the Scriptures.

7. Reserve force is an essential for the ministry, and it comes from God through the Scriptures. One of the dangers of the ministry is an inner unrest, an absence of reserve of power, a tendency to limit ourselves to our weekly output of work. We tire, or we find ourselves at the mercy of some critical discussion, or it may be some intellectual dissipation. It is just here that the Bible will provide the needed counterpoise. It will give a fresh atmosphere, a new outlook, an anchorage of soul. Constant meditation of the Bible will give freshness of spirit, capacity for usefulness, readiness for emergencies, persistence in service. The man will *last*, and his ministry abide and increase in fruitfulness.

### III. *A Definite Duty.*

1. We must go to our Bible *regularly*. We must get alone with God through His Word. Some one has said that morning devotion anchors the soul so that it will not drift far away.

2. We must receive from our Bible *directly*. Whatever else we may learn from others, what we get from God direct is of fundamental importance. The Bible must be our 'Enchiridion.' We shall find it useful to keep one Bible solely for devotional purposes, and especially a Greek Testament. It should be entirely without marks or notes, in order that we may come to the most familiar passage unfettered by old ideas, and thus receive something fresh for daily need, new manna for new requirements.



3. We must apply the Bible *practically*. The purpose of devotion is personal need, and not the need of our flock. It is a constant temptation to a clergyman to read his Bible with others in view, but in the secret place this must be resolutely set aside and resisted. 'What saith my Lord unto His servant?' is the one and constant thought. The Word of God must be allowed to criticize us (*κριτικός*, Heb. iv. 12), to sift, test, guide, warn, cheer, purify, guard, bless us. And when the Bible is all this to us we shall go forth to our work with 'the best of books in our hands'; strong in the Lord to preach and live the Word of His grace in Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

#### SECTION 4. 'THE LAW OF TRUTH WAS WRITTEN UPON HIS LIPS.'

This element of Bunyan's picture of the minister is clearly taken from Malachi's description of the true prophet: 'The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips' (*Ch.* ii. 6). And as we ponder it we shall find that it consists of several important points.

##### I. *Testimony.*

The 'lips' imply utterance, and suggest that the preacher has a message to deliver. If he has not something to say, he might as well not be a minister of the Gospel. He must have a message, personal and definite, the announcement of the Good News, 'the word of the truth of the Gospel.'

But it means still more than this; it assumes that he delivers his message, that he has something to say and says it. Two questions will ever confront the preacher of the Gospel: What am I going to say? Have I said it?

<sup>1</sup> For further consideration of the Bible as a book of devotion, the writer ventures to refer again to his little book, *Life Abiding and Abounding* (Chapter i).

## II. *Faithfulness.*

His message is 'the truth.' 'The law of truth was written upon his lips.' God is the God of truth (Deut. xxxii. 4). Christ is the Truth (John xiv. 6). The Divine Word is truth (John xvii. 17). And the minister is sent to bear witness to the truth, He is to proclaim 'the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.' There are few things more definitely emphasized in the New Testament than the Gospel as truth and the disciples as witnesses. St. Paul makes this truth clear when he declares that he had kept back nothing and had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts xx. 27). This is the call to-day to the Christian minister, to proclaim by lip and life the truth of God, to withhold nothing, to reveal all God's will, 'Whether they hear or whether they forbear.'

And he will find a frequent and pressing temptation to tone down the truth and even to hold it back. There will be social prejudices, intellectual prejudices, political prejudices, ecclesiastical prejudices, and even spiritual prejudices to encounter, and unless the minister seeks to be faithful, some modification of the full-orbed Gospel will almost inevitably be made. He will need courage if he is to be true to God's truth in its fulness. This is the burden of St. Paul's messages to Timothy. 'Be strong'; 'Be not ashamed.' And with this agrees his warning to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou *fulfil* it' (Col. iv. 17). And yet faithfulness and courage will not mean bitterness or hardness, or narrowness, but a simple, straightforward, loving presentation of God's eternal and unchangeable verity. 'Speaking (or living) the truth in love' (Eph. iv. 15, Greek).

## III. *Sincerity.*

Truth on the lips presupposes something farther back; 'truth in the inward parts,' which means sincerity. If we are to speak truly we must think truly, and feel truly.

There will be sincerity of motive. Whether in seeking the ministry, or in exercising it, sincerity will dominate our life and without it moral failure and disaster will be the inevitable result.

And from sincerity of motive will spring sincerity of speech. There will be no exaggeration and no flattery. 'That ye may be sincere.' Trench says that *εὐλικρινεῖς* (Phil. i. 10) means freedom from falsehood, and it is generally supposed to come from *εὐλή* and *κρίνω*, 'to judge in the sunlight,' to be held up to the light and seen to be 'transparent.' The emphasis on sincerity in the New Testament is very significant and searching (1 Cor. v. 8; 2 Cor. ii. 17; 2 Pet. iii. 1).

Testimony, Faithfulness, Sincerity; these three, and they are one. The man who possesses them is a man after God's own heart; he is not ashamed of the results of past scrutiny (Psalm cxxxix. 1), and he is not afraid to submit himself again to the same unerring testimony (Psalm cxxxix. 23f.). He lives in the sunlight of God's presence, God's truth, God's Spirit; he knows that if he regards iniquity in his heart the Lord will not hear him, and he knows that the Word of God is a mirror (Jas. i. 23-25), a discernor (Heb. iv. 12), a hammer (Jer. xxiii. 29), and that if he hides that Word in his heart he will not sin against God (Psalm cxix. 11).

#### SECTION 5. 'THE WORLD WAS BEHIND ITS BACK.'

A very difficult question is here raised, and yet one that has to be faced in every true ministry. It is what St. John calls 'the love of the world.' Let us listen carefully to the Apostolic words:—

'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him' (1 John ii. 15).

