

The Pastor
In
The Closet
Thomas Murphy

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Agape Chapel Ministries
P.O. Box 59084
Norwalk, CA 90652 USA
(Free List of Free Materials)

<http://www.geocities.com/njbible>

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CHAPTER II.

THE PASTOR IN THE CLOSET.

THE PIETY WHICH IS NEEDFUL FOR THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

It should be laid down as our first principle that eminent piety is the indispensable qualification for the ministry of the gospel. By this is not meant simply a piety the genuineness of which is unquestionable, but a piety the degree of which is above that of ordinary believers. It is meant that there should be a more thorough baptism of the Holy Ghost, a more absolute consecration of all the powers and faculties to the service of God, a more complete conformity to the likeness of the Lord Jesus, a greater familiarity with the mind of the Spirit, a nearer approach to the perfect man in Christ Jesus, in those who take upon them the privileges and the responsibilities of the pastor, than are commonly expected even in true Christians. The pastor should not be satisfied with reaching the general standard of spirituality. He has devoted himself to a high and holy office to which he believes himself called, and hence he has need of a very high tone of piety. As a minister appointed to serve in the sanctuary and wait upon souls, how deep should be his humility! His great aim is to save men, and it will not therefore suffice

for him to have merely the ordinary sympathy with the suffering and the lost. He is to be a leader in the spiritual host of God; must he not go before others in spiritual attainments? To draw men up to a more and more elevated standard of piety and devotedness is the appointment he holds from the great Head of the Church; surely he must himself rise still higher?

It is beyond all question that this eminent piety is before everything else in preparation for the duties of the sacred office. It is before talents, or learning, or study, or favorable circumstances, or skill in working, or power in sermonizing. It is needed to give character and tone and strength to all these, and to every other part of the work. Without this elevated spirituality nothing else will be of much account in producing a permanent and satisfactory ministry. All else will be like erecting a building without a foundation. This is the true foundation upon which to build—the idea which is to give character to all the superstructure. Oh that at the very beginning this could be deeply impressed upon the hearts of young ministers! Oh that they would take and weigh well the testimony of the most devoted and successful of those who have served God in his gospel! A man with this high tone of piety is sure to be a good pastor; without it success in the holy office is not to be expected.

The first thing for the young minister to consider is how he may attain to this high degree of holiness in heart and life. How often do other things occupy the mind! How much more anxiety there generally is about other branches of preparation! But this should be before them all, and at the root of them all, and ever present to give character to them all. As all other believers do, the pastor should strive to be filled with the Holy Ghost,

6. *The prayers of his godly people are ever going up for the pastor.* As a power for promoting his piety this cannot be overestimated. These prayers are offered in public and in private. Often when he little dreams of it they are ascending to the throne. They are very constant from one and another or many of his congregation, and the pastor should seek for them most anxiously. Such supplications cannot be offered up so frequently and so earnestly and yet be in vain. Undoubtedly they are among the effectual fervent prayers of the righteous which avail much. Though he may not recognize them at the time, they do bring down the power of the Spirit upon him when he is studying, when he is preaching, when he is visiting the sick and in other of the solemn duties of his office. These prayers are deeply important for the piety of the minister and for the prosecution of a work the most solemn that can be committed to the hands of man.

Such are some of the peculiar advantages which the pastor can rely upon in striving for that eminent degree of piety which becomes him. Great are his trials, but greater far are his blessings. These things compensate, and more than compensate, for all the sacrifices he may have to make. Happy, happy man is he in being privileged to hold such a noble office under Jesus the King! How high it is possible for him to rise in the attainment of holiness and of happiness! How devoted may be his godliness! How much of the spirit of heaven he may attain even here! How much of the very character of Christ the Son of God it is his privilege now to manifest before the world! #

but in view of his holy office he should strive far more earnestly. The one thought should be ever before him: "This is no ordinary profession that I hold; it is something more sacred, more heavenly, more Christ-like than the common callings of men, and therefore I must be more holy." There is no part of the training for the gospel ministry which requires so earnest and constant attention as that which pertains to the personal piety of those who are called to its duties.

We dwell long and minutely upon this branch of our subject because of its superlative importance. There is no other point in the whole subject that needs to be so thoroughly impressed as this. It must not be overshadowed by the consideration of other things, even though they too are necessary in preparing for the practical duties of the minister. We would have it so conspicuous and so deeply impressed on the heart and conscience that it may give complexion to all our other studies on this subject. This self-culture—culture of personal piety—is a branch of pastoral theology, and a most important one. It is especially noticed among the inspired rules laid down for the conduct of the minister. "Take heed unto thyself" is definitely commanded. The pastor's own heart is the place in which the work must begin. His closet is the armory in which he must equip himself for the service that may require great hardness. It is the mount where he may tarry in the presence of God, and thence come down with glory beaming in his face. It is the upper room in which he may commune with Christ and obtain that burning love that will ever sweetly constrain. It is the mercy-seat, made so by the divine presence, where the Holy Spirit may overshadow him and imbue him with a wisdom and a might that will be irresistible. It is the secret place

in which he may find his God, and then go out fortified to a work from which he might otherwise well shrink, saying, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

IMPORTANCE OF EMINENT PIETY IN THE PASTOR.

This subject has been already brought forward, but we would dwell much longer upon it, that, if it be possible, we may awaken the most profound attention to it in the hearts of those who are already in the office or who have it in prospect. We would make our conviction of the necessity for this eminent piety appear as emphatic as it is in our power. By dwelling upon the details and entering into some of the particulars we would show that it is not possible to exaggerate its importance. A few of the considerations which must press it home most solemnly appear:

(a) THE NAMES APPLIED TO MINISTERS IN THE WORD OF GOD.

These names are not given inconsiderately or for some mere rhetorical purpose by the Holy Ghost. They are full of the most weighty meaning. They are figurative, but highly indicative of the nature and duties of the office. It is not possible to read them without feeling that the calling to which they relate is a most exalted one, and the character they suppose a character of great sacredness. We can enumerate only a few of them.

Prominent among the names applied to this office is that of *pastor*—shepherd! the very name which Christ takes to himself when he says, "I am the Good Shepherd." How Christ-like should those be to whom he applies the same title! Those who are appointed to

ledge of God whose regular occupation from day to day is to become acquainted with the strictly religious wants and condition of the community, and to minister to them? If the daily avocations of the mechanic have a tendency to make him ingenious and inventive, if the daily avocations of the merchant tend to make him enterprising and adventurous, do not the daily avocations of the clergyman tend to make him devout? The influence of active life upon character is in its own place and manner as great as that of contemplative life. A man is unconsciously moulded and formed by his daily routine of duties as really as by the books he reads or the sciences he studies. Hence a faithful performance of clerical duties contributes directly to spirituality."

5. *The minister is continually in the midst of scenes which must keep fresh the impression of the importance of true godliness.* He is called to visit the dying, the suffering, the sorrowing, the hoping, the rejoicing. The nature and results of sin in their horrors and of piety in all its blessedness he sees exhibited in living reality. Sometimes he almost beholds the woes of the lost; sometimes almost the joys of the ransomed. Such scenes are passing before his eyes nearly every day. He sees them in all their various aspects. He is admitted to the confidence of hearts that are almost breaking. His soul would need to be of adamant if these things did not move it deeply. As no other person he has opportunities of witnessing the transcendent value of the gospel of Christ for assuaging the woes of men. The earnestness of life and the nearness of eternity must impress him with the thought that there is nothing but the religion of which he is a minister that is of real importance to the world. And this is the school in which he is ever learning the value of eminent godliness.

mind of the Spirit, the importance of salvation, the conversion of souls, the spread of the gospel, the edification of believers and other kindred subjects; and how can he be constantly busied about these sacred things without his soul being made more sacred by them? In studying, in preaching, in prayer, in the Sabbath-school, every day, if not every hour, his thoughts are bent upon eternal things, and it is natural that what is so much thought of should appear in ever-increasing magnitude. And these things are too momentous to lose their impressiveness because of familiarity. The heart cannot help taking the hue of that upon which it is constantly fixed. Just as the views, the gait, the tones and the manners of one whom we admire and with whom we associate imperceptibly become impressed upon us, so it is that the mind grows gradually like that with which it is most steadily engaged. Thus it is that ministers must almost necessarily become spiritual from their constant intercourse with spiritual things.

