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The ministry as a life work

THE MINISTRY AS A LIFE WORK



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THE MINISTRY AS A LIFE WORK

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The Ministry As a Life Work

The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.—*Matt. 9:37.*

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF THE MINISTRY

In the progress of the years the Church of Christ has faced many serious problems,—problems that, if they had not been settled rightly, would have subverted the life of the church and prevented it from accomplishing the work for which it was established.

No problem, however, is more potent with possibilities of good or ill to both the church and the world than the question now confronting it—the adequate supply of well-trained ministerial leaders for the pastorate and other forms of recognized activities in the Christian ministry.

This is not an altogether new problem in the history of American life. It was prominent in

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the early part of the Nineteenth Century as the tide of population swept over the Alleghanies and flowed down the valley of the Mississippi and its tributaries.

New settlements sprang up as by magic, and churches were established everywhere, but there were no men to fill their pulpits. The situation at that time was serious, but it was not so acute as the condition that faces the church at the present hour.

We may emphasize the worth of lay leadership in the church, and recognize the splendid values of the printed page in giving the message of the gospel, and yet we cannot escape the conviction that the success of the church in the present, and its welfare in the future, depends upon the numbers and quality of its ministers. The church, humanly speaking, stands or falls upon its ability to summon strong young men to its special service in sufficient numbers to meet its needs.

The comparative failure of the church to thus command its youth at the present time is apparent to everybody, and is receiving

emphasis through current discussions in the public press.

The chaos and restlessness, so marked in other spheres of human society, are reflected in the religious life of our times. The clanging noises of the world are drowning the still small voice that speaks within the soul summoning it to the divine service of the ministry. The appeal of physical sense threatens to submerge the conscience of the nation. The seriousness of the situation was not appreciated for some time, but church leaders are now awakening to conditions and their possible dangers.

Great city churches, equally with small country parishes, are having difficulty in securing ministers, and some of them remain pastorless for long periods of time.

The Interchurch Survey, made in 1920, tells us that in "One denomination 3,388 congregations did not have regular pastoral care. In another there were 994 fewer ministers than in 1914. In the New England section of one denomination 35 per cent. of the congregations were without regular ministers in 1915. In a

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denomination having 963 congregations, only 627 had settled pastors."

The Year Book for 1920 of one of the largest denominations reported 456 men ordained and 450 men deceased. But this apparent gain of six was changed to a large loss by the retirements from active service ensuing from age and physical disability, and above all, from the drift of ministers into other occupations.

This drift, according to competent observers, amounted in the church as a whole to twenty-five per cent. of those ordained.

This dearth of ministers is the result of a very serious shortage in the number of men who are preparing themselves for such work.

At a conference of theological schools held in Cambridge in 1918, it was asserted that in 1915 there were 1,000 men less preparing for the ministry than in 1895. Fourteen Presbyterian Seminaries reported in 1896, 960 students; in 1916, 840 students; and in 1921 only 639 students. In 1911 the Congregational Seminaries reported 434 students and in 1921, 483 students, an apparent gain of 49. But this gain was largely

in two schools that had organized strong departments where large numbers of the students were not preparing for the ordained ministry. The other seminaries, six in number, showed a loss of about 37 per cent. In 1910 nine Baptist theological schools reported 1,258 students, while in 1921 eleven institutions reported only 838 students. In 1920 twelve colleges, that usually send large numbers of students into the ministry, had only 27 such graduates.

Even in the pre-college age the same serious lack of interest in the ministry as a life work seems to exist. One secretary reports that in a week's campaigning, during which he held some ninety personal interviews with boys of High School and Academy age, he found only two boys who had definitely set their minds on becoming ministers. Engineering in its various forms, banking, farming, and mercantile pursuits were largely in the ascendency in their appeal to the boys as worthwhile occupations.

Such facts as these are simply indicative of general conditions. They suggest the seriousness of the situation that confronts the church, and

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call for wise action upon the part of religious leaders.

It is not simply a question of supplying men for the forward work of the church; it is also a question of maintaining the working force at its present strength and efficiency.

Sporadic efforts are being put forth to meet the situation, by awakening the churches to the consideration of conditions and by enlisting the young men and women in college and academy for some form of special service.

In the Southland the attempts to meet the situation have been comparatively successful and promising reports are heard from other sections. It should be noted, however, that these gains are more apparent than real, for large numbers of the new ministerial students in the colleges and theological schools are ordained men, already listed in denominational Year Books as ministers and pastors. They do not represent new accessions to the profession or prospective candidates.

Moreover, while these efforts to enlist students for the ministry have their value and are necessary, we must remember that there is a vast

difference between a lad in the academy or college, promising to go where the Master wants him to go, to enter the ministry if God reveals it to him as duty, and actually entering the ministry. It is a far cry from high school or freshman year in college to the ordaining council, and many temptations must be passed before the consecrating hands are laid on the head of the young candidate.

We must remember, also, that enlistment campaigns cannot produce immediate fruitage. Some decisions to enter the ministry are made by young men after they enter college, but influences leading them to adopt this calling usually can be traced far back of the college age.

Ideals and hopes and longings for manhood's occupations begin to influence our young people in their early 'teens. A mother's prayer, a father's example, the touch of some minister or missionary who has appealed to the lad's ideal of heroism, gives the initial direction to dreams and aspirations.

The effective campaign, the campaign that will ultimately give to the church the workers it

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needs, must go back to the home and the lower grades of school. It must sound the knightly call to the boys and girls and cause their hearts to thrill with the longing for the ministry as something worth while, something that has in it the atmosphere of romance and adventure that surrounded the Knights of King Arthur's Court.

Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.—*Heb.* 12:3.

CHAPTER II

DISCOURAGEMENTS TO THE MINISTRY

The question inevitably arises:—Why is the ministry failing to attract our choice young men, why are so many ignoring this the oldest and the most sacred of the professions?

Many elements enter into the problem, but they range themselves under a few general principles.

The first and most obvious reason is found in the economic situation.

The time has long since passed when even the village parson could think himself as “passing rich on forty pounds a year,” or “supply his simple needs” with any such stipend. The economic pressure is felt in every home, and nowhere more than in the home of the minister. His position forces him to certain high standards of living and public action. Personally he may be content to live in the simplest style, but his

public position requires him to dress well, to see that his wife and children are respectably clothed, and to conduct his home with an air of prosperity, comfort and hospitality.

Moreover, he is financially exploited for every good cause, and oftentimes the church expects his name to head the list of its contributors.

Sometimes the parsonage is both the minister's house and the center of the social and religious activities of the parish,—a sort of community house. But the minister must maintain these standards and meet these requirements upon a salary that averages \$563 less than the minimum set by investigators for the subsistence of the ordinary workingman's family.

At the present time, carpenters command \$10 per day, shoeworkers \$75 a week, and machinists \$3,000 a year. Such compensations for hand-workers may seem abnormal in contrast with the salaries of brain workers, but the wages of such workers will never sink to the low levels of present ministerial salaries. The Interchurch Survey presents some startling facts concerning ministerial support. According to that survey,

of "the 170,000 clergymen in the United States in 1916, less than one-half of them received more than \$700 per year. Only 1,671 ministers, or less than one per cent., had a total income of \$3,000 or more. Eighty-four per cent. of the ministers receive less than \$1,000 per year." "Out of every hundred ministers only one receives \$4,000 or more; two receive \$3,000 or more; seven receive \$2,000 or more; sixteen receive \$1,500 or more; and eighty-four receive less than \$1,000. Thirteen out of every hundred ministers receive less than \$500.

If the incomes of the laymen were proportionate to these meagre salaries, the clergy could find no fault. But in the churches themselves, oftentimes we have vast disparity between the physical comfort of the pastor and his parishioners, the members seeming to forget that the spiritual leader of the flock should share in the material prosperity that is given to its members. God calls some men to preach and some to make money, but He expects those who make money to share it with those who preach. The beauties

of sacrifice appear to best advantage when shared alike by all God's people.

It is obvious that in an age when material influences are so potent, and the very comforts of life so expensive, it is unbrotherly in spirit and unwise in policy to ask any class or profession to make the material sacrifices that are required of the ministry. Such requirements will inevitably react upon the personnel of the ministry and tend to drive from it the very type of men most needed by the profession.

In close relation to this limitation of money earning power is the limitation of the earning period. The financial basis of the ministry seems to be different from that of all other professions. The lawyer and the physician can hope not only to lay up a competence for old age, but to have their earning power extend until physical infirmity lays them aside. Moreover, as long as their physical and mental faculties are maintained, added years of age adds to their supposed value to society, and increases their earning power.

The minister faces absolutely different condi-

tions. He is required to spend in training for his work just as many years as the lawyer or physician or professor, but when they are at their zenith of power and usefulness—honored by reason of their experience—he finds himself discounted, and pulpits closed to him by reason of age.