The contrast here is striking: 'The love of the world,' and 'the love of the Father.' St. Paul's version is 'Love seeketh not her own' (1 Cor. xiii. 5). But let us look the difficulties full in the face.

### I. *What is Worldliness ?*

No one doubts or even questions the reference to the actual evil of the world. 'The lust of the eyes and the pride of life.' Two words depict the power of this worldliness, 'desire,' and 'boasting.' Or, as our Catechism puts it, 'the pomps and vanity of this wicked world.' The boastfulness, show, glitter, emptiness of sin is to be spurned and rejected. This is a matter of course.

But the problem lies on what has well been called the 'border lines in the field of doubtful practices' (H. C. Trumbull). There are certain forms of social amusement generally described as 'worldly,' like the theatre and the ball-room, and as to these, the questions are often raised 'Are they wrong ?' 'And if so, why and how ?' It is of course impossible to lay down any hard and fast line, to say that this is worldly, and that is not. But, speaking generally, worldliness betrays itself in its atmosphere. There is a something undefined, perhaps undefinable, and yet very real, that betokens a lowering of the spiritual atmosphere, a check on the spiritual vitality. It is for every man to face this problem for himself and to settle it, but it may be suggested for consideration and perhaps for guidance that anything that tends to make prayer, Bible meditation, and Christian fellowship less enjoyable is to be avoided as essentially 'worldly.' In most cases the questions relating to amusement, society, and the rest can be settled by a reference to our Master, His presence, and His will. It may not be possible to discover 'What would Jesus do ?' but it is certainly possible to ask, 'What would Jesus have me do ?' The Pauline question, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?' is still capable of many and varied applications. But we must come a little closer home to the actualities of ministerial life. The principle of worldliness may be difficult of explanation, but the practice may often and easily be depicted.

### II. *What is Worldliness in a Minister ?*

It may take various forms, and among them are the following.

1. The minister may show his worldliness by a too great fondness for social life and pleasure. There is of course no reference here to anything inherently wrong, but only to an abuse of the legitimate. 'More men are killed by meat than by poison.' It was said of a clergyman that he was always sure to be found at his club. Could anything much less satisfactory be meant and said of him? A clergyman may easily obtain the reputation of a diner-out, and though he may be scrupulously abstemious in food and drink, he will suffer in the eyes of many right-minded people by his undue love of the purely social in life. This is no plea for severe asceticism or rigid exclusiveness. Far from it. It only means that the social element must be carefully watched. Recreation, whatever its form, must be re-creation, or it will fail and do positive harm.

2. He may show his worldliness by resorting to unworthy methods. He may be tempted to indulge in sensationalism in his preaching, to excessive advertisement of his Church and parish, to be content with a low standard of preaching, to adopt secular methods which attract crowds without doing real spiritual work. The spirit of these things is essentially and fundamentally worldly, and the man who yields to it will find it eating like a canker into his spiritual life.

3. He may show his worldliness by means of ambition for place and power. There are some men who are ever seeking preferment, and who apply for almost every vacancy that occurs. They take steps directly and indirectly to put themselves before patrons of livings, and use every effort to get themselves appointed. Fortunately, patrons generally 'see through' these methods, and discount the men who use them, and there are many patrons who feel saddened and humiliated at the thought of what some clergymen will do to obtain preferment. It may not be absolutely necessary, or even wise, to go to the other extreme of never applying for a post, because there are certain positions which cannot be obtained without due and proper application. But the general principle



is beyond question, and the cases where applications are necessary and should be made are exceedingly few. A man must take reasonable care for his own affairs, especially if he is married and has others dependent on him, but great and constant consideration will be necessary as to what is 'reasonable care.' The clergyman is called to self-sacrifice, and people are always impressed by his readiness to sacrifice himself. He will not blazon this before men but live it before God, and in the long run (even if it is *long*) it will tell. There is scarcely anything more prejudicial to spiritual life, progress, and power, than ambition for place in the Church.

4. And he may show his worldliness by the fear of man. This is protean in shape, but dangerous in every guise. It is possible to shape our opinions and actions with a view to possible advancement. It is possible to frame our message so as to please man rather than God (Gal. i. 10). Our spiritual enthusiasm may easily give place to an essentially worldly prudence that gives a tone and character to everything in our ministry. And if we yield to this temptation we shall lose our high ideals, introduce slackness into our study, and perfunctoriness into our work ; our visiting will be mechanical, our preaching half-hearted, and our whole ministry joyless, barren, and useless.

### III. *How can Worldliness be Overcome ?*

'The world was behind its back.' A definite act of repudiation and rejection has been performed, and the choice has been irreversibly made. Opportunities will come again to test us, calls to sacrifice may seem harder at times than ever, specious forms of the worldly spirit will approach us in disguise, and the temptation will still meet us full in the face. But soon the fresh decision will have been made, the die cast, and the repudiation once again effected. 'We are not ignorant of his devices,' will be our experience, and with that spiritual insight which comes from God Himself we shall claim and win the victory.

But this will mean 'God first.' Our motto must ever be, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' It is only by 'the expulsive power' of a new and stronger affection that 'the love of the world' will be overcome. Only by 'the love of the Father' will the other love be displaced and dispossessed.

And this will produce such joy in Christ and His service that nothing else will compare with it for spiritual satisfaction. He will be supreme, pre-eminent, all in all, and in this will be protection, power, and peace. Our prayer will be 'Teach me to do Thy will.' 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' Our meat will be 'to do the will of Him that sent' us, and we shall be fully assured that while the world passeth away, 'he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

#### SECTION 6. 'IT STOOD AS IF IT PLEADED WITH MEN.'

There cannot be much doubt that this line of the ministerial portrait comes from St. Paul's great word, 'As though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead' (2 Cor. v. 20).