This advantage of the minister is clearly presented by Dr. Shedd: "Not only does the ministerial calling and profession require eminent piety, but it tends to produce it. By his position the clergyman is greatly assisted in attaining to a superior grade of Christian character. For, so far as his active life is concerned, his proper professional business is religious. The daily labor of the clergyman is as truly and exclusively religious as that of the farmer is agricultural or that of the merchant is mercantile. This is highly favorable to spirituality. Ought not one to grow in grace whose daily avocations bring him into communication with the anxious, the thoughtful, the convicted soul, the rejoicing heart, the bereaved, the sick and the dying? Ought not that man to advance in the love and know-

feed others in the green pastures—should they not themselves know well where and what those pastures are? Those who are to lead others in the paths of righteousness should themselves be familiar with those paths. Those who would guard others from straying must surely be themselves well fortified by the strength and the watchfulness that come from the Omnipotent Spirit!

Ambassador is another of those names which the Scriptures give. Does not this name tell of him who bears it as having stood near to God, as being entrusted with messages from heaven, as being clothed with authority from on high? Does it not tell of a loyalty of heart that should make him true to his heavenly Master? And does it not give a place of solemn dignity before all other creatures? The very name shows that his business is one of tremendous importance, even that of bearing terms of peace from the court of infinite justice to men who are in open rebellion. A view is thus opened to us of the responsibility of him who has been honored so highly as to be made an ambassador of God to men. Oh, does he not need, if any creature in this world does, the very spirit and character that prevail around the throne?

Another of the names applied to ministers is that of *stewards*—"stewards of the mysteries of God." They are admitted near to the presence of the Lord our Saviour, have his heart opened to them in confidence, and have his interests committed to their trust. Is not this a high and sacred honor? But they are responsible for the management of the high trust reposed in them. Oh, what manner of persons need they to be!

Still other names which the Scriptures give them are

lights, and *teachers*, and *witnesses*. They are to bear witness of Christ and his great doctrines; and they are, in their own life and character, to be living witnesses of the renewing and sanctifying and exalting power of the gospel of Christ. Can they sustain all these offices and discharge all these duties unless they are very highly imbued with the graces of the Holy Spirit?

It should also be remembered that the great business to which they are appointed is the very same business that occupied so much of the thoughts and of the time of the Son of God while here on earth. He came to preach as well as to redeem by his death. He came to the earth with this as one of his purposes. His heart was set upon it. Behold the zeal which he manifested concerning it: "And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils." What, then! the true preacher is a co-worker with Jesus? We have divine warrant for the assumption. It was in the apostle's mind when he said, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." What dignity does this give to the ministerial office! With what sacredness should it be regarded! Since preachers are represented as standing by the side of Christ in this great field of work, oh how holy they should be! How assiduously they should cultivate the very same mind that was in him!

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trusted to him requires that he should ever be actuated by the highest spiritual motives. The pressure of responsibility calls upon him to become more and more holy. Every conceivable motive urges him—urges him constantly—upward and onward to a fuller experience of the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost.

3. *His sense of the importance of consistency must act as a peculiarly healthful restraint upon the pastor.* He is conscious that in consequence of his solemn ordination vows it becometh him to be eminently holy; that far more is expected of him than of other men; that he is an ambassador for God, a minister of the Lord Jesus and a pastor of a portion of the redeemed flock; that he, with other ministers of the gospel, is "made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men;" and that because of his sacred profession his failings or crimes would do unspeakable harm to religion. All these considerations are like a hedge around him. He cannot break through them without a struggle, without shame and without doing sore violence to his conscience. The restraint may sometimes seem a painful one, and perhaps for the moment he would wish it removed, but it is most salutary in the end. Many a time the consciousness of what he is keeps back the minister from indulgences that would injure his soul and grieve his Saviour. Many a time it constrains him to discharge duties from which he would otherwise be tempted to shrink. Many a time it impels him forward toward higher attainments in grace and greater conformity to the pattern of his divine Lord.

4. *The mind of the minister is constantly engaged on holy things, and it is almost inevitable that it should become more and more spiritual.* His daily study pertains to the word of God, the nature of Christ, the

him who holds the sacred office. He should also improve them to the uttermost. His piety should be of a more elevated type than that of other Christians, because he has many things to help him upward which they have not. He will be unfaithful to his God, to his office and to himself if he does not lay these things to heart and derive from them their fullest benefits.

1. From the nature of their office and studies *ministers must have the clearest knowledge of the way in which eminent piety may be reached*. This very thing is the great study of their lives. It is at once their duty and their privilege to know as fully as men can know what are the most important means of grace, what are the advantages of devoted piety, how the Spirit ordinarily sanctifies the hearts of men, and how great is the weight of the motives urging on to godliness. God's ordained method of reaching that desirable end lies plainly before them, so that they cannot well mistake or wander from it. This knowledge is always fresh with them, because the duties of their office require that it should be constantly in their thoughts. Indeed, the subject can never escape from their notice, but presses home upon them with all its weight in everything they do.

2. *The pastor has every possible motive for cultivating the graces of the Spirit*. He is urged forward to it by his love to Jesus and desire for the glory of God, by pity for poor dying souls, by anxiety for his own happiness and by all his affection for the Church of Christ, especially for his own particular branch of it. He has all the motives of ordinary Christians for seeking after devoted godliness, but he has also peculiar motives of his own. His personal reputation is at stake. With him success in life's calling depends upon the measure of his sanctity. Fidelity to the charge en-

(b) THE GREATNESS OF THE WORK TO WHICH HE IS CALLED.

This demands of the pastor most thorough consecration of heart and life. There is no other work so sacred, so momentous, so identified with the highest interests of the world, so dear to the heart of God. What, then, should those men be to whom this work has been entrusted?

God has called them, and sent them to speak to their fellow-men in his name. He has laid the obligation on them to take his messages as they are found written out in the Holy Oracles, and proclaim them aloud to the whole world. Their business is to lay open before men the very heart of the infinite Jehovah. They are to explain the communications which God sends, to deliver his instructions, his threatenings, his promises, his warnings and his grand motives. To these things they are to awaken attention. They are to keep them before men, and to press them home with all the urgency that fellow-feeling and sympathy can arouse.

Ministers are the chief earthly instruments in the hands of God for saving their fellow-men. By preaching he has ordained that the gospel is to be brought home and applied. And this preaching he has made the great business of all his ministerial servants. Hence, in a most important sense, he has constituted them his agents for the rescuing of sinners from their lost estate. Though men themselves, they have been sent to grasp their fellow-men and hold them back from going down into the pit. They are appointed to go and stop the lost rushing rapidly on the way to perdition. The high commission has been given them to gather in

souls, that they may be redeemed and treasured up for the blessed mansions of Jesus.

Coming, then, in the name of the Lord and delivering the message which he has put in their mouths, it cannot be but that their words shall have a most serious influence for weal or for woe upon those to whom they are delivered. This was felt by the apostle when, as a preacher, he exclaimed, "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish; for to the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" Is it any wonder that he should thus cry out, "And who is sufficient for these things?" Each proclamation of the gospel by the minister either leads souls toward life immortal or sends them downward toward a deeper hell. It softens hearts or it hardens them. It brings men upward toward Jesus, or it will justify God in consigning them to the regions of deepest woe. Is it not, then, an awful thing to preach? Who shall attempt to do it until his heart is bathed in the atmosphere and the blood of Calvary?

In a certain and most momentous sense ministers are appointed to be mediators between God and their perishing fellow-men. They are to plead with God that he would be reconciled with men. So pleaded that faithful minister the apostle Paul as he said, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." The old prophetic obligation still rests upon them: "Æt the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord!" Thus are they to stand before God on behalf of men. But they

Slothfulness is one of the besetting sins of this office, and that because of the habits of seclusion and the possibility of postponing duties, and because there is very often no other pressing impulse than the voice of conscience. These are some of the peculiar dangers to which the minister is exposed, and they should be very carefully studied, especially in the light of their enormity when yielded to by him who is an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

5. *The pastor has no counselor whom he ordinarily likes to consult about his own soul.* Other persons have their spiritual guide, and they may be greatly benefited by unburdening their hearts to him and seeking his advice in their inward struggles. But he has no one, in fact, who stands related to him as a friend and adviser in sacred things. It is not supposed that he needs such assistance. There is a sort of impression that his attainments in divine things are, or ought to be, so high that it would be an unworthy exposure for him to condescend to seek the aid of others. And so, neither asking nor being offered the assistance of any earthly minister, his sins may remain covered, his spiritual sores fester, and if great grace is not granted him he may become hard and insensible and slide very far from the spirit he should possess and manifest.