Pension systems, nobly devised, help in some measure to alleviate these conditions, but they are not the real answers to this social injustice practised against the minister. Such schemes are at best only salves to sore hearts and soothing syrups to anxious souls.

Is it any marvel that experiencing such conditions some excellent men lose the fine idealism that led them to enter the ministry, and either become mercenary in spirit or forsake the work? It is the custom to condemn the minister who leaves the calling and enters business. He is often criticised both ungraciously and cruelly. But such action may not be a sign of venality, but an indication of mental and moral integrity and high courage. No minister can maintain the splendid fervor necessary for his work, or reach

any high plane of success, who has lost the noble idealism that enables him to esteem his work as beautiful, as necessary to mankind, as given him of God.

Some men, painfully conscious of this loss of soul vision and its implications, conscientiously turn from the ministry to other occupations.

A few years since, *The Standard* of Chicago printed a letter, quoted by Dr. Robertson, from a minister who was leaving the ministry, in which the writer said: "I am tired; tired of being the only one in the church from whom real sacrifice is expected; tired of straining and tugging to get Christian people to live like Christians; tired of planning work for my people and then being compelled to do it myself or see it left undone; tired of dodging my creditors when I would not need to if I had what was due me; tired of the affrighting vision of a penniless old age. I am not leaving Christ, I love Him. I shall still try to serve Him." This may be an extreme instance, and yet it does not stand alone. More than one minister, tired of these bitter experiences, finds it difficult to conscientiously or

joyously summon his own sons, or the sons of his church, to enter the profession that leads through so many Gethsemane experiences.

Moreover, choice young men looking forward to life's work, inevitably consider these things as factors entering into their decisions. What more natural than to ask—"Why should other men have so much and the minister so little? Is the minister being treated fairly? Why should I sacrifice the material goods of life or demand such denials upon the part of my family?" The truth is, every thoughtful man, whether of the clergy or laity, should face the question:—"Is it right to ask the minister to contribute so much to the welfare of the nation and the uplift of humanity; to brighten the lot of all men, and yet to have for himself or his loved ones no adequate share in the material benefits that flow from these improved conditions of society?"

2. The second reason that is discouraging many excellent young men is the assumption and assertion that the minister has no worthy place in the community; that his contribution to society is not of any great value; that his task is not

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a man's sized job. This feeling, widely prevalent in certain circles of society, has been the subject of discussion and re-emphasis lately in some of our popular magazines.

In opening his Yale Lectures, Dr. A. J. F. Behrends called attention to the effects upon the individual of such suspicions concerning the worthiness of his vocation, and enforced the necessity of the worker maintaining the conviction that his labor was necessary to the welfare of the world. "No man can achieve solid and satisfactory success in any calling, who is not convinced that the services which he renders are of substantial benefit to the public, and that what he gives is a full equivalent for what he receives. He who suspects that he is merely tolerated, or that he occupies the place of a dependent, or who discovers that he is retained when he has ceased to supply a living demand, inevitably suffers in the consciousness of manly independence; and where manhood shrivels, work loses its dignity and power." "To this wholesome law," Dr. Behrends adds, "the pulpit is no exception."

The present propaganda of suggestive suspicion and distrust concerning the ministry, has resulted in just such mischievous reactions in both men already in the ministry and sturdy youths who have been considering it as a possible calling. Why enter a profession where manly qualities are at discount? Why remain in a calling that is not rendering worthwhile service—especially when other and more essential occupations yield greater rewards of material good?

It is perfectly legitimate to ask the reasons for the minister's existence in the community, to question what his place is in modern life, and what is his real contribution to the welfare of mankind.

All trades and professions are subjects for such questioning and must justify themselves to society.

The danger point in such questioning of the minister's task is in the character of the questioner. Too often, men, who by nature and prejudices are unfitted to pass judgment upon the higher values of life, sit in the seat of the

judges. They do not understand the nature of the minister's task; they cannot see or realize that he is dealing with intangibles, with processes and results so largely in the realm of the spiritual that their evaluation is difficult, and to the man who looks for material tokens almost impossible. When the carpenter builds a house, or the shoemaker completes a pair of shoes, you see the thing he has been doing; the finished product is evident; but the minister is working with minds and spirits,—he is molding character, and much of his work must be unseen by human eyes. The passing of time, however, is certain to reveal the comparative values of such occupations.

The maker of sandals in ancient Capernaum filled an important place, but the fame of that city rests, not upon the maker of sandals, but upon its association with the name of the Nazarene prophet and teacher. The tent-maker of Corinth, in whose workshop Saul of Tarsus earned his living, did a worthwhile work, but we have forgotten his name, while his employee, the preacher, proclaimed a message whose influ-

ence sapped the foundations of Imperial Rome and built a new civilization.

The Great Teacher said long ago: "Man shall not live by bread alone." Men must have ideals, visions and hopes that they endeavor to realize for themselves and in society. Character is built, not of brick and stone or bread and meat, but of the things we call dreams, visions and ideals. Character is the fruitage of principles, and principles are the blossoming of dreams and ideals. The foundations of a nation, the structure of its society, is not laid in wealth or territory, but in the character of its citizenship.

The minister's task is to give the people the stuff out of which character is formed, and to guide and inspire them in the use of this character material. This is not a task that can be esteemed lightly or measured with yardstick or scales.

It is far easier to build a cathedral, to erect a factory, to lay an ocean cable, or to construct a railroad, than to mold a life into a thing of beauty and nobility, to regenerate the slum section of a great city, or to overthrow the igno-

rance and bigotry of a false religion and substitute in its place Christian conceptions and principles. It is easier to give men jobs to earn bread, than visions of God that satisfy souls, and interpret for them, time and eternity.

But as H. G. Wells makes Mr. Brittling say:

"Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and has been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honor. But all these things fall into place and life falls into place only with God."

The minister's task is really the hardest task given to mortal man, but it is absolutely fundamental to the perpetuity of the state and nation, and to the welfare of the race. Upon the minister's success or failure depends practically all that is valuable in human society. His work controls the development of human history in its noblest aspects, and his profession remains a living, burning need of the race until the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ."

3. A very potent influence diverting our young men from the regular lines of the ministry is the pressure for workers in benevolent and semi-religious organizations.

In past days the young man who desired to do religious work found himself limited practically to the pastorate of a single congregation or to missionary service. But our conceptions of what is religious service have been continually widening, and the field of opportunity consequently has been broadened.

Many avenues of endeavor offer outlet to the instinct or desire to serve the race religiously. The Young Men's Christian Association, temperance and other reform movements, social uplift societies, benevolent and charitable organizations—all of them forms of life where valuable service to humanity may be rendered—present their claims upon the life and talent of the youth of this generation. And these new fields usually promise two advantages over the regular ministry—they offer better financial returns, and are free from many of the limitations that surround the pastor or worker attached to

the church organization. The call for competent workers in these fields is just as great as the call for men in the regular ministry, and it is not surprising that many choice young men choose such forms of service. As one stalwart youth said to his minister father who was pleading with him to enter the ministry: "I am doing religious service. I am helping to bring in God's kingdom through the organization with which I am working, and at the same time I am getting three times the salary that you have received. Why should I give up the comparative freedom of my place and its comfortable income for the meagre salary and limitations of a church pastorate."

Of course, the young men who argue thus fail to see that these organizations outside of the church have no future apart from the church; that their continuance is dependent upon the favor and support of the church, and that they can offer careers for men only as the church gives them of its comfort and assistance. Roger W. Babson, in his book, "Religion and Business," asserts that "religion is the greatest unde-

veloped resource of America to-day." But this resource that means so much to the nation and the world will not be tapped by semi-religious organizations or independent prospectors. The church, with its complex and far-reaching organization, its heritage of tradition, and its centuries of capitalized life and devotion, is the only institution that can successfully make available for the state and society this mighty resource of religion.

4. A very obvious reason for the failure of our young people to consider the ministry seriously lies in the attitude of the church. For a long time the churches have neglected to emphasize the ministry as a divine calling, to pray for the young men to give their lives to it, and to hold it up to the young people as the great thing to be desired.

Prayer services are seldom devoted to consideration of the claims of the ministry upon the church and its young people; and ministers are singularly reticent about presenting the matter in the pulpit.

Several years since, a general secretary put the

question before a series of church associations representing over three hundred churches, and to his surprise only one per cent. of the churches had given any consideration to the matter at prayer meeting or stated service within a year, while representatives of scores of churches could not remember any public presentation to their membership of the work of the ministry and its claims upon the young life of the church.

A few generations ago it was not unusual for parents to dedicate their new-born sons to this holy work; and when those sons, grown to manhood, adopted the profession, to rejoice in their boy's choice as the greatest reward that could come to their faith. But these new days have brought a totally different attitude. Many parents seem to regard it as a misfortune when their boys want to enter the ministry; and some, when they see signs of interest in the profession upon the part of their sons, deliberately seek to divert the mind to other trades and professions.