##### I. *What is it to plead?*

First it means to state the truth. Like St. Paul, we must 'open and set before' (Acts xvii. 3). Then, it means to urge reasons for the acceptance of the truth. 'He reasoned' (Acts xvii. 3). And lastly, it means to persuade to acceptance; 'persuading' (Acts xviii. 4). This is the meaning of what Dr. J. H. Jowett has called 'the wooing note,' the thought underlying the well-known word, 'Jesu, *lover* of my soul.' Like the Baptist, the Christian minister must be a *friend* of the Bridegroom, and as such, point men to Him and persuade them to accept Him. The persuasion and the persuasiveness of the Christian ministry will ever be among its strongest, most dominant, and characteristic notes. The absence of it in much modern preaching is an incomparable loss to preacher and to hearer. The Gospel is intended for

acceptance, and while we cannot compel, we ought to use every endeavour to impel by persuading men.

## II. *What are the Secrets of Pleading ?*

1. A supreme conviction of the truth of the Divine Word. 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men' (2 Cor. v. 11). Is this a dominant note of our ministry? Nothing in criticism, history, or philosophy must ever be allowed to blot out from mind and heart the absolute certainty of the Divine truth.

2. A keen sense of man's need. 'Lost' is a word very seldom heard to-day, and yet it expresses a New Testament truth of the profoundest meaning and magnitude. Souls are in danger of being lost, whether we realize it or not, and no one can read the New Testament without feeling that the words 'saved' and 'lost' refer to the most vital issues of life. We shall not be able to describe the full extent and content of what is involved in being 'lost,' but the Master's Word, 'these shall go away', is quite enough, for 'away' means banished from God and from all that this implies of love and light, peace and purity, holiness and hope. And the minister who knows something of the New Testament teaching on this profound subject will never fail to 'persuade' men.

3. A real love for the souls of men. This is one of the supreme requirements of a true ministry. Not merely must we love ideas but men, not only truth but lives, not only congregations but individuals. Like the Master Himself Who hungered for men, we must seek the same spirit, and when we get it we shall indeed plead and persuade.

4. A deep love for the Saviour. The supreme force in the Apostle's life was 'the love of Christ,' and this not merely his own love to the Lord Jesus, but the Lord's love to him. It was this that 'constrained' him, 'hemmed him in' (2 Cor. v. 14, *συνέχει*), and impelled him to live for Christ not for himself. When this love fills every crevice of life it is felt to be 'so amazing, so divine,' that it 'Demands our soul, our life, our all.'

And in the power and glow of this love we plead, and persuade, and beseech men to be reconciled to God.

### III. *What are the Guarantees of this Pleading?*

As fuel to the fire, so will certain conditions affect our ministry.

1. Meditation on the Word of God will do much to make our ministry a 'pleading' and 'beseeching' ministry. 'Thy Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones' (Jer. xx. 9). The heart warmed and burning with the fire of Divine truth 'cannot but speak,' and speak in terms of loving, earnest pleading with men.

2. The power of the Holy Spirit will be another means of fulfilling this pleading ministry. What people need above everything is a ministry of the Word in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Dr. J. H. Jowett in his invaluable little book, *The Passion for Souls*, tells of a pitman who said of his Vicar, 'You have only to shake that man's hand, to feel that he is full of the Holy Ghost.' Could any testimony be finer? Could anything be more humiliating to many of us in the face of our many failures? The Word and the Spirit. The Word through the Spirit, and the Spirit in the Word. These two, filling the heart, sensitizing the conscience, and ruling the will are the simple, sufficient secrets of a ministry that pleads with men and does not plead in vain.

### SECTION 7. 'A CROWN OF GOLD DID HANG OVER ITS HEAD.'

There are many incentives in Christianity. One is the hope of future reward. 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward' (2 John 8). In the long line of worthies in Hebrews xi. the future bulks largely, and 'the recompense of reward' was a great power for faithful endurance. The Lord Jesus Himself used this truth in His teaching (Matt. xxiv. ; xxv.), and the Apocalypse

sounds a similar note in almost every part of its great vision of the future.

### I. *The Promised Prospect.*

There are four 'crowns' prepared for the followers of Christ and associated with the great future. (a) The Crown of Life, as the reward of faithfulness (Rev. ii. 10). (b) The Crown of Righteousness, as the outcome of strenuous endurance (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). (c) The Crown of Rejoicing, as the acknowledgment of soul-winning (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20). (d) The Crown of Glory, as the acknowledgment of true service (1 Pet. v. 4).

All these will be found to refer to Service not to Salvation. St. Paul longed to see his converts living so faithfully that in the great day it would be seen that he had not laboured 'in vain' (Phil. ii. 16), and he encouraged the Church at Corinth by telling them to be 'stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not *in vain* in the Lord' (1 Cor. xv. 58). No one can read the New Testament without being conscious of this great incentive, the prospect promised 'to them that love Him.'

### II. *The Present Power.*

The future is intended to be an inspiration to the present. We are to work in the hope and prospect of hearing the Master's 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' We are to labour with the thought of winning men to Christ and then of presenting our converts at the Court on High (Col. i. 28), and of having the supreme joy of saying, 'Behold I and the children whom Thou hast given me' (Heb. ii. 13). Surely the inspiration of such a prospect should be a great power in our life.