HELPS TO THE PIETY OF THE PASTOR.

Having spoken of the hinderances, we would now enumerate some of the helps, to a deeper spirituality which this office furnishes. It carries with it certain advantages for the promotion of personal piety—advantages which are not possessed by any other calling in life. These should receive the closest attention by

take it for granted that all is well with his own soul, without giving that question the constant attention which its awful importance demands. He has a sort of habitual impression that that question is of course settled, and so he may hardly ever think of his own spiritual state. It is not a matter of pressing daily duty with him to make his calling and election sure. His incessant ministering to other makes the impression of his personal safety the more settled, and thus he comes to neglect his own salvation; at least there is very great danger that he will so neglect it. This was not the way with the great apostle, though he had so many evidences of his acceptance. His anxious course he thus describes: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The great danger here is that if the minister should be self-deceived he might go on and on and never awake to the realization of his deplorable condition.

4. *There are special temptations to which, from its peculiar nature, the ministerial office is exposed.* It is a sacred office, and that very thing draws after it certain dangers that should be candidly admitted. Very often the peril of the pastor is to be unfaithful in delivering the whole counsel of God for fear of awakening the enmity of his hearers. Envy of others who are supposed to have a superior place or success is a strong temptation in the way of many. Some are liable to be led away by spiritual pride, and then to become impatient of opposition, and even to show a domineering spirit that is most offensive. Even the great confidence reposed in the minister, and the love with which he is cherished, give promise of an impunity in yielding that makes certain temptations far more formidable.

are especially to plead with men that they would be reconciled unto God. Perpetually their cry to the perishing is to be, "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Their awful position is that of standing between dying men and the living God, who is just, holy, and yet forgiving. With the one they are to plead the infinite merits of Christ; to the other they must point out the blood, the blood that cleanseth from all sins. Their messages are most solemn as coming from the lips of God. They are awfully solemn, since men must heed them or go down into everlasting burnings. Oh, how much they need the Holy Spirit every moment!

They are leaders in the great sacramental host. That host of the living God, blood-washed and called to the highest destiny, is increasing in numbers every day. It is gathering men from every clime, and is bound together by the most sacred of ties. The object before it is to rescue this world from the dominion of Satan and to crown Christ its King. This is the grand enterprise of the world, to which everything else must be subordinate and must contribute. There are in it posts of toil and responsibility for private Christians, but ministers are the heaven-ordained leaders. Christ is the Head, and from him come the authority and the power, but they are the responsible captains. What manner of men must they be? Theirs is the post of danger and responsibility, but it is the post of honor too. How blessed those who have grace to be faithful!

The work of the minister is the grandest and most important work in the world. The estimation in which God holds it—God, before whom all the callings of men are open—may be learned from the glowing words of

the apostle: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they believe without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" Thus does God regard it, and thus especially should it be looked upon by those who are placed in it. The following language in reference to it is not too strong: "What an office is that of the minister! The world cannot show such another work. It is the *great*, the *greatest*, in which a man can be engaged. Moses's leading forth the tribes from Egypt, and Joshua's conducting them into Canaan, sink into insignificance when compared with it. Time begins and time will end all other works in which a man can be engaged, but eternity alone is the boundary and endurance of this. All others are the works of man; this is pre-eminently the work of God. A never-dying God is his employer, never-dying souls his employ—on them and in them to undo all that Satan and sin have effected, renew them after the image of Christ, and bring them back to God and his glory. To teach the philosophy of human redemption, the science of God's great salvation, the stupendous plan of divine mercy, and to bring back the sinner from the brink of perdition to the paradise of heaven; to prophesy to the dry bones that they live; to open the eyes of the blind, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; to quicken to a new life the dead in trespasses and in sins; to awaken the dreamy sleeper and to convert the sinner,—this is the paramount design of the gospel ministry. To effect this, how absolutely necessary the presence of God!"

to be with him that he has no heart in a work which is most solemn in its issues. How careful should he be lest in dealing so constantly with other souls he should come to neglect his own!

2. The pastor must be watchful, or soon he will find that *all his studying of the Bible is intended for others*. The word of God is the great instrument with which he is to work, and in that light simply he will soon find himself regarding it and making it familiar. How to make it plain to others and how to interest them in it may soon become the ever-present question with him. And so much absorbed does he become with this that he does not search it for the blessings with which it might enrich his own soul. Bishop Simpson has well portrayed this danger: "The very word of God that the minister studies may do him less good than it does the non-professional reader. Why is this? I take my Bible; my heart is sad and I seek some precious promise. I bend over the page; my heart leans for a moment on that precious passage: 'Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself,' and just as the heart is beginning to grasp the sweetness and the fitness of the passage there springs up the thought, 'That will be a fine passage to unfold to my congregation,' and ere I am aware I am preparing a sermon for my people, instead of resting my soul upon the riches of the promise." Many a minister while feeding others has thus starved himself.

3. Because he holds the ministerial office and has devoted his life to divine things, *the pastor is liable to*

more resolved in my Christian calling?" is a question he should very thoughtfully ask. The minister cannot do without this preaching to himself, for ordinarily he has no other to preach to him, and his soul will suffer without this culture.

HINDERANCES IN THE WAY OF MINISTERIAL PIETY.

There are certain things which are in danger of impeding the progress of the clergyman in holiness. There are temptations which are peculiar to him and which arise from the nature of his office. His very advantages and means of usefulness sometimes become a snare when they are not properly guarded. Sometimes when he appears to be the strongest he needs to be especially watchful. These dangers should be carefully studied, for they are insidious, and it is only when they are clearly seen that they lose their power. It is well that a few of them should be here exposed.

1. The minister is in danger of imperceptibly falling into the *habit of looking upon spiritual things simply as a profession*. It is his business to work for the salvation of souls; he is called to interpret the Bible as a profession; he goes to visit the sick officially; he calls upon men to glorify God because it is his duty to do so; and he gradually falls into all these duties as a mere habit. He is in danger of coming to look upon them simply as a profession, and not as matters involving everlasting interests. If he is not careful he will soon find himself performing them in a merely perfunctory manner. The great interests which he handles become so familiar that they may excite within him scarcely any feeling. This tendency is seen in all the professions. And there is great cause for the minister to be alarmed lest it comes

The more we reflect upon it the more we must feel that we have neither thoughts to imagine nor words to express its greatness. It is not possible for us to overestimate its importance or the importance of the deepest piety in those who are called to its sacred duties.

This solemn grandeur of his work should be kept before every pastor, younger or older, to animate him in a calling which has its many trials. It should ever be in his mind to make him faithful in duties from which the flesh naturally shrinks. He should never forget it, that it may especially be an ever-present motive to lead him to a most thorough consecration of his whole being to the cause of the Master.

(c) THE CONVERSION OF SOULS AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH DEPEND ON THE DEGREE OF THE PASTOR'S PIETY.

This is saying much, but due reflection will make it appear that it is no exaggeration. We have an illustrious scriptural example of it in the case of Barnabas. The noble record of him is, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord"—"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith;" and hence "much people was added unto the Lord." May we not believe that much people will always be added unto the Lord under the ministry of men of such character?

As is the love of Christ in his own soul, so will be the minister's zeal for the perishing souls of those committed to his care; so will he long for the glory of Christ; and so will he pray and work and strive in his heavenly calling; and so ordinarily will be his success in that calling. There is nothing else in this wide world that can properly constrain him to put forth the efforts

that are needed. It was this which the apostle Paul said constrained him, and so it must be with every one who would follow in the successful course of the apostle. All other motives will soon lose their impelling energy, but this will grow stronger and stronger. It will find means for removing or overcoming obstacles, and still hold its onward course. Hence, in the quiet seclusion of his closet, when the pastor's heart is warming through communion with God, there is the best possible preparation going on for the conversion of souls.