Perhaps the prevalent critical attitude toward the minister has influenced some of these parents, and certainly it has had a chilling effect upon

the enthusiasm and devotion of some of the young people.

Apparently everybody in the church understands how to run the church better than the minister, and does not hesitate to let him know it. Every member, and many who are not members, feel perfectly competent to instruct the minister in theology, biblical interpretation and other religious subjects. The physician or the lawyer or the engineer is supposed to know his profession better than the layman, but everybody feels abundantly able to pass judgment upon the minister's work, and to teach him the principles of his profession.

Is it any marvel that high-strung young men resent this attitude and decline to enter a profession where it is possible for them to be subjected to such humiliations?

The red-blooded young man does not want to be glorified because of his profession, but he does want to feel that his work is worth while, that the church at least respects his leadership and service.

The church must catch a new vision of its

ministry, place it in a nobler position of honor, and give, to those who adopt it as a profession, the respect and attention given to other professions.

The economic situation, the critical attitude concerning the worthiness of the minister's contribution to society, the demand for workers in other related occupations, and the apparent unconcern of the church are all evident reasons for the decline in the ministry and its failing appeal to our young men; but they are not final causes.

The ultimate reasons lie deep in the spirit of man, in the pervading atmosphere of the age, and in the very nature of the call to the ministry and the minister's work.

Two things must be remembered. During the last fifty years we have been passing through a tremendous intellectual revolution. Philosophy, history, pedagogy, and theology have all been influenced by the discoveries in biology and other physical sciences. The intellectual attitude for a generation has been that of questioning. The bases of religious faith have therefore come

under the microscope of investigation and reason. This attitude carried into the classroom of our schools and applied to religious questions without tact or discrimination, has undoubtedly had its harmful reactions upon the young men. The atmosphere of doubt and questioning is not the atmosphere in which preachers are born and reared.

It should be noted, also, that lately the spiritual life of the churches of our land has not been of the type to emphasize the call to the ministry. We have had sporadic revivals in various sections, and a certain kind of ethical quickening that has made us more responsive to social problems and to the appeals of human suffering, but we have not had any great awakening of the spiritual conscience of the nation such as would make our youth feel the divine necessity of preaching the gospel.

The call to the ministry is born into the soul on the swelling tide of the spiritual experience of eternal things, and we have had few such tides sweeping over our land in the last half century.

The young men and women of the present are just as earnest and sincere, just as willing to sacrifice for noble principles and ideals as the young people of the past. They will gladly ignore material benefits and turn from worldly honors if they can be shown the real heroism of the ministry; the knightliness of its work; the worthiness of its achievements. They will gladly cry: "Here we are, send us into service," when the church experiences the spiritual awakening for which so many of the "elect of God" are hoping, praying and laboring.

In the last analysis the solution of the problem lies in the spiritual atmosphere of the church of God. The supreme duty of the church to-day is to secure such an atmosphere of religious fervor, such a consciousness of the realities of religious life, that it becomes natural for its young men to consider the work of the ministry as the choice occupation, the profession in which they may secure the greatest satisfactions and the largest usefulness possible to mortal man.

Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men.—*Matt.* 4:19.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY

It is inevitable that the prevailing spirit of our times, that is confessedly material and practical, should influence the young men and women in their ideals and personal spirit, and to a certain extent determine their choices of life occupations. The individual spirit reacts to the larger class or age spirit, and it requires hardy souls, souls of unusual strength, to resist the prevalent spirit of their times. Moreover, much of the evil is clothed with a sweet persuasiveness that charms the unsuspecting and leads astray even the elect.

The spirit of the times is even reflected in the *motives* that are presented to our young people for entering the ministry. To be effective, the motive for entering the ministry must be strong enough both to influence the decision in the beginning, and to hold the will and purpose afterward—to keep the soul in the day when the tempta-

tions of ease or pleasure are met, or hardship must be endured either in the minister's own person or in the persons of those in his household whom he should love better than his own life.

An examination of the motives presented to our young people reveals the fact that for some little time the appeals have been based somewhat largely on altruistic motives. We have been saying to our young men: "Go into the ministry or some form of religious service because the world needs you so sorely; its heart-aches must be assuaged; its wounds of body and mind must be healed; the wrongs righted and the darkness driven out," or we have placed the emphasis upon the other aspect and said: "In such service you can make your life count for the most, you can aid best in meeting the needs of the race, in building up a new civilization."

These things are true, the world does need builders of its moral and religious life more than anything else; it does need men who have caught the vision of service and are willing to minister to its necessities; it is true that no profession offers a wider field of usefulness than the min-

istry with its manifold forms of service; but these are not the ultimates in the call to the ministry. We need something deeper than these things, something upon which these motives may rest, if the ministry is to have its rightful appeal and rightful place in the thought of the church and the ideals of our young men.

The simply altruistic motives lose their freshness of appeal after a time; they fail to sustain the minister's courage when his wife and children are suffering for the common things that give pleasure to life; and they do not furnish companionship and solace for the soul in the loneliness of the strange land.

The work of the minister and missionary is of such character, and makes such drafts upon the soul, that deep in the heart must be the consciousness of an overmastering call; the imperial power of an "I ought," the conviction—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." The young man of today may not have the wonderful vision such as summoned Isaiah to service; nor with Ezekiel hear the voice saying: "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee";

nor yet in trance-like state hear with Paul the message: "Depart, for I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles." Such special forms of calls are given to men who have special missions, but they do suggest the norm of conviction that must enter the soul. The ministry must be, not of man's choosing but God's calling, and the man who elects it must feel the burning of the message in his soul.

The man who has such a conviction will not be thwarted by difficulties nor turned aside by temptations. The divine "I must" will drive him on to labor and sacrifice and service.

At first thought it may seem that to emphasize this aspect of the call would deplete the ranks of the ministry, or at least prevent some young men from enlisting. Of course, one man divinely driven into the ministry is worth more than a multitude who select it without this overmastering compulsion.

Perhaps, however, the insistence upon this form of call would really direct attention to the ministry. Make men think, and thought will lead to conviction and conviction to action.

This was in the mind of Jesus when he said: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

It is apparent that the key to the unrest in the younger ministers, and the secret reason that so many students lose their interest and drift away from their purpose of entering the ministry, may be found in the motives that are being presented to them. Men will endure sacrifice and suffering if the motive is potent, if the objective seems worth while. This is true in every realm of life. Peary was willing to endure indescribable agony and privation for the honor of being the first man to reach the North Pole. Marcus Whitman gladly braved dangers and toils that he might save the Northwest Territory for his country. The youth of America have never hesitated to offer themselves for service when they felt that the country needed them. The sufficient motive has never failed to evoke the sufficient response.

The young men and women of the churches are not different from the rest of their age. They will not shrink from the sacrifice and hardships of the ministry if the sufficient motive of a worthy service to which they are divinely called is presented to them. The church does not need to reject the motives it has been presenting, but to revise its points of emphasis; to visualize anew the things that have been growing dim in its thought and ideal, and to stress the divine, the holy nature of the call.

Modern China stretching out its famine stricken arms to America, or oppressed Armenia blindly reaching forth her shackled hands, may become the "Macedonian Vision" through which God speaks to the young men and women of today.

The human cry of need may move the heart and become the messenger of divine impressment—the voice of the passing Christ calling: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.—1 *Tim.* 3:1.

CHAPTER IV

THE CANDIDATE FOR THE MINISTRY

It is evident, even to the casual observer, that many men and women have not chosen wisely the occupations or professions in which they are engaged. What may be termed misfits are found in every occupation,—lawyers who ought to be farmers, merchants who should be artisans, artisans who should be captains of industry, teachers who ought to be anything other than what they are trying to be, men and women in every trade and profession who seem to be poorly fitted for efficient service in the occupation in which they are engaged.

The ministry is no exception to this statement, for it has its misfits, men who are palpably unfitted to do their best in the work they are striving to do.

Many times these men are choice souls with holy desire to serve God; but some physical defect, some deficiency in education or culture, some

tendency to mental aberration or astigmatism, handicaps them in the race for success.

These seemingly unfit men are not always wholly at fault in their choice of the ministry. Sometimes others are blameworthy—an over-zealous mother, an unwise pastor, or unthinking friends have crowded them into the selection of the ministry as their life-work.

Sometimes these men are conscious of their limitations, but conditions are such that they cannot enter some other calling or they have not quite the courage to acknowledge their mistake and begin over again the work of life.

The struggles of such men are oftentimes pathetic as they strive to be faithful to tasks that are distasteful.

It is true that God has used some strange agents for the glory of his kingdom, servants whose adaptability for their work the world would have seriously questioned. We would not dare to interfere with the calling of men by the Holy Spirit, but it is not fair to our young people, nor to the church, to fail in frankness in

advising with young men who are considering the ministry as a profession.

The work of the ministry is too serious, and the demands upon the modern minister are too exacting for any young man to enter the work without facing squarely its exactions, limitations and requisites to success.