But the responsibility is also great. We may lose our reward. While there may be no question of our salvation, there may be of our faithfulness; no thought of losing heaven, but certainly of losing our right position there. The labourer may be without sheaves, his soul saved,



but his life lost. Miss Havergal tells of an old servant to whom she had never spoken for Christ, but who, when led to Christ by some one else said, 'Miss Fanny, I might have been *yours*.' There is a solemn and searching truth in the New Testament that does not seem to have had the attention it deserves. I mean the possibility of grief at the Advent of Christ. When we are reminded of 'shame before Him at His coming' (1 John ii. 28); when we are exhorted to perfect love in order that 'we may have boldness in the day of judgment,' we are surely to understand the possibility of something like shame and fear in that great day. St. Paul speaks of the Christian who builds upon the foundation, wood, hay, and stubble, and then of the fire trying every man's work of what sort it is. There is no question of salvation here, but only of faithful service. 'If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire' (1 Cor. iii. 11-15). All this is in strict accord with our Lord's solemn exhortation to 'watch and pray' in order that we 'may be accounted worthy . . . to stand before the Son of Man' (Luke xxi. 36). It stands to reason that if a Christian man does not follow after holiness, does not attempt the work of soul-winning, and does not render God any faithful service, he cannot experience the same assurance of satisfaction as that which pertains to the faithful soldier and servant of the Master. Be it ours, therefore, so to live in our Lord's presence and so to be faithful to His momentary grace, that we may lift up our face without spot on that day and rejoice before Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Bunyan showed, here as elsewhere, his unerring spiritual insight in including this element in his picture of a Christian minister. The future must affect the present. Judgment must begin at the house of God, and if we are to be workmen who need not to be ashamed when He appears, we must live and labour in the light of that great and awful day.

## CHAPTER II

### ESSENTIALS OF A COMPETENT MINISTRY

IT is evident from almost every consideration we have given to the Christian ministry that the prime secret of its power lies in the minister himself, his life, character, and tone. Only as these are true will his work be effective. Bunyan's picture of the Christian minister emphasizes this, for every aspect is concerned chiefly, and in some respects entirely, with the man himself.

But there are certain aspects of the life and character of the minister which call for special attention if we are to realize the full meaning of a competent ministry.

#### SECTION I. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (*Gal. i. 16* ; *1 John i. 3*).

The end of all God's dealings with man is union and communion. From Genesis to Revelation we see how sin separates and how Christ unites. The work of Christ *for* us leads to His work *in* us, and the preposition 'in,' whether referring to 'Christ in us,' or to us 'in Christ,' is the key-note and central truth of the teaching of St. Paul and St. John. 'In Christo' has been called 'The Monogram of St. Paul.' In the Epistle to the Galatians five times the Apostle refers to Christ being 'in' us, and in Phil. iv. it is recorded no less than eight times that we are 'in Christ' or 'in the Lord.'

#### I. *The Power.*

Almost every grace and blessing of the Christian life is associated with the presence of Christ in His people. 'Jesus in the midst' is the description of the Cross.

‘There am I in the midst’ is the assurance about the two or three gathered in His Name. ‘The Prince in the midst’ is the prophetic anticipation of the Messiah (Ezek. xlv. 10). And ‘the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne’ is one of the last visions of the exalted Lord (Rev. vii. 17). If then He is to have His rightful power over our lives He must be in His rightful place ‘in the midst.’ This ought to be a matter of special concern to the Christian minister.

1. Peace. ‘Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you’ (John xx. 19) The peace of His presence gives restfulness in the ministry.

2. Purity. ‘The Holy One in the Midst’ (Hos. xi. 9). ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?’ (1 Cor. iii. 16). The purity of His presence is the guarantee of ministerial holiness.

3. Power. ‘The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing’ (Zeph. iii. 17). ‘Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you’ (2 Cor. iii. 13). The power of His presence is the assurance of the powerlessness of all opposition to our ministry.

4. Courage. ‘Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest’ (Josh. i. 9). ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the health of His countenance’ (Psa. xlii. 5, R.V.). ‘He saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid’ (John vi. 20). The courage due to His presence is the one sufficient inspiration of all ministerial service.

5. Wisdom. ‘To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood’ (Gal. i. 16). ‘And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of

Man' (Rev. i. 13). The spiritual perception required for the varied demands of the ministry can only come from the indwelling presence of Christ.

6. Satisfaction. 'And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied and praise the Name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and My people shall never be ashamed' (Joel ii. 26 f.). Amid all the disappointments attendant on the ministry nothing can compare with the joy of the conscious presence of Christ.

7. Expectation. 'Christ in you the hope of glory' (Col. i. 27). The presence of Christ in the heart is the pledge and foretaste of that glory which will be ours at His Advent.

These and other passages show that the presence of Christ in the heart is the centre from which radiates every experience, every blessing, every influence.

## II. *The Peril.*

But privilege brings peril, and the very blessings of the Gospel may easily be turned into their opposites by carelessness. While it is eternally and blessedly true that so far as salvation is concerned the believer's position 'in Christ' and his possession of Christ ('Christ in you') are untouched by anything merely human, yet it is equally and solemnly true that our personal *experience* of these realities may be affected by our sin, or neglect, or non-fulfilment of conditions. As the disciples on the way to Emmaus 'constrained' our Lord to abide with them, so there is a sense in which we have to fulfil requirements if He is to abide in us and we are to abide in Him. The peril of lost fellowship is a real one and should be faced by every minister, for nothing can make up for it. What are some of the causes of this failure in fellowship?

1. There is the danger of preoccupation with other interests. It is only too possible for ordinary every-

day affairs to shut out the clergyman from his Bible and from fellowship with God. Even our legitimate intercourse with others can easily exclude Christ. It is therefore essential that we shall so arrange our time, that not even the most natural and normal earthly concerns may affect our conscious communion with our Master.

2. There is the danger of pressure of daily work. It is also very possible to neglect Christ through haste. One of our most serious perils is that of having 'no time' for fellowship, because of the constant pressure of engagements connected with our own clerical work. How often clergymen have said that they have scarcely any time even to read their Bible, and yet we must 'take time to be holy.'

3. There is the danger of presumption. By this is meant the solemn possibility of taking spiritual realities too much for granted. While we know the joy of resting upon fundamental facts, such as Justification, Righteousness, and the Gift of the Holy Spirit, we must never allow the freedom and fulness of Divine grace to hinder our definite fellowship in daily experience. No knowledge of doctrine, no certainty of spiritual position must interfere with our effort to hold communion with our Master. We dare not take His presence for granted, and if we do we shall find the risk is great and the loss will be serious. We ought to know by definite fulfilment of conditions that He is in us and with us. These are only some of the spiritual perils connected with our loss of fellowship, and they are among the greatest and most serious we can experience. A ministry which is not based on a constant 'recollectedness' of the Master's presence must necessarily be shorn of spiritual power.