Then the piety of the church will generally rise about as high as that of its minister. A cold, worldly-minded pastor is sure to have a cold church. A living pastor will have a church in which life and joy and prayer will abound. How can it be otherwise, since his ministrations permeate the whole life of the body? He is the appointed agent for edifying the people of God in their most holy faith, and their spirituality cannot be expected to rise higher than his. There doubtless are exceptions, but the general rule is, that the measure of devotedness in any particular church may be gauged by that of the pastor's heart. Should he rest satisfied while there is any coldness there?

And who can tell how much depends on the life and prosperity of the Church? In it are involved the honor of God, the comfort of believers, the destiny of souls, the spread of the gospel, the purity of those who are the appointed lights of the world, and the interests that awaken all heaven and for which the Lord of glory died. How God regards the state of the Church may be seen in those great prophetic messages to the seven churches of Asia which were appointed beacons for all ages. The condition of the Church which the Lord Jesus redeemed with his own most precious blood must

with them into all their troubles for sin and into all their joys for deliverance through Christ.

This habit will without doubt intensify the earnestness of one's preaching. It must quicken the sensitivities, and awaken to keenness of thought about the great spiritual wants of the soul. Then in the proclamation of the gospel the pastor will have all the ardor that can be produced by the serious thought that his own interests are at stake. He cannot be indifferent with the conviction pressing upon him that life or death is the issue—he cannot be cold and formal.

The thought is well presented by the devout Leighton: "It is a cold, lifeless thing to speak of spiritual things upon mere report; but they that speak of them as their own, as having share and interest in them, and some experience of their sweetness, their discourse of them is enlivened by firm belief and an ardent affection; they cannot mention them but their hearts are straight taken with such gladness as they are forced to vent in praises." Then the preacher must preach in sympathy with the people, and his sighs and his tears and his joys mingle with theirs.

The pastor should look upon this rule of preaching himself in all his sermons as one of very great moment. It is important for his own sake, it is important for his people's sake, that he should preach every sermon to himself as one of the chief auditors. He should do this even when he is addressing the impatient, for their hearts and his are by nature alike, and the gulf from which he would draw them is the gulf from which he has only narrowly escaped himself. After preaching, the sermon should rest deeply in his own thoughts, and its influence upon his spiritual life be anxiously looked for. "In what am I better or

comings? What are my besetting sins? What are the deficiencies in my Christian character? What hindrances do I find to my progress in grace? To what higher degrees of spirituality am I desirous of attaining? What more good might I do in the kingdom? These and similar questions to self would give far more directness of aim to his discourses. He may depend on it that his own wants and those of his people are very similar. Then, if his discourses arise out of his own experience, and are shaped so as to meet his own wants, they will assuredly also be applicable to the great body of his Christian people.

The soul of the minister will almost necessarily grow in grace under such a process. Its own great interests will not be neglected through exclusive care for others; its prevailing maladies will be detected; it will be kept alive, and the proper spiritual nourishment will be given it. When every sermon is faithfully brought home to the preacher's own heart, he must advance in purity, in vigor, in knowledge and in every other grace. Perhaps not perceptibly, but very surely, will he make progress from year to year.

Nothing could have a better effect in preserving from a perfunctory mode of preaching than this self-application of the sermon. As in every other profession, the minister is in danger here. To see a man preaching as a mere thing of rote is a very sad sight indeed. There is nothing more heartless or repulsive. It is scarcely possible for such preaching to do any good or not to disgust. But when the preacher keeps his own case vividly before him in what he is saying, then he must be interested, and consequently interest others. Then he appears not as one above them. He is not patronizing, but he is one with his audience, and enters

be very near and dear to his heart. And is it true, most solemnly true, that the measure of that Church's godliness depends upon that of the pastor's heart? Then his heart is the place in which must begin a revival in the Church. There is the place from which the Church's devotedness to God must begin to rise into a higher and higher sphere. One minister with his heart properly alive, properly sprinkled with atoning blood, properly consecrated by the Holy Spirit, must be a great blessing in the whole community. A few such in the bounds of the Church would soon change its whole aspect—yea, would soon affect the moral tone of the whole country. Blessings for thousands are impending when the minister is on his knees pleading for more and more grace.

(d) THE REAL POWER OF THE PASTOR IS IN HIS EARNEST GODLINESS.

This is his power with God; it is also his power with men. Though other branches of preparation are absolutely necessary, yet this it is which above everything else will make him an able workman. His calling is such that his heart is needed in it at every point. It is the heart alone, and the heart glowing with love to God, that can give him strength and energy and perseverance and success. With it he will be irresistible, without it his ministerial life will be a failure.

Where there is such an unction of the Holy Ghost it will, as a matter of course, impart a high and holy character; and a character without a spot and beyond suspicion must ever be the right arm of a minister's efficiency. It is in fact indispensable to his real efficiency. In this the calling of the pastor is different from most other callings amongst men. Worldly wis-

dom or professional skill or artistic proficiency may give a high degree of success in these callings without any aid whatever from moral or religious character. But not so with the minister. Christian integrity is that which must penetrate and give tone to all that he does. What skill is to the artist, what logical acumen is to the lawyer, what far-seeing wisdom is to the statesman, that is reliable probity to him. It is the tower of his strength among men. It is his most attractive ornament. Rob him of that, and he becomes the most despised of mankind; give it to him in its richness, and no man is more honored and beloved.

And the heart is the true source of such exalted character. Where there is devoted godliness in the heart it will be seen in the life. It cannot be hid. It is not ostentatious, but it must necessarily work itself out into the light of day. Moreover, it cannot be counterfeited. If the genuine work is not within, no efforts to imitate it will be successful. But where it really is, life, lips, acts will all reveal it, even when it is not so intended. The heart which is elevated by communion with Christ will show itself on the countenance and in the daily intercourse with men. Hence, whatever character we would bear with our fellow-men we must attain to in the depths of our own hearts. Whatever standing we would maintain before the world we must first reach in our secret intercourse with God.

Then devoted piety will almost inevitably disarm opposition, and even envy itself. There is in it such a charm of humility that enmity cannot stand in its presence. It has a gentleness of love that could not be hated. As a matter of fact, it may be generally seen that the men who live nearest to God are the ones who

ing, and let it not be intermitted for any trivial consideration. Let your study of the word be profound, so as to get down to its very marrow and sweetness. Let your meditations be constant, so that all the day long you may have some Scripture before the mind. Let it be with you as his biographer says of McCheyne, that "he fed on the word, not in order to prepare himself for his people, but for personal edification. To do so was a fundamental rule with him." And let all this devotional study of the word be mingled with prayer, that the same Spirit who inspired it would give it life and power in its effects upon your own soul.

(d) THE PASTOR SHOULD CULTIVATE HIS PIETY BY
PREACHING TO HIMSELF.

"Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" is the scriptural rebuke for neglecting this duty. When the preacher delivers the message of God, he should never separate himself from his audience as if he were not addressed. He needs the communications of grace just as much as his congregation does. His own experience of wants, of sins, of trials and of blessings should be wrought into his discourses. His own faults should be kept in view, and rebuked as sharply as those of his audience. Diligently should he listen for the voice of God as addressed to his own particular case, and then reiterate that voice from the sacred desk. This rule, given by another, should ever be his guide: "In your preparations for the pulpit endeavor to derive from the subject on which you are about to preach that spiritual benefit you wish your hearers to receive."

It is well for the minister to study his own particular wants in every sermon that he preaches. He should question himself, What are my most grievous short-

heart. The soul will generally become assimilated to Him whose inspired utterances are kept constantly and impressively before it. We shall grow holy by the adoring contemplation of Him who is holiness itself. "But we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The word is pure, and its effect is always to purify. We do not sufficiently appreciate the supernatural influence of the Scriptures in sanctifying those who are kept under their influence. Wisdom worthy of profound reflection is contained in the remarks of Dr. Archibald Alexander on this point: "There is something wonderful in the power which the word of God possesses over the consciences of men. To those who never read or heard it this fact must be unknown, but it is manifest to those who are conversant with the sacred volume or who are in the habit of hearing it expounded. Why should this book above all others have the power of penetrating, and, as it were, searching the inmost recesses of the soul, and showing to a man the multitude and enormity of the evils of his heart and life? This may by some be attributed to early education, but I believe that if the experiment could be fairly tried, it would be found that men who have never been brought up with any sentiment of reverence for the Bible would experience its power over the conscience. "The entrance of thy words giveth light.""