One of the fundamental questions for the candidate is the question of personal health. The young man should ask himself, "Am I physically adapted to the exacting duties of the ministry?"

We have often been reminded that "The body is not the measure of the soul," and yet as Dr. Behrends tells us, "Preaching is always an athletic contest, a close grappling and serious wrestle, and whether the result shall be conquest, or defeat, or a drawn battle, will depend upon the perfect command the preacher has of his thoughts and himself."

Under the Jewish dispensation, the priest who served in the temple was supposed to be without blemish, physically. The New Testament does not insist upon that canon of perfection for the

Christian minister, and many noble and fruitful workers have been handicapped in some way. Robert Hall, the supreme master of pulpit style and eloquence; George Matheson, the blind poet whose pathetic hymns have voiced the yearnings of many hearts; Horace Bushnell, the prophet of a new era in theology in New England; the Apostle Paul himself, these, and scores of others like them, have wrought nobly and "worked righteousness" notwithstanding their physical disabilities.

But to-day the anemic, the frail framed ascetic, the man of weak, nervous vitality finds himself under an avalanche of demands that physical strength will not permit him to meet.

The minister is no longer the "quiet student of past days"; he is a man of affairs, with a multitude of interests demanding his time and tapping his reservoirs of nervous energy. The modern minister must keep fit physically or he cannot meet the conditions of this strenuous age. Possibly the ideal of the present time is not the best, and its requirements may not be of the highest, but we face facts not theories, and are

considering conditions as they must be met in this twentieth century.

It would seem not to be necessary to suggest that men with serious imperfections in the organs of speech, or conspicuous and unsightly blemishes in physical appearance, should weigh carefully such handicaps; but unfortunately, friends are not always frank, and ofttimes we do not "see ourselves as others see us." More than one man suffering from serious physical defects has spent years in preparation for the ministry only to awaken to the bitter consciousness that some one was not frank and friendly and christian in advising him.

The second canon that should be observed concerns the intellectual power; the minister should not be, mentally, either indolent or erratic.

The drudgery of the study is irksome to many men, especially to men of brilliant parts who have a gift for language. As the result, words take the place of ideas, and nicely turned phrases the place of golden nuggets of truth. It was jokingly said of one brilliant man that "he was

so indolent that he had not conceived a new idea since he left the seminary."

But genius is not the substitute for labor. Only the sweat of the brain will keep the mind fresh and furnish a message for the world. God inspires men to preach, but he inspires them through their toils. The great minister must be a great worker or his greatness soon departs.

But neither genius nor labor are substitutes for mental poise—for the power to hold in right relationships the principles, the truths, and the ideals of revelation.

It is undeniable that God has sometimes used men of erratic tendencies for the good of the race, but, from the Apostolic days to the present hour, the Church of Christ has suffered from the unbalanced mentality of leaders who have over-emphasized particular phases of truth and doctrine.

The history of the church may be written from the story of its struggles with these honest but mentally astigmatised followers. The Apostle Paul, who had suffered acutely from these perverted thinkers, was thinking of these things

when he wrote to Timothy: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

This soundness of mind, this sanity and poise of mental life is a gift to be both coveted and courted by all, and especially by the minister. Situations are arising continually, both in personal life and public relationships, that require clear thinking and sound judgment on the part of the minister. The present world crisis stresses this requirement. It is so easy to permit the passions and prejudices engendered by the world war to influence the judgment or lead to the misreading of the providence of God in his dealing with the nation; or to confuse the desires of our hearts with the clear utterances of revelation. Sanity in thought, balance in judgment, soundness of mind has been one of the needs of the ministry in all ages, and it is especially needed in this hour when the world is in chaos, and so many of the nations seem to be passing through the Garden of Sorrows. Everywhere prophets

are proclaiming their ability to lead the world out of its darkness. The world sadly needs clear heads, and reasoned faith in its leaders.

Is it unfair for the Church to require such sanity and wholesome mentality of the men whom it calls into service as teachers and leaders? When so much importance attaches to this characteristic, when the peace and success of the church is determined by it, and the happiness and usefulness of the worker is dependent upon it, reason demands that the church examine carefully the intellectual fitness of those who apply for induction into its official leadership.

The ministry was not established to give credentials to every man who thinks himself called to deliver a message, but to supply for the church a leadership sound minded, godly lived and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The third canon to be observed pertains to the spiritual life—the susceptibility to spiritual forces, the aptitudes of the soul. As the artist is supposed to have some sense of form and color, and the poet an ear for words and

rhythm, so the minister is presumed to possess a spirit that reacts to spiritual impulses and ideals. And this presumption is justified, even though in some particular cases it may not seem to be founded on facts.

The minister has become a man of all work—a business manager, a social organizer, a director of benevolent activities, a functionary of diverse and many times unrelated causes, but these things are not vital to his work. They are interesting and valuable, but they are the accidents of his occupation, the parasites that attach themselves to his office through the conditions of the times.

His one supreme business is to minister to the spiritual life of the race, to keep the soul of man "on top"; and all other things must be subjected to this objective.

But he can do this only as his own soul maintains its supremacy over the temporal and material. He must think in the realm of the spirit, speak the language of the spirit, and act in harmony with spiritual motives and ideals. This means in the last analysis to make spirituality as

much as possible "a fixed mental and moral habit."

Of course this is a difficult task, and such an attitude of mind and heart can be attained and maintained only through patient cultivation and experimentation. The initial impulse comes through the action of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, but the continuance of that impulse, the changing of the impulse to a habit, depends largely upon the man himself. It is for him to spiritualize his thinking, feeling, and acting until such condition becomes the norm of his life and he "walks in the Spirit."

This is the reason back of Paul's words to the Philippians: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise think on these things." Spiritual powers and attainments are achieved only through careful attention to the things through which God reveals himself to us, and devotion to the realm of the spirit.

But no man will give habitual attention to the media of fellowship with the Eternal, and certainly he will find no joy in such attention, if he has not a certain aptitude for spiritual things, a receptivity to spiritual truth and ideals.

All men possess a little of this aptitude, but the minister must possess it in large measure, or the formulas of the church become dry and meaningless; the tasks of the ministry, so often small in themselves, become drudgery; and the hopes of Christian faith lose their power to inspire and compel zeal and devotion.

God may use, sometimes, an unspiritual man to bring spiritual things to pass, but that is not his usual way of working. God follows the general law of his universe. Like begets like. Every seed after its kind. This is the law of the spiritual world just as truly as it is the law of the physical life.

Young men looking forward to the ministry, and those seeking to influence our youth for this profession, might well ponder this canon of spirituality. It may serve as the determining factor in influencing the choice, and either save the

life from disappointment or lead to joyous service.

God wants his people to be happy and to find satisfaction in the tasks of life. Only the joyous worker attains the highest usefulness, and the joyous worker is the man whose free spirit and service moves along the line of God given aptitudes and powers.

Dr. Elijah Brown of Ram's Horn fame put the matter in Ram's Horn style when he said:

"Unless a man's born with preach in him I don't believe he can ever get it there. I hold these truths to be self-evident. That God settles some things for eternity before the foundations of the world were laid, and one of them is that a man with no music in his soul can never become a Paderewski, and another is that the preacher must be born with his preach in him or no theological institution can ever put it there."

It must ever be true that preachers are born of God, and not made by man. God must endow them with the powers and capacities of body, mind, and soul that destines them for his special service. Man's task is to discover these

potential personalities, aid them to find themselves, and then encourage and direct them in training for the service to which they are called.

Refuse profane and old wives fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness. Neglect not the good gift that is in thee.—1 *Tim.* 4:7, 14.

CRAPTER V

THE TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY

John Harvard endowed Harvard University, the first college in America, because he feared that "an illiterate ministry to the churches might arise when our present ministers shall lie in the dust." That fear has been in the minds of the leaders of the church for generations and out of it has come many of those self-sacrificing gifts that established most of our academies and colleges and all of our seminaries.

Unfortunately, all members of the churches have not seen with the clear-eyed vision of these founders of our schools. Many of the fathers believed that if God called a man to preach it was his duty to preach, irrespective of training or educational equipment. In fact some of them thought that education was a hindrance, that it fettered the free movement of the Spirit. Practically applied, this sentiment resulted in forcing

into the ministry many ignorant and uncouth men, men whose ignorance was so palpable and whose messages and manners were so grotesque that their audiences were repelled rather than attracted.

God has used most marvellously some men who have not been trained in the schools. We have abundant reason to venerate such names as John Bunyan, Andrew Fuller and Dwight L. Moody—men who by their piety, energy, common sense and eloquence, have wrought splendidly for the truth. But the usefulness of these remarkable men does not argue against the need of other men obtaining a thorough scholastic preparation. Such men succeeded in spite of their handicaps of poor preparation, not because of them.