### III. *Protection.*

But how may we avoid these perils and experience the power of His presence and fellowship? The way is very simple.



1. He is brought into our lives by faith. 'If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me' (Rev. iii. 20). 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith' (Eph. iii. 17). Trust unlocks the door and allows Him to enter and abide. And the act of faith by which He first enters is to become transformed into an attitude for daily living. 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God' (Gal. ii. 20).

2. He is kept in our lives by faithfulness. Communion with Him by prayer and the Bible, and obedience to Him by response to His will, are the guarantees of a perpetual fellowship which is the heart of the Christian ministry. The whole of Christianity, and therefore the whole of our ministry, is summed up in the Lord's words: 'At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you' (John. xiv. 20). Here we have (1) Our Safe Position. 'I am in My Father.' On this all else rests, the Divinity of our Lord. (2) Our Strong Protection. 'Ye in Me.' This means our acceptance in Christ for pardon and righteousness, and our union with Him in His death and His life. (3) Our Sure Provision. 'I in you.' This guarantees all necessary power for life and holiness. And in the Holy Spirit we come to 'know' this gradually and increasingly, and enter into the full blessing of communion with God in Christ. Herein lies our power for life and service, and the guarantee of 'full proof of our ministry.'

## SECTION 2. CONCENTRATION (1 Kings xx. 40 ; Phil. iii. 13).

There is nothing finer or more fascinating than life. We see this in Science as we are shown the glories, first of the crystal, then of the cell, the inorganic and the organic in nature. But it is still more evident in the spheres of morality and religion, for there is nothing more wonderful or beautiful than a life of holiness which combines nature and grace. The essence of life is will, and every true life will be dominated by purpose. It has been pointed

out that there are three principles which actuate human life. Some lives are regulated by external forces (as illustrated by the clock and its weights). Others by the internal force of conscience (as illustrated by the watch and its mechanism). Others again by a Divine vitality (as illustrated by a bird and its wings). The third is the real life, because in the believer it implies surrender to the will of God. Blending the two passages that stand at the top of this section let us give special heed to the need and power of a concentrated purpose in life.

### I. *A Great Trust.*

The man in the story was given the charge of a prisoner, and, like the prophet, we may use the incident parabolically. Our trust is twofold. (a) We have the care of our own life; our time, our gifts, our character. God has a plan for every life. Bushnell's great sermon suggests this by its title, 'Every man's life a plan of God.' When we realize this we begin to know something of life's dignity and responsibility. The Holy Spirit reveals this plan step by step as we abide in fellowship with God. (b) And the second part of our trust is the care of other lives. 'None of us liveth to himself.' Our life is bound up in the bundle of life with others, and we cannot move far or often without being conscious of our relationship to and responsibility for others.

### II. *A Great Failure.*

While the man was preoccupied the prisoner escaped. 'While thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.' And he paid the penalty of his error. There is nothing sadder in life than lost opportunities. Time for reading comes and goes without being utilized. Opportunity for work comes and is not taken advantage of. And such opportunities never recur, nor can be recalled. It is utterly false to say 'We may be what we might have been.' God's grace may do much, but it is not His will to do all, and concerning failure of time and service, the

solemn words must be written, 'Never again.' There is no need to fail. The Holy Spirit is ready to bestow grace, and so enable us to fulfil God's purpose, and to carry out His plan.

### III. *A Great Weakness.*

'Thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.' Then the trouble was not work, but busy idleness, mere triviality. How vivid, picturesque, and searching, is the word 'desultory,' i. e. leaping from one thing to another. Desultory reading ; desultory work ; these are among the greatest snares of the ministry. There is a danger not only of rush, but of useless rush in a clergyman's life. Nothing can compare with personality ; it is only as we *are* that we *do*. And if we cannot see the relative and proportionate values of things we shall fail lamentably. We must not hesitate to drop work, however important, if thereby we can do other work that is still more important. We shall do more by doing less, because we shall be able thereby to put our personality into what we actually accomplish.

### IV. *A Great Need.*

'This one thing I do.' Mark the terseness of the Greek. 'But one.' This will mean Conviction, Concentration, and Consecration. A definite assurance as to life's plan ; a definite object of life, as high as possible ; and a definite purpose to carry out the plan and realize the object. These will unite all our energies and prevent their dissipation. Paul's purpose transformed all that he touched ; it was the secret of his mighty power and influence. And it was in this spirit he urged Timothy. 'Give thyself wholly to them.' Indeed all lives, worthy of the name, are dominated by purpose. 'Daniel purposed in his heart.' Esther ventured everything for her people. The ideal man of the Psalmist takes up a position and does not change (Ps. xv. 2-5), because his heart is fixed. Every element in David Livingstone centred in his will. Opposition, trial, failure, only nerved him afresh. 'If I live, I must succeed in my undertaking ; death alone will put a

stop to my efforts.' It is the same in every career ; business men, athletes, artists, scholars, scientists, must concentrate or fail.

But what is of great moment is that the power of a concentrated purpose often makes the difference between the failure of the genius and the success of mediocrity. Men of moderate powers if wholly consecrated can accomplish what greater men fail to do because they lack concentration. As a well-known American scholar said, ' It does not take a great man to radiate a pure spirit,' and the difference between men almost invariably lies in the *will*. This is especially true of the ministry where the danger of the dissipation of thought and energy is so great and pressing. A clergyman's time is so largely his own, that if he has no plan of reading and study, no distinction between engagements, no power of saying ' No,' he is likely to be an utter failure however great may be his natural gifts. ' He who is false to present duty breaks a thread in the loom and will find the flaw when he may have forgotten its cause.'

