

made creeds and confessions. She is "the pillar and ground" of the unchangeable "Truth," the "witness and keeper" through the ages of "the Faith, once for all delivered to the saints." She stands for the liberty wherewith the truth has made her free. Let her children "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Let them banish all narrowness and prejudice, all pride and conceit. Let them gladly acknowledge all that is good and gracious in our separated brethren. Let them say, "Grace be unto all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Unity will come as a crown of victory, not to theological strife, but to Christian love. From the long story of the Church's warfare let us learn that the conquests of love are the only conquests which abide. Be steadfast. Be patient of men's prejudices and weakness. Pray on and hope on. Hold out loving hands to men, and so shall the Lord's last prayer find, in His own time, its answer.

*Third.*—We have very gravely considered the canons concerning ordination and the due preparation of candidates for the sacred ministry. High character and sound learning in the clergy are essential to the worthy work of the Church, in this time and land especially. We have reason to be thankful that the Church has always demanded, and has so constantly found these in her ministry. But the door to the priesthood should be even more carefully guarded in the time to come. Devotion, self consecration, clear intelligence, a learning abreast of the times, secular knowledge as well as thorough training in theology—that queen of all the sciences, are imperatively required in those who are set to teach the people of this age.

More than ever must the priest's lips keep knowledge—definite, clear, theological knowledge—and more than ever must the prudence, the meekness, the patience, and the tact of a trained intellect and a devout soul be exhibited in gentle manners by the pastors of the flock.

*Fourth.*—And here we earnestly charge our brethren of the clergy to remember that the foremost and most abiding of all their duties is to "preach the Gospel." This, dear brethren, is the first command in our commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

It has seemed to us that this primal duty has been somewhat obscured. We have nothing to say here of the relative importance of preaching and administration. Each has its place; but, whatever else it may do or be, a living Church must be a preaching and a teaching Church. It would be something to alarm if our preaching were such that our people should become clamorous for less and less of it. In that case, we are convinced that the clamor would not be against preaching, but against the king of preaching; not against the length of the sermon, but against the kind of sermon. Still, as of old, men are touched and held by the strong, wise, tender words of other men. If the power of the pulpit is less in our time as some, not we, assert, it is from no change in the nature or circumstances of man. The evidence is all about us. The printed column or the printed page can never reach the inmost heart of men like the living voice—the pleading and persuading voice of a living person. He who knew what is in man committed his Gospel to the voices of men. It was to be written also; but still the voice was to utter it—the voice of a man to other men, as it was first uttered on the hillsides of Palestine and the shores of the Galilean lake. We solemnly charge our brethren in the ministry to cultivate and exercise this their great office. In the words

of the mighty apostle to the son of his heart, we say to you: "Preach the Gospel." Make the pulpit a throne of light. Let it teach. It is sent to teach, not alone to move or to excite emotion, least of all to win men's admiration of eloquent periods, beautiful diction, and graceful delivery. Its one great purpose is to instruct and enlighten in the things belonging to God. Definite, positive doctrine about the deepest things, is ours to teach. If we have it not, but only guesses of our own and speculations which are the froth of common, surface, thoughtless thinking, then our place of utterance may be anywhere in all the world save in the pulpit of the Church. But having a sure doctrine, having a positive and determinate trust of fact and truth committed to us, we need not fear that the old teaching will not have the old power; that earnest practical sermons for the men and the hour will fail to enlighten, guide, and strengthen the souls entrusted to our charge, until they grow to ripeness and strength of wisdom in things pertaining to godliness.

*Fifth.*—And here let us remind our brethren, and ourselves, also, that we are sent and commanded to care for the lambs as well as for the sheep. "Feed my lambs" remains forever a solemn burden on the souls of bishops and other clergy. Are we obeying the command? We recognize the differences of times and the difficulties of present circumstances. But does the Sunday school in its best estate quite fulfil the meaning of this marching order? Is the "leaflet" quite a substitute for that little catechism which wisest men have declared to be "the best treatise on dogmatic theology, in the smallest compass ever penned by man," and which is still level to the capacities of a child. Does the Sunday school teacher, at his best, or the Sunday school superintendent, at his best, quite fulfil the office of the pastor, standing with the Lord's precious "little ones" around him, patiently, lovingly, and with authority instructing and leading them as the beloved of the Lord, whom no man may dare "offend" at his soul's peril? It is wise to use all helps and all helpers, but we charge the clergy to resign into no other hands whatever, the care and trust of the Lord's little ones. We charge you to regard this most precious of all the offices of your ministry, as your own special responsibility; and while you may use all aids of easier learning or larger illustration, we expect you to teach the old Church catechism as the central north and expression of faith and duty, and the Bible as the Word of God, which makes men "wise unto salvation."