We must also recognize the fact that the proportion of such leadership has been small, and the strength of the church has been conserved and increased largely by the trained leadership of such educated men as Paul and Augustine, Chrysostom and John Wickliffe, John Huss and Calvin, Edwards, and Beecher and Brooks and Broadus.

Even the Apostolic Band, so often referred to as consisting of "unlearned and ignorant men," was highly trained, for its members had three years of training under the greatest teacher the world has ever seen. And after that marvelous intellectual and spiritual privilege, they were not permitted to enter on their work until they had received the special gift of the Holy Spirit.

The desirability of thorough training for the men who enter the ministry hardly seems debatable, and yet, the decline in the number of students in the standard seminaries, the multiplication of training schools offering short cut courses, and the large numbers of unschooled men presenting themselves for ordination have forced the question to the front.

Is it wise or necessary to train thoroughly candidates for the ministry? Must the young man undergo a long period of discipline and study? Will not the God who calls him give him the understanding and the power to deliver the message?

The temptation to make it easy for the young men to enter the work is evident. Some high

class institutions have felt the pull of this sentiment and lowered their requirements or established departments that meet the needs of students without classical culture.

The men themselves naturally desire to enter upon their careers as soon as possible, and ministerial students are not all immune to the germ of indolence.

The average ministerial student is earnest and devoted, but the short course, the easy course, has many attractions, as is evidenced by the numbers pursuing their studies at short course institutions or selecting easy subjects in those institutions where they have large opportunities for elective topics. The elective system has done much to emancipate the individual, to develop genius and talent, and to give color and interest to modern education, but it has its weaknesses, and its privileges are often abused. Shortcomings in educational equipment may be overcome by diligence, but they take heavy toll from the minister's nerve power.

Greek and Hebrew may not be necessary from our modern viewpoint, but it does seem fitting

that the man who is to deliver the message of the gospel should have at least a working knowledge of the wonderful language in which that gospel was given to the world. The man unacquainted with Greek is shut out from the beauties and spiritual suggestions conveyed only through that matchless language. Such a man can never be an independent investigator of the truth, for he must ever be subservient to the judgment and scholarship of other men.

Moreover, the minister needs the intellectual training that come from stiff courses of study, especially in the realm of language. He needs an education that will give a certain hardness to his intellectual and moral fibre; a power to face hard questions, to think them through to satisfying conclusions both for himself and the cultured men and women of his congregation.

Other professions are steadily increasing their educational demands upon their members, and the ministry cannot afford to fall behind in the character and equipment of its members.

Remembering the exacting conditions of our times, the many problems that demand wide

observation, breadth of knowledge and culture, and clear, accurate thinking; remembering the increase of general education whereby college-bred men and women are found in every congregation; remembering the glorious greatness of the gospel message, we can hardly over-emphasize the need of adequate preparation for the men who are to become "stewards of the word of God."

It is manifest that no man with a just conception of the ministerial office would desire to take upon himself the responsibilities and privileges of the profession without obtaining the best training possible for him under the circumstances of his lot. The work is too vital, too holy, too far-reaching in its effects, too Christ-like, for any human being to enter into it thoughtlessly or to give to it anything less than the best of himself, the highest powers of his body, mind, and spirit.

The ideal preparation is undoubtedly a full college and seminary course, including at least one of the languages in which the scriptures were written.

Some years ago in discussing the "Preparation

for the Ministry," President Alvah Hovey of Newton Theological Institution affirmed: "Those who have thoroughly studied the Word of God and the history of his people; who have exercised their mental faculties and learned how to lead other minds by a straight line into the very center and heart of religious truth; who have endured the rigors of an intellectual and moral probation before taking the full responsibility of 'stewards of the mysteries of God'; those, in a word, who, at the Master's call, have deliberately prepared themselves in young manhood for the holy office of the Christian ministry, and have then gone forth to spend the best of their days in that service,—have labored with a success in proportion to their fitness to do the work of their calling, and have achieved results more desirable and permanent than have others of equal native ability and equal devotion to the cause."

This statement has been confirmed recently in a remarkable way by the investigations of the Committee on Denominational Schools appointed by the Northern Baptist Convention. The report of that committee shows that "combining all the

records obtained (405), the graduates of 1901-1905 and of 1911-1915 (two groups whose efficiency was investigated covering the period 1916-1920), and comparing this record with that of the 675 not seminary-trained men in the states adjacent to the seminaries, for that same period, 1916-1920, it was found that seminary-trained men led their churches to give for denominational benevolences an average of over four and one-half times as much money, secured two and one-half times as many baptisms, and twice as many accessions by letter and Christian experience. These figures include among men not seminary-trained, many of college and partial seminary training. Incomplete as these returns are, they are dependable and strongly argue for full seminary preparation."

The charge has been made recently that the curricula of the seminaries is archaic, that it bears no relation to modern life, that it emphasizes dead languages to the exclusion of living subjects, that it does not prepare men to meet the conditions that prevail in the world in which they live. As a rule, such charges arise out of ignorance

concerning modern ministerial training. Practically all of the seminaries give wide latitude in the matter of selective courses, and many of them have working agreements with universities whereby the courses of the university become available for the seminary student. Twenty years ago most of the institutions were under the old system that recognized five general departments: Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, and Homiletics. The school of to-day has these departments, but it also has either other departments or includes under the old classification subjects that were undreamed of a generation since. One well known institution offers such courses as "The Theology of the Poets," "Romanism and Modernism," "The Church and Labor," "The Rural Church and the Community," "The Family and Child Welfare," "The Church and Internationalism," "Church Music," "The Principles of Education," "The Theory of Education."

Certainly nothing could be more modern or practical than such courses in sociology and religious education.

Moreover, the ability of the schools to develop effective workers seems to be augmenting. The report of the Committee already referred to has this significant statement: "The graduates of 1911-1915 led their churches during the period 1916-1920 to give more to denominational benevolence and secured as many baptisms, and more other accessions to the churches by letter and experience for the same period, 1916-1920, than seminary graduates ten years earlier. This fact reveals increasing and not decreasing seminary efficiency."

It is inevitable that some worthy men will not be able to pursue full college and seminary courses. They may be called to the ministry too late in life, or when called they may have already assumed the responsibilities of family support. But even these men should aim for the best equipment possible, and for them the training school or special courses at the standard institution are available.

Some denominational bodies are beginning to legislate concerning the training of the ministry, and wisely establishing standards of education as

prerequisite to ordination. Such legislation is not for the purpose of keeping men out of the ministry, but to encourage and inspire men to enter it; to set ideals for candidates to surpass; to establish standards that will cause the world to respect and honor the profession; to raise the leadership of the church to the level where its primacy will be universally recognized; and above all, to increase its efficiency that the high purpose of the Great Head of the Church may be quickly achieved.

The proposal to raise standards of requirements, and to demand long periods of educational preparation becomes exceedingly serious in view of the steadily mounting cost of education and the fact that the ministry is recruited largely from families of limited financial resources.

If present economic conditions continue very long, or there should be any marked increase in the number of students, it is evident that ministerial education societies and institutions engaged in training the clergy would need to enlarge their resources available for scholarship aid.

Some excellent men criticise this policy of giv-

ing special financial aid to ministerial students, and contend that they should be treated exactly as other professional students. It should be remembered, however, that the church calls such men to a special and technical form of service; a service of life-long self-sacrifice in its behalf; and a service in which they cannot hope to obtain, no matter how diligent or faithful or brilliant, the material rewards that come to the lawyer or physician or engineer. Moreover, if these students should borrow funds to obtain this training, the meagre stipends of the average church would not permit them to pay their debts.

Nobody considers the boys attending public school or the young men in college as subjects of charity, and yet none of them make adequate financial return for the benefits received. The public contributes to their support and training for citizenship, and expects its payment in later life values. And no more is it charity for the young men preparing for the ministry to receive aid. The church contributes to their training, but it expects the laboratory of the schools to add elements of value to their lives. The church an-

ticipates heavy interest returns from its investment.

It is not for the best interests of either the ministry or the church to maintain such conditions that the chosen leaders of God's holy work should enter upon their careers harassed with visions of debts that they cannot pay, or with lowered nervous vitality consequent upon overstrain in supporting themselves, entirely, during the period of education.

Ministers are the officers of the church army. As the nation deems it wise to support and direct the training of the officers of its army and navy, so the church of Christ calling its young men and women to its special service, and establishing for them high standards of discipline and culture, can do no less than aid them in meeting its requirements.

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.—*Matt.* 28:19-20.

CHAPTER VI

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE MINISTRY

From the business standpoint, the church is probably the greatest industry ever developed by mortal man. There is more capital invested in it, more workers engaged in advancing its interests, and its concerns are more widespread than any other enterprise that men have undertaken. Its achievements have been so numerous and varied that we are confronted everywhere by its benefits; and the unprejudiced observer soon comes to feel that practically everything essential to happiness in modern civilization owes its debt to the church of Christ.