To every pastor, then, would we say, Study the Bible with constant and close self-application. Make its chapters and verses familiar, not merely by the effort to gain an intellectual understanding of them, but by the blessed comfort you have found from them in your own souls. Adopt some rule of systematic devotional read-

have the least annoyance from opposition. The good man will have but few adversaries, excepting among such as were adversaries to Him who was goodness incarnate. Because piety disarms opposition it must give power as well as peace to him who is most deeply imbued with its spirit.

Moreover, to have the heart true to God and true to men through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit is the only way to obtain that abiding confidence from men which is so essential to the gospel minister. That confidence cannot be retained unless it has its source in a deep fountain of truth within. But that will secure it. Who can doubt the reliability of him who evidently lives under the power of heavenly motives? And such confidence is an armory of power for the minister. Much as it is needed in most earthly callings, in none of them is it so important as in his. When men have reason to rely upon him fully, his motives will be rightly construed, even when they cannot all be seen, and all his efforts in the gospel cause will have double weight. He will then have an influence among his fellow-men that will itself be a very great power. There are men whose reputation for high integrity makes them giants—moral giants—for good in the world. For this reason, even if for none better, should that highest of integrity, the integrity of true godliness, be assiduously sought after. It will give such weight to the minister's words that none of them will be lost. Coming, as they manifestly do, from an honest and earnest heart, they will be received, and weighed, and remembered. It will be seen that he holds communion with God, and so men will be induced to listen to him, as otherwise they would not. The respect which his manifest godliness inspires will compel them to honor

his message. And then his preaching will inevitably be clothed with double power.

That true sanctity which becomes the gospel minister will keep him near to God, the source of all real strength and success. He cannot retain any measure of spirituality unless he walks with God. But from that holy presence he will go out amongst his fellow-men clothed in a might that no human training or talents could give him. Then may his soul beam with a glory like that which irradiated the face of Moses as he came down from Sinai. He would carry with him an indescribable atmosphere of sacredness that would tell effectively on all his ministry. With almost the authority of the Master could he speak. From the source from which he received communications of grace would he also receive communications of power, and as he ministered in the name of the Lord, would the strength of that name go with him, and bring forth results that would be the crown of his rejoicing.

An eminently pious minister will almost inevitably be successful in his blessed work. The pity which he has learned to feel for souls, his unquenchable love for Jesus and his all-absorbing zeal for the glory of God will impart to his working an earnestness that can scarcely fail of success. Clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost, which comes down to him in answer to his effectual fervent prayer, he will be sure of seeing the cause of Christ prospering in his hands. If he be a profound theologian, a ripe scholar or an eloquent speaker, his communion with God will hallow each gift and make it still more effective. If his attainments be of the most ordinary character, still the holy unction that accompanies his efforts will make them tell. This will make up wonderfully for other defects. Yea, it will

in the soul. Not only to the young man, but to all who ask a similar question, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" comes the inspired answer, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Oh how the devout study and personal application of the Scriptures enrich the soul! A simple passage devoutly meditated upon makes the heart better. Then the growth in piety which is produced in this way is not ephemeral or spurious in any sense; it is healthy, and will be permanent in its results. All the books on personal piety that were ever written are not to be compared in wisdom, in authority, or in efficacy with the Bible.

Now, there is special need for the devotional study of the Bible by the pastor. His piety should be of the most elevated type. His own spiritual wants, as well as those of the people to whom he ministers, demand that it should also be progressive—ever rising and expanding as his work becomes more solemn, and nothing will meet these requirements but a piety that is truly scriptural. No type of piety but that which is wrought out from the word of God will do for him whose example is largely to give form and character to the religion of hundreds. Then the more thoroughly the minister studies the Bible for his own edification, the better will he understand how to bring it home to others. And no spirituality but that which the Holy Ghost teaches in his word will rightly equip or steady pastors in their great work for God, for souls and for eternity.

For the minister especially it is very important that his soul be put in direct contact with the word of the Lord. He should get just as near as it is possible to the mind of the Spirit. The very thoughts of that Spirit he should endeavor to think over in his own

(c) PIETY INCREASED BY THE DEVOTIONAL READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Ministers are liable to get into the habit of studying the word of God simply that they may be the better prepared to teach others. It is all important, however, that they should do more than this. They should not read the Bible merely for others, nor simply as a book of science, or history, or geography, or profound wisdom only, but that they may also bring it home and apply it to themselves. The faintest impression that it is not intended for their own personal benefit should never be admitted. Their hearts should be so applied to it that they may themselves be brought nearer to God. They should listen to it that they may hear God's voice addressed to their own souls, and that for themselves they may see his glory beaming upon every page. For their own personal benefit, as if there were no others in the world who needed it, for their spiritual strength and instruction and comfort, they should meditate upon it profoundly every day.

This is a very important duty for every Christian. The word is the great instrument by which the Spirit increases holiness in the hearts of believers. It is by faith in that word that men are ordained to be sanctified. Christ teaches the necessity of the truth when, in his great intercessory prayer, he made sure of its efficacy by the petition, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The Spirit will honor his own truth, and will make it effectual. It is by Christ, the Bread of life, that the soul is to be nourished; and Christ is to be found chiefly in the Scriptures. From the Scriptures come light, and heat, and strength, and impulse, all of which are important elements of true godliness

often accomplish for the minister what no mere earthly advantages could. McCheyne well said: "A heated iron, though blunt, will pierce its way even where a much sharper instrument, if it be cold, cannot penetrate. So if our ministers only be filled with the Spirit, who is like fire, they will pierce into the hardest hearts where the sharpest wits cannot find their way." It was also a saying of his, "A loving man will always accomplish more than a merely learned one." Other of his rich aphorisms were, "It is not great talents that God blesses so much as great likeness to Christ. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

The names of multitudes of pastors could be given which would prove that those who are the most godly are the most highly blest in saving souls and spreading that righteousness of which they are themselves bright examples. Their work is not that which merely dazzles for a moment and then leaves deeper darkness behind it. It is abiding, and sends out great streams of influence for good that will cease neither in time nor in eternity.

It is hoped that these emphatic reiterations of the fact that the pastor's deep piety is his real power will not be looked upon as platitudes. They may possibly be regarded by some who have not had much experience as commonplace truisms not needing mention. They have been repeated so often, and by so many, that here perhaps they may arrest scarcely any attention. But they cannot be thought of too profoundly. They are the words of truth and soberness. No true pastor but will understand their great importance more and more as his experience increases. It cannot be repeated too often, nor made too emphatic, that the pastor's great power is in his vital godliness. Nothing in this wide

world will make up for the want of it. Let experience be heard. This is the testimony of all those who have been the most highly blest in their ministerial work. One such testimony may be given; it is that of one of the princes of Welsh preachers, Christmas Evans: "The pulpit orator falls infinitely too short of answering the desired effect unless the fire within him is kindled by the influence of the Holy Ghost of God, for which he must pray in the name of Jesus, firmly believing in God's promise that he will give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him. This is the mystery of the art of eloquence of the man of God. He must be clothed with the power from on high. Here is the great inward secret." In this work of the ministry, as in everything else pertaining to the gospel, God's great rule is, "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Let no one pass this point by until it has arrested his attention, sunken into his heart and fixed his life-purpose.

(e) DEVOTED PIETY WILL MAKE ALL THE WORK OF THE PASTOR EASY AND PLEASANT.

This is another consideration upon which great stress should be laid. Such piety is unspeakably important, not only for God's glory and the benefit of souls, but also for the pastor's own comfort. It is in this, and not in superior talents or cultivated taste, or in a pleasant charge or attractive social relations, that his real enjoyment is to be found.

Without that warm love to God and his work the ministry must prove but a life of drudgery and hypocrisy. The mistaken man who holds it must constantly assume an interest in spiritual things which he does not feel. He must speak with an emotion which he has to force.

it all a scene of worship and make this life but the commencement of heaven. Oh it would be a most blessed thing for every pastor to make sacred this morning hour of prayer! Thoughtfully has one written of it: "Prayer, prayer, prayer, the first, second and third elements of the Christian life, should open, prolong and conclude each day. The first act of the soul in early morning should be a draught at the heavenly fountain. It will sweeten the taste for the day. If you can have but ten minutes with God at that fresh, tranquil and tender season, make sure of those minutes. They are of more value than much fine gold. But if you tarry long so sweetly at the throne, you will come out of the closet as the high priest of Israel came from the awful ministry at the altar of incense, suffused all over with the heavenly fragrance of that communion."