One special application of this important subject is the need of maintaining our habits of study all through our ministerial life. With all possible emphasis it should be said that no ministerial work, however important, must ever be allowed to interfere with our studies. But if this is to be so, there must be (1) a settled determination on our part to devote some time every day to study ; (2) a careful arrangement and husbanding of our time to allow of this being done ; (3) a choice of some particular branch of biblical and theological study which will bear fruit in our ministry. It may be Old Testament, or New Testament, or Doctrine, or History, or Evidences ; or it may be all of these in turn in the course of a settled ministry. But whatever it be the plan must be rigidly adhered to. (4) Most important of all, even though mentioned last, is a regular, first-hand study of our Greek Testament, together with all the best available helps. The value of such a plan and determination is that our reading will have definiteness and purpose ; our spiritual

life will be helped by the intellectual discipline ; our sermons will never lack force and freshness ; and our ministry will prove increasingly fruitful to the very end.

‘ This one thing I do.’ Concentration and Consecration. And then it is that ‘ God that worketh in us both to *will* and to *work*.’ The heart right with God, the mind true to truth, the will loyal to law, the life filled with the Spirit. Granted all this, and then, not failure but success, not weakness but strength, not disappointment but delight will characterize our life and ministry.

### SECTION 3. THE HOLY SPIRIT (*Acts viii. 29*).

The unique feature of Christianity, its last, greatest, and most characteristic fact and factor is the Holy Spirit of God. And if this is true of Christianity generally it is pre-eminently true of the ministry. Our Lord’s ministry began ‘ in the power of the Spirit.’ He told His disciples to tarry ‘ until ye be endued with power from on high.’ St. Paul says that his ministry was ‘ not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power ’ (1 Cor. ii. 4). The Holy Spirit is ‘ the Spirit of Truth ; ’ the Word of God is ‘ the sword of the Spirit ; ’ and over all the operations of the Christian Church in Acts the Holy Spirit exercised constant and complete control. Out of the various passages where the Holy Spirit is mentioned in connexion with Christian service, let us take the story of Philip and the Eunuch.

#### I. *The Relation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Worker.*

1. He discloses the will of God. God has spoken through His Word which is itself the work of the Spirit (2 Tim. iii. 16 ; 2 Pet. i. 21), and He still speaks to the soul as He applies that Word. The Word without the Spirit is dry and useless ; the Spirit without the Word has no message. But the Spirit in the Word is the twofold secret of all true ministry.

2. He needs a ready and obedient heart. In wireless



telegraphy two stations are required, one for transmitting the other for receiving. And these two must be perfectly attuned to each other, or the message will be lost. It is the same in Christian work. Philip was in Samaria, hard at work winning souls and shepherding them. The call of the Spirit came, 'Go toward the south into the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.' Surely the work ought not to be left at so critical a juncture! But obedience had made him spiritually acute and he knew the Spirit's voice. The soul must be attuned to the will of God by faithful loyalty, or else the messages from above will be lost.

3. The word of the Spirit to us will agree with what He is saying to others. Philip soon understood why he had been called away from Samaria, for when he saw the chariot, the Spirit spoke again, and in a short time Philip was proclaiming Christ to the Ethiopian and winning him for his Master. To-day we call this 'providential,' or a 'coincidence,' but if we gave things their right name, we should call it the leading of the Spirit.

One thing is perfectly certain; the Christian minister must be in constant and close touch with the Holy Spirit of God if his ministry is to be fruitful and glorify God.

## II. *The Work to be done.*

Philip represents the Christian minister as he faces his work in the power of the Spirit. The same Spirit that guides to the work and brings the work to us, equips for it, and provides grace sufficient.

1. Philip had to proclaim the Gospel to a man of great personal power. His position was high, his influence great, and the minister of the Gospel was fearless because full of the Spirit of power. Whatever be our work the Gospel is adequate to every need.

2. Philip had to proclaim the Gospel to a man of distinct material power. The circumstances of his journey to and from Jerusalem, the distance from and to Ethiopia, the time required, the chariot and the entire

surroundings, might easily have made Philip quail, but they did not. God's Gospel proclaimed in the power of the Spirit is sufficient for all possible materialism.

3. Philip had to proclaim the Gospel to a man of evident intellectual power. He was reading and pondering for himself, and required 'light and leading.' Philip addressed himself to this task and soon explained what was needed. There is nothing more striking than the power of a consecrated, sanctified man to satisfy the intellect with the truth and grace of the Gospel.

4. Philip had to proclaim the Gospel to one who felt spiritual hunger. The Ethiopian was seeking light and yearning for satisfaction. The religion of Judaism while better than his former paganism did not fully satisfy. Even its own pages seemed to point to something higher as he pondered the mysterious words of the prophet. And in this state of hunger Philip met him and preached to him Jesus as the fulfilment of the prophet's words, as the satisfaction of all yearnings, as the inspiration of all joyous life. This is the greatest and deepest work we can do. There are hungry ones to feed, thirsty ones to satisfy, empty ones to fill, sad ones to cheer, dark ones to illuminate, and when the man of God has the Gospel of God and preaches the Christ of God in the power of the Spirit of God he reveals the Salvation of God to the needy ones who soon go 'on their way rejoicing.'

How, then, may the servant of God so keep in touch with the Spirit of God that his work may always meet with blessing?

1. He must maintain spiritual sensitiveness by fellowship with the Spirit of God. '*Ye know Him.*' Do we?

2. He must cultivate spiritual responsiveness by obedience. '*If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.*' Obedience is the organ of vision and the guarantee of power.

3. He must ensure spiritual equipment by discipline. The habit of prayer, the habit of meditation, will provide

channels for the Spirit to pour His grace into our souls and through us to others. In everything, therefore, our ministry must be 'full of the Holy Ghost.'