This great, going business, unctioing in so many ways, in so many parts of the world, began in weakness nineteen hundred years ago, and has come to its present status only through self-sacrificing service upon the part of its adherents. The

church has been conceived of, sometimes, as a field for service, but it is rather a *force* for service, an army marshaled to succor a world in need.

As the leaders of this force, the ministers have always borne burdens, assumed grave responsibilities, and challenged opportunities. But no generation of the past has offered so many open doors to the consecrated clergyman, or so sorely needed his ministration as the present age.

The old opportunities for the demonstration of the power of ministerial leadership are still with us. The rural communities with their decaying churches; the city with its crowding populations; the immigrant with his strange tongue and alien ideal; the child problem; and the labor problem; and the divorce problem; and a dozen other such questions of long standing still send out their ringing challenge to the church and its leaders.

But the world has been passing through a strange and terrible experience these last few years; the fountains of life have been broken up, the bulwarks of society have been overthrown, and cruelty and lust and hate have overwhelmed great masses of the race. The world has been

surprised in its self-confidence, foolish pride, and undue elation over its progress in material things. The world boasted of its conquests and culture, and in that very moment, the leaders of its intellectual life, the organizers of its industry, the captains of its scientific adventures were seized with madness, and plunged it into a maelstrom of hate and destruction. Out of the terrors of the world war the nations have emerged with minds bewildered by conflict, hearts torn with anguish, and hands blindly reaching forth after guidance. New tasks face the minister, for he must be the interpreter of these experiences to men. As ex-President Wilson said in one of his great addresses, "The business of the Christian church, of the Christian minister, is to show the spiritual relations of men to the great world process, whether they be physical or spiritual. It is nothing less than to show the plan of life and man's relation to that plan."

In this interpretation of the plan of the ages and the mediation between the world and its bewilderments, between men and their woes, the minister has a veritable sea of sorrows to assuage.

America has not really tasted the bitter cup that has been pressed to the lips of the nations. Her territory has not been ravaged, her homes have not been destroyed, her sons and daughters have not been slain till the wombs of the mothers could not supply the demand for sacrifices. Europe, however, knows all the bitterness of these sorrows as she contemplates her childless homes, her countless crosses on Flander's Fields, and her hosts of maimed and blind and sick. At the meeting of the National Federation of Churches in Boston in the autumn of 1920 the Secretary of the Federation stated that "if the dead of France could be marshaled twenty abreast it would take them eleven days, marching day and night, to pass a given point; if to the dead of France could be added the dead of the other nations, it would require three months to pass; if to this mighty procession could be added the maimed and blind and those incapacitated for life's work, the line would be marching from now (from the time of the meeting) till the roses bloom in the spring."

The world is indeed treading the winepress of

sorrow and its only hope, the only light that shines in its dark night, is the light that streams from the face of the "Man of Sorrows," the "Divine Son."

But the world needs far more than this assuagement of its griefs. There must be a moral and spiritual reconstruction of both the foundations and the structure of human society.

The world war as fought by America and her allies was entered into with splendid idealism; but warfare is always subversive to high moral and religious ideals. Inevitably the safeguards of society have been broken down, and established conventionalities overthrown. Multitudes seem to have lost their convictions of honor, and cherished principles have been violated without compunction. The world has gone mad over the things of physical sense, and does not hesitate to adopt any means in order to obtain its satisfactions. Human life is held cheaply, and lawlessness is continually bursting through the crusts of well-ordered life.

The only hope of the world is to rebuild its life by recalling men to the consciousness of the

reality of the spiritual; by convincing them that men do not live by bread alone; by moralizing the material forces that are subject to man.

It is strangely significant, perhaps we should say providential, that at this time we are celebrating the three-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

Bradford and Brewster and their fellow-workers were few in number, but they were mighty in spirit, and upon their high idealism and lofty principles our nation has builded its structure of a free government freely supported, by a liberty-loving and religious-minded people. We should strive to-day for a rebirth of the Pilgrim ideal, not only in America, but in the nations of the earth.

Perhaps the element of that ideal most needed in the present hour is its religious reverence and spirit.

President Harding said in a recent address in Washington:

"In spite of our complete divorcement of Church and State, quite in harmony with our religious freedom, there is an important relation-

ship between Church and Nation, because no nation can prosper, no nation can survive if it ever forgets Almighty God. I have believed that religious reverence has played a very influential and helpful part in the matchless American achievement, and I wish it ever to abide. If I were to utter a prayer for the republic tonight, it would be to reconsecrate us in religious devotion and make us abidingly a God-fearing, God-loving people."

Viewing conditions from the business standpoint, Mr. Babson asserts: "The need of the hour is more religion. More religion is needed everywhere, from the halls of Congress at Washington to the factories, the mines, the fields and the forests. It is one thing to talk about plans or policies, but a plan or policy without a religious motive is like a watch without a spring or a body without the breath of life. The security of our investments is absolutely dependent upon faith, the righteousness and the religion of our people. I have stated that the real strength of our investments is due, not to the distinguished bankers of America, but rather to the poor preachers. I now

go farther than that and say that the development of the country as a whole is due to this *something*, this indescribable *something*, this combination of faith, thrift, industry, initiative, integrity and vision, which these preachers have developed in their communities."

Both statesman and keen-minded statistician have analyzed the situation with exactness and simplicity. The only corrective for the chaos, restlessness and laxity of the present is more religion. It is the task and privilege of the minister in this hour of the world's great need to cast into the whirlpool of its life the steadying element, the message of our religious faith. He is in a peculiar manner the representative of the moral and spiritual forces of the nation, the regenerative powers of society, and upon him depends to a large extent the restoration of the world to sanity and healthful ideals.

But the reconstruction of the old pillars is not the only need of the world. It is asking and expecting the creation of new temples for its life and faith.

The great developments of the past century

have been along material lines. The resources of nature have been exploited, and man's conquests of natural forces have surpassed the wildest dreams of the ancients. Disciples of Neitsche are now asserting that the cycle of progress has been completed and that the race is entering the path that leads downward.

Competent observers, who have no sympathy with such decadent philosophy, are also beginning to question concerning the future, and expressing doubts that man can progress much further along material lines.

Whatever the future may contain for the race, materially, it is evident that just now we need a vast increment to the moral and spiritual resources of mankind. For several generations the moral and spiritual development of the world has not kept pace with its material advances. The problem is to develop spiritual powers adequate to control and direct these gigantic forces that have been called into action by the discoveries of science and the unfolding of nature's storehouses.

This is undoubtedly the minister's problem, and there are indications that we are entering upon

the pathway that leads to its solution. The world is growing heartsick and weary. It is awakening to its need of God. It is becoming conscious of its sorrows, conscious of its broken idols of human culture and achievements, conscious of its own helplessness. Voices in the wilderness are beginning to cry out, "Give us back our God," "Lead us into the presence of the Holy One," "Show us the fountain of living waters."

These voices in the night, that reveal the blind gropings of the race, are heard not only in America and Europe, but also in other continents, continents that we call pagan.

The groanings of the race, the birth pangs of new ideals and civilizations, are heard in China and Japan, in India and Arabia, in Africa and the Islands of the Sea. Everywhere a new day seems to be dawning on the race. Shall it be a day dark with the clouds of doubt and prejudice and rivalry and hate, or a day bright and glorious because the "sun of righteousness" arises "with healing in its wings." The Christian forces of America, under the leadership of the ministry will practically determine the character of this

new age. America of all the nations has the men and the means, the reserves that are able to control conditions.

The signs of the times point to a glorious day-break, the ushering in of a new era of spiritual progress. The surprising development of the nineteenth century along material lines will be matched in the twentieth by the nobler conquests of the spirit when the visions of prophets and the dreams of poets shall have their fruition.

The golden age of the minister from the standpoint of opportunity is in the present generation. He is the key man to the world's future, for he must unlock the treasure house of the spirit. In his hands are the issues of life for the race. Never before has he had such opportunities to lay foundations of faith; to build temples of worship in the souls of men; to mediate between the human spirit and the eternal God; to re-discover to the consciousness of the race the eternal verities of the Christian religion.

Like his Master of old, the minister can feel the rising power of his divine mission and exclaim: "He has annointed me to preach good tidings to

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the poor; he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty them that are bruised. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Wherefore my brethren beloved and longed for,
my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord.—
Phil. 4:1.

CHAPTER VII

THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE MINISTRY

There are some obvious attractions to the ministry, such as the desirable social position accorded the minister, the opportunities it presents for ease and culture, and the command of one's time that it affords. These things do not, however, appeal to any large number of worthy young men.

A somewhat larger company of candidates are attracted by the approbation of society that the minister is supposed to receive, or by the leadership that is accorded him in certain walks of life, or by the prevalent altruistic emphasis and its invocation of the romantic emotions of our young people.