This habit, once formed, will become an invaluable element of the pastor's strength. It may require some effort and some self-denial at first, but soon it will grow easy and prove that hour the most attractive of all the hours of the day. It will be looked forward to as the time of sweet refreshment of the soul. When one has learned to relish this hour of devotion he has acquired a great element of power in his ministerial work. The practice cannot be recommended too strongly. We beg that the recommendation be not looked upon as visionary or trivial. Let time be given for communion with God before the ordinary duties of the day are entered upon. The pastor with a work for eternity staring him in the face cannot afford to do without anything that would help him—certainly not without such a grand agency of spiritual power as this.

the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." The testimony of that most godly man, Philip Henry, speaking of one of his studying days, was, "I forgot, when I began, explicitly and expressly to crave help from God, and the chariot-wheels drove accordingly. Lord, forgive my omission, and keep me in the way of duty!" What higher example and encouragement could we have for this practice?

It is recommended that the morning hour be set apart for devotion, because that hour can more generally be commanded, and because the mind is then clearer and better fitted for communion with God. Most pastors could so arrange their daily duties as to have that hour statedly to themselves. Then they would not be interrupted by any of the ordinary claims of the day; the mind would be refreshed and calm, and the world would not often intrude. It could easily be an hour kept sacred to God and the soul and the profound interests of eternity.

The influence of this morning hour of undisturbed fellowship with God would be felt all the day. Not simply would its prayers be answered, but a tone of spirituality would spring out from it and pervade all. The presence of Christ would be felt in every hour and every act, and this would save from innumerable mistakes and perplexities. A blessed restraint would be imposed from the remembrance of the hour when the heart burned with love, and from the anticipation of again meeting with Christ in the sweet morning devotions. An elevated tone of Christian life would thus be imparted to the whole day. Duty would be turned into pleasure, trials would be moderated and every true enjoyment would be rendered doubly sweet. The consciousness that the day was devoted to God would keep

He must even strive to maintain a character that is not natural to him. It is a humiliating thing to be such a minister as this. It is to toil on and on in a work in which there is no heart and no pleasure, and scarcely any good to be expected.

All other motives than the constraining love of Christ in the heart soon lose their influence. There are no doubt other incentives, such as ambition, love of learning and desire for social influence, that may carry forward a minister for a while with apparent pleasure. But they will not stand the wear and tear of years of drudgery and trial. If the pastor who is chiefly actuated by these is successful, they will soon satiate; if he is not as successful as he expected to be, he becomes discouraged and disgusted with his office. If there is nothing more than these, the ministry soon becomes a miserable failure.

But when the love of Christ reigns in the heart supremely, it gives an impulse to the whole life that is ever steady and joyous. The wear and tear of toiling years will not wear it out. Sometimes there may appear only little success, but it has a faith that lays hold of the promises and is not discouraged. Through prosperity or adversity, among friends or enemies, in failing or continuing health, it moves steadily forward, impelled by an inward affection that cannot be quenched. Instead of years and trials wearing it out, it only grows stronger and stronger with the lapse of time. It constantly intensifies as more and more is seen of the love of Christ and the value of souls.

When earnest godliness reigns within it turns the whole life of the minister into a work of love. Souls then seem so precious that too much cannot be done to save them. Christ is so dear that everything which can

possibly be contrived for his glory is a delight. There can be no rest unless something be undertaken for him every hour. Even hard duties then become a pleasure; or, rather, there are no hard duties, for supreme love to Christ makes duty and pleasure to be identical.

Thus it is that by supplying the holiest of motives, by giving a keen perception of what should be done, by quickening the faculties, and by imparting a lively sense of the Holy Spirit's aid, devoted godliness makes all the work of the sacred office easy and prosperous.

In fact, the calling of the pastor is the happiest and most noble calling in the world when his piety is of this elevated character. There may be apparent drawbacks to his comfort arising from poverty, or opposition of unreasonable men, or want of honor from the world, but all is more than made up by his hidden springs of spiritual joy. The minister who is imbued with a heavenly unction is blest with the honor that cometh from God, and with the assurance of the divine friendship. Good men will do him reverence, for they are gifted with the same spiritual instinct. The approbation of conscience will be to him a perpetual feast. He may see the appalling evils of sin wherever he turns, but he will have the indescribable pleasure of helping to remove or alleviate those evils. When the same mind is in him that was in Christ Jesus, then his life-work will consist in doing that which he loves best—that which he knows will be for the glory of his best Beloved, his heavenly Friend. His work on earth will prove the perpetual delight of laying up treasure in heaven. In reality, his life on earth will be but the beginning of his heavenly happiness. And all ministerial biography shows that the men who have been the most holy have also been the most happy in their work. When, like

the inquiring, or to preach a sermon that will be the savor of life unto life or of death unto death to some soul; or to decide questions of duty in critical emergencies; or he may have opportunities of influencing by words fitly spoken, or of setting an example that will help souls forward on the way of life. Every day he lives his soul may make progress in grace and in the experience of heavenly love. Day by day the pastor is to stand as an intercessor before the throne of grace, bearing the names of the flock committed to his charge. How can a pastor enter upon any day of such solemn responsibility without making sure of divine help during every moment?

The practice of spending the first hour of the day in secret prayer is recommended by the highest example. It is said of one of our most eminent statesmen, at a time when most responsible duties to the country rested on him, that his morning hour was always spent in imploring the help of the great Ruler of the nations. A distinguished judge acknowledged his success in his profession as owing to the hour he daily spent with God. General Havelock, though burdened with the care of the army during the terrible mutiny in India, managed to keep sacred for prayer a long time in the morning of each day. Other honored names might be added, as those of Bacon, and the great astronomer Kepler, and the historian De Thou, of whom it is related that every morning "he implored God in private to purify his heart, to banish from it hatred and flattery, to enlighten his mind, and to make known to him the truth which so many passions and conflicting interests had almost buried." This also was the custom of one guided by the Divine Spirit, for David's resolution was, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in

would have upon the life! How could the direction of Christ be better obeyed, or the resulting blessing more certainly secured? "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly!" Let the first hour of the day, then, before food, before family, before daily avocations, be made sacred to the Lord.

In the life and work of the minister especially it is all important that there should be specific and long periods of devotion. He should observe the rule to be in the spirit of prayer always, but there should be a definite and considerable time for it daily. He should have such a period every day, when the world would be resolutely excluded, when the mind would dwell long and intently on spiritual things, when the divine word would be read and applied to self very deliberately, when the soul would be kept in prolonged communion with God, when the realities of the spiritual and eternal would be made more impressive, and when the mind might be toned up to a braver grappling with the trials and the duties of life.

The importance of this morning hour of communion with God will be seen when the responsibility of the minister's office is considered. He has a great work to do, and every day which he spends is so much taken from the aggregate of time given him for that work. He never commences a day that will not bring him something in which he will need divine guidance. Every day with him has its own work—a work to which he was never called before, and will never be called again. During any day upon which he enters he may be sorely tempted, or he may be called to the awful duty of ministering to persons nigh unto death, or to counsel

Rutherford, they have lived under the influence of a constant unction from on high, they have also breathed the very blessedness of the upper sanctuary. The more devoted, the more joyous they have been. The whole life of such eminently pious ministers is a joy. To make the attainment of this ministerial happiness an object of pursuit is not unscriptural, for even Christ charged his disciples: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

(f) THE PASTOR IS APPOINTED TO BE A LIVING EXAMPLE OF THE GOSPEL WHICH HE PREACHES.

This places the necessity of his being an eminently godly man in a very strong light. The solemn charge is imposed upon him of demonstrating by his daily walk and conversation the truth and the power of the doctrines of the gospel. From this responsibility no possible argument will release him. The divine law which has been laid down for his guidance is this: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?); not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must *have a good report* of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." The reputation for holiness which the pastor is to sustain is here described with some minuteness, that there may be no mistake.

This appointment of the minister to teach by example

must be carefully studied. All his other learning will be in vain without it. All other preparation for his office will be lost if this does not receive the chief attention. Of ministers emphatically it may be said that they are Christ's living epistles sent out into the world in order that men might read in them the transforming efficacy of his gospel. To them especially is the direction of Christ given: "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." To pastors the particular charge is given that they strengthen the Church by their own example: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, *but being examples* to the flock." And this example is to be set by them in all the Christian graces: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example for the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." In this way they are to illustrate all kinds of good works and to disarm all opposition: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." There is no law of the whole pastoral office that is more fully and explicitly enjoined than this.