#### SECTION 4. FAITH (*Luke xvii. 5*).

There are few things more obvious in the New Testament than the emphasis laid on Faith. In every part, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse, the call of God to man is clear. And 'without faith it is impossible to please God' might almost be regarded as the keynote of the New Testament. Almost every aspect of the Christian life is connected with Faith. We are justified by faith (Rom. v. 1); purified by faith (Acts xv. 9); we live by faith (Gal. ii. 20); we stand by faith (2 Cor. i. 24); we walk by faith (2 Cor. v. 7); Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Eph. iii. 17); we are victorious by faith (1 John v. 4). And yet the very familiarity tends to make us overlook the meaning, necessity, and importance of faith. It is so simple and obvious that we fail to do justice to its depth of meaning and its fulness of power in connexion with every aspect of Christian life and service. And if this is true generally, it is specially true of the ministry, for unless that be a ministry of faith, strong faith, constant faith, persistent faith, it will of necessity prove very largely a failure.

But amid all the strong and striking stress laid on faith in the New Testament one thing is missing, a prayer for faith. The prayer of faith is often found, but never the prayer for faith. Why this is, we shall see in due course. The nearest approach to it is the prayer, 'Lord, increase our faith,' and yet even here the Lord's answer is to be carefully noted. He replies virtually by saying: Use the faith you possess and you will have more. 'If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed.' All this shows, and is intended to show, that faith is an act and an attitude towards God. Let us give this our special consideration in those ways in which it affects the Christian life.

I. *The Attitude of Faith.*

1. Faith reckons. In Romans vi. 11 we have the great Apostolic word connected with holiness. 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The word is 'a metaphor from accounts.' There are two columns of spiritual figures; on one side is Death, on the other Resurrection; on one side is Sin, on the other Deliverance. And the Christian is to make a careful 'calculation,' to reckon himself dead to one side and alive to the other. This reckoning is one of faith, not of feeling. The believer depends on the great facts of Christ's death and resurrection, and resting himself on these facts he reckons their spiritual efficiency his own, assured that as his faith accepts and appropriates the Divine work of Redemption, the results of Christ's death and resurrection are 'put to his account,' imputed, reckoned to belong to him for pardon, life, and holiness. There is, perhaps, no aspect of faith that needs such careful and constant attention as this as the secret of Christian holiness. The Divine order is Faith, Fact, Feeling, and whether we 'feel' it or not, the facts of Christ's Redemption are ours, and faith 'reckons' them such, and lives accordingly.

2. Faith responds. On the basis of this reckoning we yield ourselves to God and present ourselves to Him to be a living sacrifice, and our members instruments of righteousness to holiness. This is the second element of the attitude of faith. On the foundation of our acceptance of Christ and our acceptance in Christ, we surrender to Christ and present ourselves to Him for service. 'Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God' (Rom. vi. 13). This is the meaning of such lives as those of Barnabas and Paul, who 'handed over' their lives 'for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Acts xv. 26). Just as our Lord

'committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously' (1 Pet. ii. 23), so we commit our souls to God as our faithful Creator (1 Pet. iv. 19). This 'presentation' or 'yielding,' or 'handing over,' or 'committal,' is the attitude expressed by the frequent phrase in the Old Testament: 'Here am I.' It means the life at God's disposal, the response of the soul to the love and grace of God in Christ. And it is by faith that the soul makes this response and commits itself to God.

3. Faith receives. The outgoing of faith in 'reckoning' and 'responding' is here met by the corresponding attitude of receiving. Faith appropriates. 'Of His fulness have all we received' (John i. 16). 'Receive not the grace of God in vain' (2 Cor. vi. 1). 'That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith' (Gal. iii. 14). The word 'receive' is one of the great words of the New Testament, and it is by faith that we receive from God. Herein lies the great distinction between *asking* and *taking*. Faith not only asks, but accepts. Prayer is the faith that asks. Thanksgiving is the faith that takes. Faith takes, appropriates, applies, and in this attitude of receptiveness and reception we have one of the prime essentials of the true Christian life.

4. Faith rests. The greatest word of Christ for the spiritual life is 'abide' (John xv. 4). This means nothing more, as it can mean nothing less, than 'Stay where you are.' You are in Christ for pardon; abide there. You are in Christ for power; abide there. You are in Christ for peace; abide there. You are in Christ for life; abide there. Our union with Him is so real and close that He does not say, 'I am the root, ye are the branches,' but 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches,' and a vine includes branches as well! It is faith that enables us to accept this position and to abide in it. We continue in His Word (John viii. 31) by believing it. We continue in His love by believing it (John xv. 9). And the more we believe the more we abide, for faith's resting place is ever in union with Christ our life.

Now as we review these four aspects of faith; its



reckoning, its response, its receptiveness, its rest, we ought to see that for the ministry faith is the great necessity, the great power. Without faith our lives and work cannot possibly be pleasing to God, and by faith everything goes well because 'all things are possible to him that believeth' (Mark ix. 23). Faith includes the whole of our attitude to God ; it submits to Him in everything ; it admits Him to everything ; it commits to Him everything ; it permits Him to do everything ; and it transmits for Him everything. We remember our Lord's rebuke to 'them of little faith,' and His explanation of the disciples' powerlessness because 'this kind cometh not forth but by prayer,' which means at the root, faith. Nothing is more striking in the Gospels than Christ's constant demand for faith, and His constant rebuke of the want of it. It may be said without question, or even qualification, that our ministry will be one of power, grace, and influence in exact proportion as our inner life learns, and experiences, and expresses the secrets of faith. But how can this be ?