Fundamentally, the attractive appeals to enter upon the work of the minister and to persevere in its labors, range themselves under three general heads—the attraction of a great call, the

attraction of a great work, and the attraction of a great fellowship.

The attractive power of the ideal call to the ministry can hardly be overestimated. The true minister is born a minister just as the musician is born a musician or the artist is born an artist. But the imperatives that bid the minister express his personality by becoming a minister are unlike those that exercise dominion over the genius of the sculptor or the painter or the musician. To the instinctive leading of those forces that exercise empire over the spirit is added the summons of a great and glorious God bidding the soul acknowledge his reign and assume his livery of service.

Somehow in that call there is an authority, a something never seen on land or sea, that grips the soul, and from which it can never quite escape.

The attraction of the call is, however, matched by the attraction of the work. The work of the minister may be defined in many ways, depending somewhat upon the mental attitude and spiritual experience of the definer.

Sometimes men look at the work from the standpoint of a narrow ecclesiasticism, and it is conceived, as the gathering of a congregation and aligning it with some particular denominational group, or the building of a church edifice, or the preaching of a few sermons and administration of the sacraments, or the management of worthy charities. Sometimes the vocation is described in terms of social service, such as "the creation of a new social order," "the establishment of universal brotherhood," or "the building of a new civilization."

All of these worthy objectives are involved in the clergy's affairs, but it is possible to have a deeper and richer conception of his mission. From God's point of view—the minister is his representative among men, the herald of his message of grace and love. As Jesus was the "Word," the expression of the Father's heart and mind, so in some marvelous way the minister is the "word" of his Master, the Christ, manifesting the divine thought and purpose. Paul suggested this idea when he wrote of himself to the Philippians, "To me to live is Christ." Earlier in

his career he expressed the same thought to the Galatians, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." For the minister to live among men is for Christ in him and through him to live among men, and the message of the true minister is the message of God. He may sometimes speak without authority, just as the Apostle Paul sometimes spoke without divine inspiration, but he is ever facing the fact that he is a "consecrated man," set apart for holy service as the messenger of the Most High.

From the standpoint of man, the minister's mission is to save a lost and ruined world, to drive out darkness and sin, and to usher in the light and holiness of the kingdom of God. He must aid man to discover God, to enter into the spiritual kingdom. He must grip their souls with the imperatives of divine love and righteousness, until, yielding to his persuasion, they enter the aristocracy of faith, and Jesus Christ becomes the arbiter of life.

Of course this is a tremendous and perplexing task, and seemingly impossible of accomplishment. The minister could not fulfill this two-fold mis-

sion if he were dependent simply upon his own initiative and personality.

But in the very difficulty of his mission there is an element of satisfaction and an added attraction to his vocation. Men like big jobs. There is no real pleasure in doing the easy thing. The athlete finds relish in his contest only as he faces an opponent worthy of his powers. Men, virile men, like Theodore Roosevelt, find their highest enjoyment in doing the hard thing, and the harder, the more taxing the struggle, the greater the joy, both in contest and victory.

And that joy, the joy of the strenuous, the joy of burden bearing, of carrying forward mighty enterprises, belongs to the minister by reason of the nature of his mission.

Moreover, marvelous as it seems, the minister's objective is not altogether in the realm of the impossible. The word "impossible" ought never to have been coined. There is no such thing as an impossibility. What we call "impossible" to-day may be the commonplace of to-morrow. A generation since, the world said it was impossible for men to converse with their fellow-men across

this continent, or to fly ten thousand feet in the air in machines heavier than air, or to cross the Atlantic in a submarine. Such things were considered the wild fancies of the romancer. And yet these things, and even more marvelous things, are the everyday happenings of the present.

In the spiritual realm Jesus ruled out the idea of the "impossible" when he said: "With God all things are possible." And the church has been making through the centuries the seeming "impossible" the rule of its achievements. What a wild dream for that little band of enthusiasts to attempt to break through the crusts of life in the Roman world and enthrone the religion of the Nazarene! What effrontery of faith for that insignificant Baptist Church Association at Kittery, England, to resolve that the "time had arrived to attempt to give the gospel to the pagan world"!

It may seem to the world an impossibility for the minister to overthrow the walls of modern Jerichos, and to build New Jerusalems of righteousness; to accomplish the mighty objectives that the race and the Word of God sets for him; but

the regnancy of faith still abides, and the hard thing becomes the joyous venture of his soul.

The attractions of the call and the work of the ministry are enhanced by the attractions of its fellowships. Men can be faithful to principles and ideals even in loneliness and isolation. Many noble saints have wasted in dungeons, and multitudes have given their bodies to be burned, out of loyalty to conscience and religious sentiment.

But even for the strongest and most independent there is something uplifting in the fellowships of life. One of the abiding charms of the ministry is its "sweet and noble fellowships." This fellowship is not simply of the minister's own generation. As a spiritual relationship it reaches back through the ages, linking the present-day minister with the choice souls that have labored and wrought in faith.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews summoned the men of his generation to courage and consecration by picturing their spiritual fellowship with the fathers who had wrought under the old dispensation, and above all, by the consciousness

that they were in the same line with the "author and perfecter of our faith." The same spiritual alliance is the inheritance of the minister to-day, and it is a glorious company of prophets and apostles and holy men of which the minister is a member. Paul, the matchless; Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed; Athanasius, the defender of the faith; Hubmaier, the protestant; Wickliffe, the morning star of the reformation; John Robinson, the separatist; Carey, the inspirer of modern missions; Gordon, the mystic; Lorimer, the platform prince; and a host of others whose names stand for piety, principle, and Christly service, are in the mighty "cloud of witnesses," this spiritual ancestry. The minister of to-day is one with these, in the temper of his life, the motives of his soul, the objectives of his labor, and the ends of his destiny. The memory of that fellowship thrills his heart, lightens his burdens and encourages his soul in the dark hour when the candle of hope burns dimly. He is of that company of the immortals of whom the Scripture asserts the "world was not worthy."

The minister may have his heavy burdens, his

almost overpowering tasks, but as in the audacity and confidence of faith he attempts to fulfill his commission, he hears the voice of his Captain,—
“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.”

Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.—*Matt. 25:21.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE REWARDS OF THE MINISTRY

We are told sometimes that the minister should not think of a reward, that it is not in accord with the dignity or idealism of the sacred office. His thought should be of duty, of moral obligation, of divine commands and human needs rather than compensations or personal benefits. But there is no adequate reason for such assertions. The minister is of like passions as other men, and very few can be held long to sacrifices and labors by abstruse idealism or abstract principles of righteous conduct. Personality cries out for incarnations. Absolute ethics must have embodiments and rest upon sentiments, if its impositions are to have response in the human heart, and evoke the homage of obedience. The "oughts" of life need the persuasions of faith and feeling.

The scriptures recognize this very clearly, and

their greatest teachings are the teachings that come through the embodiments of principles in the lives of the heroes; the prophets and wise men and apostles; and above all in the life of the Divine Master. And these great characters, illustrating the marvelous truths that God desired to teach the race, were not insensible to the prospective rewards of their faithfulness. The writer of Hebrews tells us that Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward"; and the implication is that Abraham and Jacob, Joseph and David, and the other worthies mentioned in the same chapter shared in the expectation of Moses and were inspired to labor and wait for the promised indemnity.

In his teaching Jesus referred to the matter again and again, making prospective rewards the incentive to faithfulness and zeal. The anticipation of reward is fundamental in such parables as the talents and the pounds, while it is the essential doctrine in the interpretation of our Lord's marvelous picturing of the final judgment as recorded in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew.

Jesus himself did not hesitate to claim reward

for his faithful performance of the Father's will, and in his prayer for his disciples, found in the seventeenth of John, petitioned the Father: "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me (reward me) with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

The young man looking forward to the ministry, to the surrender of his life to self-denying and arduous labors, has the right to ask: "What will be the rewards of such a life?" "Is there anything that can justify me in investing my youth, my manhood, my talent, my life, in this occupation?" "Will the investment pay valuable dividends?" Livingston asked it as he buried himself in the heart of Africa. Paton asked it as he condemned himself to the isolation of the islands of the sea. Ashmore asked it as he gave his statesmanlike abilities to the uplift of China. Every man who enters this service, at home or abroad, whether his talents fit him for a place of leadership in the great swirling currents of the world's life, or for the quiet pursuits of the village pastor-

ate, has the right, and ought, to ask concerning the adequacy of the reward.

Some of the compensations are patent even to the unbelieving, but the richest and best are in those invisible, intangible things that are the most precious possessions of the human heart. The assets of the kingdom of God that become the holdings of the minister are not all visible to the unregenerate.

Some of these rewards become available almost coincident with the determination to devote the life to divine service, while others await the developing experience of the minister, or the culmination of divine providence in the final judgment.