*Sixth.*—An evil we have seen and much bemoan is a growing tendency toward a short and uncertain tenure of the pastoral office.

The Church's law contemplates long pastorates, long growths of affection, the weaving of many knots of love in life, the holy memories of many services, the intimate tenderness of sorrows and anxieties borne together, and the happy remembrance of joys and thanksgivings together shared. She looks for her best strength, where memories of the marriage vow, the font, the altar, the sick-bed, the grave-side, are the common possession of pastor and flock. Human as she is, she knows the blessedness of our homely human affections, and that by them, sanctified, we are sanctified and lifted to affections divine and eternal. Our earthly loves and friendships, our every-day joys and sorrows, have divine meanings and leadings in the tender thought of the dear Mother who is so human, while she leads us gently up to the love that is divine. So her plan is that the shepherd shall abide with the flock. She asks the pastor to stay long with his own, to patiently wait while the shuttle flies back and forth across the web of his days, and weaves for him, in mingled threads of gloom and brightness, a band of love, binding him ever closer to the souls he serves here, and, by Christ's great grace, to become a gleaming band of glory, binding him and them in everlasting fellowship hereafter.

Brethren of the laity, it is not, we are con-

vinced, the fault of your clergy alone that pastorates are so short, and that the tenderness and sweetness of the pastoral relation are well-nigh lost from among us. It is for you to make the relation permanent by all patience, gentle consideration, kindly judgment, gracious helpfulness, loyalty, and love. Stand by your pastor in frank, manly, and honourable fashion. Give him what he must have to do effectual work—your utmost trust. Hold up his hands and cheer his heart. He is only human—a poor, weak sinner, after all, like the rest of us. He will make mistakes. He will not be always wise. But while you know him to be true and loyal, be you true and loyal also, and then all will be well.

You want the man who knelt by your child's sick-bed to kneel by your own. You want him who said the holy words at your father's grave to say the same strong words at your own. You want the man who blessed your vow to the sole woman of your heart, to pour the consecrated stream on the brow of her child and yours. All your life long you want the faithful, the tried, the selectest man to be the friend of your inmost hours, and he ought to be your pastor.

This is what the Church intends in the pastoral relation. This is what has been made a reality again and again, and such pastorates have left high and holy memories, all along her story, to brighten and sweeten the lives of her children. Let it be the noble ambition of every pastor and every congregation to begin, continue, and bring to a holy and blessed end such pastorates as these, where all that is best on earth and all that is best in Paradise meet and clasp hands together over a relation so humbly human, yet so divinely sweet, that, at its consummation, a man may say, in trembling trust: "Here am I and the children which Thou hast given me."

*Seventh.*—Our thoughts, brethren, have been dwelling much upon the Christian family. The family is the root germ of the Church and the root germ of the State. Both are safe while the family is safe. When the family is wrecked, neither Church nor State is worth preserving. The hearth of the home is the sacred altar, at last, of all religion, all law, all loyalty, and all order. The ancient religions of our forefathers taught us that, at least. Our Lord revealed the reason, lifted it up, stamped His divine mark upon it. From our Lord Jesus Christ we have received it with new sanctions and girded with divine defenses: The awful, sacredness of home, the one man and the one woman, who are not two but one, whose union is a great mystery, like the union of Christ and His Church.

It is with sad foreboding that Christian people must see how the sanctity and permanency of the marriage bond has been outraged and broken by the lawless legislation of so many of our States. The Church of God can have no regard for such legislation; it has no more respect or validity in her consciousness than the legislation on the same subject of Turkey or the "customs of Dahomy." Indeed, she must consider it not only an outrage upon the Christian consciousness, but upon the inherited race-consciousness of our people. Therefore she has set herself in her own legislation to record her solemn protest against a tendency which, in our judgment, enlightened by the Word of God and the guidance of His Holy Spirit, can lead only to the ruin of the civil state and the destruction of all religion and purity of living among men. We are convinced that much, if not all, of the looseness with which the marriage bond is treated in legislation and practice is due to the first falsehood which considers the individual as the unit of human society, and demands, therefore, that the motive of all civil arrangements shall be the pleasure and contentment of the individual. As a matter of historical fact as well as of scientific determination, the family is the unit, and the well-being of the individual can be rightly sought only in and through the well-being of the family.

The Holy Scriptures are full of the doctrine of the family and its relations. It is a thing so