## II. *The Warrant of Faith.*

Faith must have a foundation, and if only our foundation is right we need not concern ourselves unduly, or indeed at all, with the reality or quality of our faith. Just as a healthy man is not always occupied with the thought of his health, so the man of God whose faith finds its true foundation is not concerned with the fact or the depth of his faith. What is this basis ? It is simply the Word of God. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' Herein lies the explanation of the absence of prayer *for* faith from the New Testament. It would be unnecessary and futile. Faith does not come down from heaven in answer to prayer ; it springs up in the soul in response to the Divine Word. Faith is believing, trusting, crediting, confiding, and faith must have something to credit, Someone in Whom to confide. And so, the more we know of God through

His Word, His revelation of Himself, the more we shall trust Him. Faith will rise and grow instinctively as we enter more fully into the mind, will, and character of God as revealed in the Scriptures. Thus, the power of our ministry will be in exact proportion to our knowledge of the Bible in regard to God. If we study it but seldom our faith will be poor because we know not God. If our study and meditation be constant and true, our faith will be strong because 'they that know their God shall be strong' (Dan. xi. 32). Faith, then, is our response to God's revelation, and it will respond in accordance with its knowledge of the contents of that revelation.

Herein, therefore, lies the great secret of ministerial power, the knowledge of God ; and herein lies the secret of this knowledge, faith. This is the explanation of George Müller's wonderful life ; he knew God by knowing and believing his Bible ; and whenever there is ministerial shallowness, poverty, and lack of blessing, it is invariably due to ignorance of God through ignorance of His Word. The pre-eminent need to-day is of spiritual men ; the secret of spirituality is fellowship with God ; the secret of fellowship is time spent with God through the Bible ; and the one supreme factor in all such time will be faith, trust, confidence. From the act will come the habit, and from the habit the character. We shall enter more fully into His character and revelation of Himself in Christ ; we shall find our souls growing in grace and '*in the knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Our people will feel and know the difference in our ministry, 'the hungry sheep look up and *are fed*,' and people will know that God is in us of a truth.

#### SECTION 5. SIMPLICITY (*Phil.* i. 21).

We are apt to think of Christianity as complex and complicated, and in particular to regard the ministry as involved in a variety of great problems, hard tasks, conflicting duties. There is no doubt that modern life is complex and difficult, and that the demands on the

ministry seem to grow in number and increase in strain and stress. But is it not possible to find some unifying factor, some element in which the various complications can be either resolved or relieved? After all, life for the average man consists of a few simple, all-embracing principles, which when applied are seen to work out all right. And why should not the clergyman possess some such method of reducing life to a little more of its essential simplicity?

We believe that there is such a possibility, and that in the possession of this secret, life becomes much easier, even though it grows none the less complex when regarded in itself. The one great necessity is an unifying factor that can be applied to everything in life. Is there such a factor? There is; it is found in the Apostolic words, 'To me to live is Christ.' If Christ is made the centre of our ministry we shall be able to use Him as the unifying and simplifying factor of all the varied complexity and perplexity of our life and work. 'To me to live is Christ.' What does this mean? Just three things.

### I. *Receiving Everything from Christ.*

Our lives are constantly receptive. Experiences come to us in a variety of ways and through very different channels. But when once we realize that Christ is all, then everything that comes into our life comes in and through Him. Not only is He our Saviour from Sin, He is our Friend, our Teacher, our Lord, and all that we possess comes from him. Even though we have trouble and trial we can say with truth that 'it comes from above,' because we know that His permissive will does not allow anything to come to us apart from His knowledge and consent. It simplifies matters immensely when we can take this position of realizing that everything which enters into our life comes from and through Him.

### II. *Seeing Everything in Christ.*

As we ponder the problems of life, we find very many

things that perplex and puzzle and distress us. The problems of sin, suffering, and sorrow lie heavily on heart and brain, and on none more than on his whose life is brought into close touch with human needs. As we meditate on the hardships, injustices, and cruelties of life, we soon feel the pressure of mystery amid the many forces of the world which do *not* make for righteousness. But if once we realize that 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' we begin to look out on the world around with very different eyes, and though we cannot solve the problems, the way we look at them makes a profound difference. We view them from the standpoint of Christ. Some thirty years ago I remember reading an address containing an illustration of this point, which has proved to me and to others a word in season. The Christian was depicted as a man living in a room which had but one window in it, made in the form of a Cross. The result was that the outlook from the window took that shape under all circumstances. The sunshine came to him in the form of a Cross. The landscape in all its beauty and variety was shaped like a Cross. The shadows deepened in the form of a Cross. The storms fell and the lightning flashed in the form of a Cross. Everything bright and dark took that shape and entered thus into his consciousness. So should it be with the Christian; joys and sorrows, light and darkness, sunshine and shadow, should all be looked at in the light of Christ, and when this is so, in His light we see light and can wait until all things are made clear.

### III. *Doing Everything for Christ.*

Life is largely made up of activity, and the ministry finds itself engaged on a multifarious variety of work; 'the daily round, the common task.' At times brain and body are apt to stagger under the load, and we are tempted to succumb under the pressure of the burden. Then it is that our simplifying and unifying factor comes in with blessedness and power, and we begin to realize that everything is to be done for Christ. No task that comes can

possibly be outside His ken or sphere. No work that is really our duty can fail to be accomplished if done unto Him. 'For Christ' is the talisman that opens every door. 'In Christ' is the guarantee of grace sufficient for every task. As George Herbert says:—

'Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in anything,  
To do it unto Thee.

'A servant with this clause,  
Makes drudgery Divine;  
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and th' action fine.'

'Drudgery divine.' This is only possible when we do everything for Christ, when He is the motive, the inspiration, the joy, the power of service.

'To me to live is Christ.' Receiving everything from Christ. Seeing everything in Christ. Doing everything for Christ. This is life in its simplicity, sufficiency, and satisfaction. This is ministry in peace, power, and progress. Away from this is unrest, dissatisfaction, emptiness, weariness, powerlessness. Apart from this is disappointment, depression, discontent, despondency, and despair. But when Christ is our life, ministry becomes a privilege, a joy, a delight; an ever-deepening experience, an ever-increasing power, an ever-extending blessing, and an ever-heightening glory to God. So let us sum up all by saying that for life and ministry Christ is always necessary, Christ is always available, Christ is always sufficient.

'Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,  
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed,  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
Christ the beginning, and the end is Christ.'



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