Some one has said that the supreme reward that can come to a righteous life is to see itself reproduced in some other life. The joy of this reproduction is seen in both the natural and the spiritual realms. The mother finds abiding happiness in the reproducing of herself in the life of her child. The true teacher has satisfaction in the begetting of knowledge and a thirst for knowledge in the mind of his pupil, and, the Christian minister is gladdened as he sees faith blossoming

in the hearts of those to whom he proclaims the word, and a transfiguring power assuming regnancy in their lives. The Scriptures suggest, frequently, that this experience is a reward of faithful service. The prophet Isaiah pictured the suffering Messiah as requited in this manner for his sufferings: "He shall see his seed. He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

The disciples of Jesus were "slow of heart to believe," and were oftentimes disappointing in the response of faith and loyalty, but Jesus seems to have found satisfaction in the steadily developing power of their faith as they received his message. The joy of reproducing himself in them, colors the thought of his last great prayer as he entrusts them and their future to the Father's care: "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."—"Holy Father, keep them in Thy name."

The minister has another source of satisfaction,—and it is no mean indemnity for his heartaches and self-denials, in the realization that he is devoting himself to the greatest and best things of human life; that he is spending himself in

building the noblest of humanity's hopes and dreams.

Sometimes the world does not appreciate what the minister is contributing to its welfare; sometimes it stones its prophets, and its benefactors go down to the grave covered with neglect. The approbation of our fellowmen is precious and cheering to the soul, but it is not a necessity. If need be, the servant of Jesus can "endure as seeing him who is invisible," and can rejoice that even though "despised and rejected of men," his work is hastening the advent of the King.

But valuable as is the reward that comes from the consciousness of reproducing himself in other lives, and contributing to the highest good of his fellowmen, it is probable that the average minister finds his keenest joys in the approval of his own conscience, and his confidence in the Master's final benediction "Well done."

Ministers are supposedly of tender conscience, and their spirits are susceptible to subtle influences. For many of them there is sweet and blessed reward in the consciousness that they follow the path of duty; that they tread in the foot-

steps of their Lord; that they are obeying the great, inherent purposes for which God created them, called them, into His kingdom, and then inducted them into leadership in His church.

It is true, a man's mental state is influenced by physical conditions, and many a noble soul has tortured itself with doubts when all that was needed to give poise and joy was a period of rest. Nearly every worker has his seasons when the fires of hope and faith burn low. But somehow God renews his faithful from day to day, and courage takes fresh hold of its tasks as it listens to the voice of the Lord. When Jesus said to his worn and weary disciples, "Come ye apart and rest awhile," he simply acted in harmony with that divine providence whereby the Father provides for the toilers of His kingdom.

God would have His servants rest in the blessed consciousness of His approval. Perhaps, to the pious imaginations of many, the richest reward is reserved to the last, to be awarded in the kingdom of the future.

The knight of the olden time esteemed himself richly repaid for his arduous labors or endurance

of dangers if, on bended knee, he could enter the presence of his king or press his lips to the finger tips of his queen.

But the minister has something as much deeper and richer than that experience of those ancient knights, as his King is greater and more glorious than the monarchs they served. The minister's Lord is the King of Glory, the Mighty One who walks in the "midst of the golden candlestick."

Even while in the flesh, the minister, through the eyes of faith, may have a choice and blessed perception of his Lord. It is true that we see him only as in a "mirror darkly." We could not stand the full effulgence of His glory, but in rapturous moments that he vouchsafes to his faithful they catch heavenly visions of his supernal excellence. And these glimpses of his bliss and beauty are simply promises of the felicity that shall be granted to them when, having completed the work assigned to them, they "see him as he is face to face" and hear him saying "ye have been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.—*Ephesians* 4:11-13.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERMANENCY OF THE MINISTRY

As we consider the present status of the ministry, and seek the prophet's vision for the future, several convictions force themselves upon us.

The first of these is the persuasion that the ministry is not a passing office of the times, but a permanent institution of the church.

Mankind owes a mighty debt to the Christian ministry. Ministers have been benefactors of the race through all the years since the establishment of the office by the apostolic church. They have been discoverers of continents, pioneers of civilization, inspirers of learning, founders of universities, reformers of government, proclaimers of civil and religious liberty, defenders of the op-

pressed, and leaders of leagues of pity and peace for the world. They have filled the pages of history with the records of great deeds for the human brotherhood. The glowing deeds of such men as William Brewster, the leader of the Pilgrim Exodus to America; Roger Williams, the pioneer of Religious Liberty in America; David Livingston, the explorer of Darkest Africa; Marcus Whitman, the savior of the Northwest Territory for the United States; and hundreds of men of like spirit and noble deed, give glory to the profession, and places men and nations and civilizations under everlasting debts of gratitude.

Notwithstanding these things, we hear the opinion expressed occasionally that the pulpit has become a superfluity, that the preacher's mission has been fulfilled, and that the world no longer needs him or esteems his profession as an essential part of the social body. The growth of ritualism, the development of the printing press, and popularization of the newspaper, and the increasing number of publicity agents, are supposed to have superceded the voice of the minister.

But the written word can never make the

spoken word obsolete, nor a business manager fulfill the functions of the God-called pastor.

Our social and political organizations are all witnessing for the power of the human voice and personality in matters of propaganda. Political campaign managers and directors of reform movements use the printed page generously; but they depend most on the men with the silver tongues.

The minister's calling, consisting so largely of the proclamation of the truth by the spoken word, is "rooted in the moral order of human history." You cannot eliminate it or supplant it with something else without impoverishing the church and bringing the world to moral and spiritual bankruptcy. The voice of the minister, the work of the clergyman, is needed today just as keenly as when Luther thundered his defiance of Rome; or Edwards set in motion the moral forces of the Great Awakening; and Whitefield convicted by his eloquence the multitudes of the careless and godless.

The servant of Christ does not need to offer apology for his being or for his work. He can

face men with dignity and assurance under the "profound conviction that what he has to say, the whole world, from prince to beggar, needs to hear and heed."

A second observation is that the ministry of today should seek the production of an adequate and nobler ministry for the church of tomorrow. If the church is a permanent institution and its ministry a confirmed and constant factor of its life, it is obviously a vital matter to conserve and develop the ministerial profession and to persuade choice souls to consecrate themselves to this form of service.

It must be confessed that ministers have not always been acutely conscious of this duty. Sometimes they have not appraised their profession at its true worth. To this extent they are responsible for the suspicion that the ministry is of no value to modern society, and the consequent failure of some young men to adopt the profession. Timidity and self-consciousness oftentimes prevent a proper self-assertion, and the assumption of the honorable place that belongs to the preacher of righteousness. The prophet of God has no occa-

sion to fear the face of man. Of course conceit and vanity and bluster have no place in the preacher's life, but there is a certain self-appreciation that is simply manliness.

This false modesty, the apologetic attitude adopted by some clergymen in the presence of political or social leaders or men of other professions or business, has had harmful reactions upon some of the young men. Moreover, this self-deceiving humility, coupled with the economic handicaps, have made ministers chary of persuading their own sons or other choice young men to enter the profession. The minister must be convinced, and act as though he were convinced, that his vocation is manly and his work essential to society.

In the measure that he adopts this attitude, the minister will find himself begetting spiritual sons who gladly follow in his footsteps and rejoice that his mantle has fallen upon them.

Another judgment, and a judgment that is impressing itself upon the hearts of many leaders in the church, is, that the church of Christ must seek both to make attractive the conditions that sur-

round the minister, and to obey the Master's injunction: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest."

The amelioration of conditions is a difficult and complex affair, and is in some measure controlled by worldly forces; but the Christian consecration and wisdom of the laity can accomplish much, if the task is undertaken with any degree of enthusiasm and unity. It will take time to change the atmosphere, to transfer economic burdens, and to breed large conceptions of liberal treatment; but the clergy will not be impatient if it can feel that the church is treating the problem seriously, and is really determined that its spiritual leaders shall have their modicum of respect, honor, and financial emoluments.

Tennyson tells us that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," and certainly this is true in regard to the possibilities of prayer in influencing young men to enter the ministry. President Horr, of Newton Theological Institution, commenting on the Master's injunction to pray that laborers might be sent into

the harvest fields, tells us "There is a divine urgency, which in answer to prayer, compels men to enter the work of the ministry. There is a call, and the church may expect that call to be heard when she prays as God has directed."

The church is approaching the climax of its long and marvellous history of benefits conferred upon the race. The ministry is facing its supreme hour of sacrificial service. No man can predict what issues the crisis will present, nor assuredly envision the ensuing results. But this is certain that clergy and laity alike need to pray, and to pray the achieving prayer, that God would so add to the forces of the workers that when the divine hour of opportunity for mankind shall strike, it may not strike in vain.

"Watchman, what of the night?" "The morning cometh." Yes, the morning of God's great day is coming, for the sons and daughters of the church shall shortly hear the voice of the Master, and thrilling to his command, will lay hold of those powers and forces that are able to subjugate the hearts of men and enthrone the Christ in every realm of human society.

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