Those who hold this office are not only to describe to men the effects of religion upon the life, but they are also to show them in their own practice. This is something that can be better understood and will be more deeply felt. Holiness of life, the pure and noble character that is reached by daily communion with God, when

praying will make the whole work of the minister safe and happy. He will then be preparing for the pulpit and other duties every day and hour. Quaintly has it been said, "They who have been made *fishers* of men mind their business both when they are *fishang* and when they are mending their nets." In everything should the minister wrestle in prayer, because God is so willing to hear and to help him, because it is so safe to rely always on the infinite understanding and infinite power, and because this carrying every act before the throne will turn the whole life into an unbroken service of God.

(b) PIETY TO BE CULTIVATED BY A MORNING HOUR
OF DEVOTION.

In all the counsels which we purpose giving for the guidance of the pastor we want to be as specific as possible. We do not intend to rest in mere general observations, which might be important, but would not lead to the practical results we desire. Our suggestion now is, that the pastor set apart the first hour of every day for uninterrupted communion with God. We would have the first and best of the minister's time rigidly devoted to the divine service. Most pastors, by a little arrangement of duties and by a little self-denial, could carry out this important rule. Those with whom it would be absolutely impossible might set apart some other hour of the day, but the first hour is the best. We will not dwell on the other benefits that would accrue, such as the economizing of time and the establishing of regular habits, but we would say that the spiritual benefits could scarcely be exaggerated. A whole morning hour spent in reading the word of God, in prayer and in spiritual meditation, what an influence it

of grace, but he more. He has to do with such purely spiritual things that nothing but the Spirit can qualify him for his exalted work. In the cause committed to him such tremendous interests are involved that he needs constant guidance from on high. Of himself how can he reach such hard and impenitent hearts as he has to do with? His vocation requires him to stand so near to God that he must have the purifying of the Holy Spirit for that awful presence. It is his to intercede for others as well as to pray for himself, and how can he do that unless he has the aid of that Intercessor who inspires groanings that cannot be uttered? Eminent is he to be a temple of the Holy Ghost; oh how holy, how holy doth it become him to be! Even Christ, the divine Shepherd, spent whole nights in prayer; how much more do those who are mere men, though in the most sacred office, need to tarry long, long in that exercise! Among other ends he had in view in praying so often, and in causing that fact to be recorded, did he not intend to set an example to his under-shepherds in all time? Ah, prayer should be their daily breath. Emphatically should it be true of them that they "pray always."

Every one of their ministerial acts—yes, all that they do—should be consecrated by prayer. They are liable to err and make grievous mistakes; how can they be safe without the guidance of the Spirit? All that they do and say may be so momentous in its results that they should not rely upon their own understanding, but hold constant fellowship with God. It was this dwelling with God that made Whitefield so great. "So close was his communion with God before preaching that it was said he used to come down to the people 'as if there were a rainbow about his head.'" Constant

seen in the minister, will convince men of the truth and power of the gospel as nothing else short of God's omnipotent Spirit could do. Men form their opinions of Christianity not so much from what they read in the book of God as from what they read in the book of the lives of its professors. When this book is fair and beautiful, they will be attracted; when it is blurred, they will be driven away. Example will break down opposition and produce conviction when nothing else will. An eminent man of God has said, "Be assured of this, brethren, there is no preaching like the preaching of ministerial sanctity." Hooker used to say that "the life of a pious clergyman is visible rhetoric;" and Herbert, that "the virtuous life of a clergyman is the most powerful eloquence." And what will give this sanctity of life but the unction from on high? What but the possession of the very mind of Christ will so purify and ennoble the life as to make it a fit example to illustrate the gospel and attract to the cross? The life of the pastor should be one of such heavenly-mindedness that he would not only bear witness of Christ, but also be a living witness to him; that his example would give a high tone to the piety of the Church; that, in boldness, with the devoted Paul he could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

(g) EMINENT PIETY IS EXPECTED OF THE PASTOR.

Hence he cannot be too diligent in its cultivation. It is true that very often there is too much expected of him. He is but man, and the struggle against sin and imperfections must constantly be carried on in him as well as in other men. And sometimes he is most unjustly, even cruelly, criticised. Enemies do this be-

cause, through him, they wish to injure the cause; friends do it from want of thought or want of knowledge. His motives cannot be all seen. As a public man he must act, and his reasons for acting are not always understood. Many things he must do which are encompassed with difficulties, and these difficulties alone are looked at and exaggerated, and he is censured for them, whilst everything else is overlooked.

At the same time, it is true that high-toned principle and consistency are expected of him. And it is right that they should. Everything in the heart-experience which he is supposed to have passed through, in the profession which he has made, in the sacred office to which he is called, in the superior advantages for sanctity which he has had, and in the holy influences which he is appointed to disseminate,—all these justify the expectation that he will be a man of more than ordinary godliness. If he comes short of that expectation he is disgraced. What cowardice would be to a soldier, what weakness would be to an athlete, what dishonesty would be to a steward, that will a low degree of piety be to him. It will be to his dishonor, and the world will see it and know it, and hold him in corresponding disdain. No man is more highly honored than a devotedly consistent minister; none is more despised than he who is faithless and inconsistent.

It is to be sorely lamented that occasionally there are men to be found in this office who have very little indeed, if any, of its spirit. Here is one of an irascible temperament who is constantly embroiling himself and his church in the most lamentable strifes. Here is another who is unstable, ever devising, trying and abandoning projects, so as to forfeit all confidence. Here is

istry, and success attended upon it now but seldom witnessed. And what was the cause of the difference? They *prayed* more than we do. If we would prevail and have power with men, we must first prevail and have power with God. It was on his knees that Jacob became a prince, and if we would become princes we must be oftener and more importunate upon our knees." Dr. Griffin remarked of a young man, a pupil of his who had just commenced preaching, "He has an active mind and superior talents. The only question I have about him is, whether he will pray down the Holy Spirit while he preaches." The probability of any minister's success is in the question, "*Will he pray down the Holy Spirit?*" Very valuable was the dying testimony of the great and godly Andrew Fuller: "I wish I had prayed more for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in studying and preaching my sermons." The exhortation of the noble French preacher, Massillon, cannot be too attentively studied: "Accompany your labors with your prayers. Speak of the disorders of your people more frequently to God than to them. Complain to him of the obstacles put in the way of their conversion by your unfaithfulness more frequently than of those which their obstinacy may present. Blame yourself alone at his feet for the small fruit of your ministry. As a tender father apologize to him for the faults of your children, and accuse only yourself." Innumerable other such declarations could easily be cited from the writings of the most devoted and successful of ministers. The transcendent importance of prayer is the voice of the best, the greatest, the most highly blest of those who have labored in the cause of Christ.

Above all other Christians, the pastor must be a man of prayer. All others need to be daily at the throne

more of the image of God, for more power with men, for everything which as a Christian and Christian minister he should desire.

The importance of prayer in the ministry is so very, very great that we will strive to impress it by showing how it lay before the minds of men whose own eminent godliness enabled them to understand it as others could not. This is not the opinion of one or two, but of the many, and that of those who had most of the mind of Christ. We would repeat their testimony over and over again, that the great truth may be fixed the more indelibly. It has been tersely said, that "a ministry of prayer must be a ministry of power," and all experience goes to prove the truth of this saying. It has been reasoned in this way: "Above all things, prayer must blend itself with all ministerial labors. Nothing makes a thought derived from others more certainly our own than the attempt to make it the subject of serious and earnest prayer. This gives a new and somewhat original cast to the thought itself, and it flows from the mind and the tongue with a mild yet winning force which few hearts are able to resist. To a preacher who thus combines study and devotion, though he may give no signs of extraordinary genius, the hearers listen, they know not why, and are impressed by his preaching in a manner they can scarcely understand. The secret of his influence is that God is with him and makes whatever he does prosper."

The great Welsh preacher, Mr. Williams of Werr—one of the princely trio of that land of great preachers, John Elias, William Williams, and Christmas Evans—left this testimony: "The old ministers were not much better preachers than we are, and in many respects they were inferior, but there was an unction about their min-

another eminently worldly, so as to have no claim to be regarded as a steward of the mysteries of God. Here is another hopelessly imprudent, ever doing that which is unwise and sadly inconsistent with the high reputation he ought to bear. And occasionally there is one bearing the ministerial name who is still worse. Either because he has no grace in his heart, or because he allows himself to tamper with temptation, he falls into gross sin and causes a shudder throughout the kingdom of Christ.

Who can estimate the injury which such an unholy minister does? His crime will be noised abroad from east to west. It will be told of beyond the seas. Its history will be translated into other languages. It will be gloated over by the enemy through Western settlements. Its disgusting details will be read by wondering girls in the log cabins of Canada. And nowhere will it be repeated without causing pain or injury. It will grieve the pious, harden the impenitent, furnish argument for the opposer, blight the spirit of devotion, encourage others to sin, and cause nameless mischiefs that nothing but the omnipotent Spirit of God can counteract. Oh that those who hold the ministerial office, or are looking forward to it, would duly consider this! Oh that those who have no heart for its becoming spirituality would leave it! Oh that all would study well their tremendous responsibility! Oh that they would get very, very near to Christ, and cling to him with the full conviction that only by his side are they safe! Oh that they were willing to deny themselves many things which might seem right enough in themselves, but which might easily, be misunderstood and tend to the dishonor of the cause! Oh that they would all strive for a godliness of the most elevated character,

which would keep them far above reproach or even the suspicion of wrong!

(h) THE PASTOR IS WARRANTED IN LOOKING FORWARD TO EMINENT GLORY IN THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

If even "Jesus, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame," how much more should his ministers endure any toils in view of the great heavenly joys before them!

That there are peculiar joys in store for the faithful pastor is taught not very obscurely in the Scriptures. What other meaning can we attach to the words of Christ: "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together"? Did not the apostle foresee that peculiar glory when he thought of those whom he had been instrumental in saving, and said, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" And another prophet in still more glowing language exclaimed, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." After a very careful study of the whole subject, Dr. Killen records this cheering conclusion: "To every devoted pastor, in reference to the people among whom he labors, it may be said in the words of our Lord himself, They cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Nor does he himself design either to pay or put such off with the wealth and honors of time, but he has in store for them abundant recompense at the resurrection of the just. Having turned many to righteousness, they shall then not only

linger for a moment on this promise. Observe, he does not simply say, "Ask and ye shall receive;" that, coming from the lips of perfect Truth, would be enough. But to make the promise more impressive, he repeats it three times: "ye shall receive," "ye shall find," "it shall be opened unto you." Nor is that all. To make it still more emphatic, he repeats it three times again: "every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." In the very acts of asking, seeking, knocking, the blessing is received. Nor is even this all, though the promise has been repeated six times. That it may sink the more deeply into every heart, he uses one of the most touching arguments: "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit (as Luke has it) to them that ask him!" Was there ever such a promise as this? Was ever any engagement of God so positively ratified? If prayer, to be successful, must be for things agreeable to the will of God, can there be any question about this prayer for the Holy Spirit? Is not his whole heart set upon granting us this?

Not a day, then, should pass without the pastor carrying this petition before the throne, and wrestling for the Holy Spirit to come and baptize him afresh, and baptize him thoroughly, with his sanctifying influences. In urging this petition he should never become weary or discouraged or satiated, or so familiar with the request that it will lose its fervency. When he is praying for the influences of the Holy Spirit, he is praying for more holiness of life, for more of the mind of Christ, for

Then, by this operation, the conscience becomes pacified through atoning blood, and that blood he applies day by day, so that the soul is kept in peace and animated to aspire after higher degrees of holiness. Besides, the work is carried on with the greatest success by the Spirit holding up Christ as our model after whom we are to copy in heart and life. Nor is he presented as our pattern only, but as our motive also—as the glorious object of our love, the worthy object to which our whole being ought to be consecrated. Thus through Christ the Spirit sanctifies. He takes men hour by hour to the cross by which sin was once effectually conquered, and by which it is yet to be utterly banished from the hearts and the habitations of men.

Then the encouraging thing for us, and the point we would now urge, is that this Spirit is given in answer to prayer. He is with his Church and with his people already, but the larger measure of his sanctifying power which ministers especially need is that which we are now considering. This undoubtedly may be obtained by earnest and persevering prayer. The most emphatic promise in the whole Bible is given in reference to this very thing: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" According to Luke, who records the same promise, the blessing desired is the gift of the Holy Ghost. Let us

'shine as the brightness of the firmament,' but be made 'pillars in the temple of our God.'"

All true pastors are preparing for that pre-eminent glory of the future. Surpassingly great is the bliss which they may lawfully keep in view in all their ministerial work and trials. To this they are appointed, and for this they are getting ready according to the measure of their fidelity.

What eminent godliness should now be theirs! What heavenly-mindedness they should now have, in prospect of such distinguished seats of bliss in the celestial world! It is not unbecoming for them to keep steadfastly in sight the portrait of the faithful minister as described by Bunyan. It was the picture of a grave person hanging up against the wall: "It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back; he stood as if he pleaded with men, *and a crown of gold did hang over his head.*" When all is regarded as given for Christ's sake, then it is not unwarranted for the pastor to be incited to the effort for eminent piety by the motives so strongly stated by Dr. J. W. Alexander: "Each instant of present labor is to be repaid with a million of ages of glory."

We have thus dwelt at much length upon the transcendent importance of deep-toned piety in pastors, because of our clearest possible conviction that it lies at the foundation of everything hopeful in the office. We cannot present this conviction as emphatically as we feel it. At the present age of so much superficial religion we feel that this subject is one of immense importance. What is needed in the ministry now is complete consecration of heart and head and hands to

Christ. With ministers more than with any other persons alive the supreme motive needs to be the glory of God. In all their studies and ministrations, in every element of their being, their moving impulse should be love to Christ.

Oh that every pastor could be made to believe and feel, and keep before him the conviction, that nothing else but this devoted godliness will make his ministry either pleasant or profitable! Can ministers not be persuaded to rely upon this as true? Would that they might all form the solemn purpose not to rest until this degree of godliness was reached! This is within the power of all. Great eloquence or popularity it may be impossible for many to reach, but great devotedness to Christ is attainable by all who will strive for it. And when this is reached, then a successful ministry is made sure. If our ministers, young and old, would set out for this, the whole face of the Church, and of the country too, would very soon be changed. How much is dependent upon our pastors laying this matter to heart!

HOW THE PIETY OF THE MINISTER MAY BE CULTIVATED.

This is a point of vital importance to every pastor. No subject should receive from him more anxious thought. There is none to which he should give closer attention from the beginning of his ministry to its close. The following suggestions may be of use to those who are earnestly set on higher attainments in this first qualification for their sacred office:

(a) THIS PIETY TO BE CULTIVATED BY CONSTANT PRAYER.

We have written fully of the attainment of a high type of piety by the pastor, because we feel profoundly

its importance. And now the very momentous question comes up, How can it be reached? By what means can the heart be so cultivated as to arrive at this blessed experience? That such elevated piety is attainable should be laid down as a maxim at the very beginning. And that every pastor should set his heart upon it, and never rest until it is experienced, we would press home as our first and most important advice. Then the most effectual method for reaching it we would emphatically declare to be constant prayer. It is hardly necessary to mention this to those who have themselves been called into the ministry, but it may be wise to stir up their minds to a vivid sense of the great practical truth. If we can say anything that will awaken more earnest attention to it, the effort will not be misdirected.

It is well known that every degree of piety in the heart must be the work of the Holy Ghost. By him it is that piety is first implanted through the renewing of the nature that was once all corruption. That nature needs to be sanctified more and more, the obstacles in the heart and in the world have to be overcome, the motives drawn from Christ and his gospel have to be brought home with such power as to impress the mind. But to do all this is the special office of the Holy Spirit, and by no other power in the world excepting by him can it be effected. By the death of Christ his power was secured, and he was sent into the world for the express purpose of sanctifying redeemed men and producing in them the holy likeness of Christ.

He effects this change by taking Christ and the things of Christ, and impressing them vividly upon the hearts of those who are the subjects of renewing grace. He shows Christ as our personal Saviour, and opens the eye of faith so that he can be seen and trusted in.