SERMON.

BY REV. GEO. E. WHITE.

Introductory Sermon as pastor of the Fairville church.

The Minister and His Church.

Acts 10-29. "I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"

From this act on the part of Cornelius in sending for Peter to hear of him words whereby he and his friends might be further instructed in the truths of the gospel, I gather a hint as to the relation existing between the minister and his church, into which relation we enter at this time. It is a new page, clean and white, we turn in life's history to day. Let each one of us avoid the dishonor of putting the first spot upon this new page, either by unkind words or ungenerous deeds. I should be destitute of the most common feelings of humanity, if I did not feel both oppressed and encouraged with present surroundings. I fear lest this first stroke of the pen shall mar the whole page. For it is true, "What I have written I have written." To-day, we enter mutual relations, as pastor and people, which may affect the remotest ages; to-day, we touch chords which may vibrate for weal or woe to all eternity—solemn hour this. I pray God that we may all fully realize the grandeur and solemnity of this occasion.

It is my purpose, then, to address you at this time on the subject of the minister and his church, touching somewhat on the duties and relation of the one to the other, in the hopes, that by divine grace, we may each be the better fitted to act the christian part.

I. First, then, let me state some of my solemn convictions regarding the true minister of Jesus Christ. The true minister of Jesus Christ is a man called of God to preach his gospel and shepherd his sheep. No man is at liberty to enter the gospel ministry as a profession. The ministry is not a profession, it is a "calling". "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ". And again, "Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father". Then the mantle of the prophet is God's own property, and he lets it fall on whom he will. The way in which God calls men into his vineyard is indeed varied. Some have to pass through long years of mental training, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus, others he calls directly from the field or the plough, as in the case of Elisha. But shall we question the qualifications of either, or deny the divinity of the mission of either? God forbid! "There are diversities of operation, but the same spirit." I presume, that I myself, differ so much from any minister you have had heretofore, that some of you may be in doubt as to the wisdom of your choice, if not the validity of my calling. But let not too hasty judgment pass your lips, we will know each other better later on—"for by their fruits ye shall know them."

Yes, the true minister of Jesus Christ is a man "called" of God. This has been God's plan from the beginning, ever since he called Abraham from Ur of the Caldees. Do you remember the call of Moses? He was out in the wilderness of Horeb, a fugitive from home and duty. And while watching the flocks of Jethro, amid the awful grandeur of mountain scenery, he saw a bush on fire, and while the flames enveloped it the bush was not destroyed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." As he drew near a voice said: "Draw not nigh; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And again the voice said: "I am come down to deliver my people. Come now, I will send thee." "Whom am I," cried Moses, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" "I will be with thee." "What is thy name?" "I am that I am." That was the call of Moses. He went. You know the results.

Now it is my firm conviction that some such call or vision must come to every true minister of Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah received his call in a vision. He "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." And he heard the hosts of heaven crying with a loud voice, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Then cried the prophet: "Woe is me! for I am undone; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Then appeared the angel of the Lord, having a live coal from off the altar of God, and laid it upon the mouth of the prophet and said: "Lo this hath touched thy lips; and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." Then said the voice to the prophet, "Whom shall I send, and, who will go for us?" And in great humility Isaiah said: "Here am I send me."

Thus God calls and fits his servants to do his bidding. And being thus called and fitted by the Lord God of hosts the true minister can "but speak the things which he hath seen and heard." With such a mission and such a message, who or what can stay God servant in his course? Kings and councils have attempted the task, but prison walls have been unable to confine him, neither could chains bind him, even iron gates swing open of their own accord to let the message of Jehovah pass. Above the rage of men and the fury of devils, the true minister lifts his voice like a trumpet: "Whether is it right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Ah, this is the secret of the minister's power, he hath "seen and heard." He hath seen God in a vision, he hath heard the Almighty say: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." To this his soul responds—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

Again, the true minister of Jesus Christ is one who ever seeks the glory of God and the highest good of his people. As God's ambassador, he has to deal with the souls of men. That his task is not an easy one, is clear, when we remember there is a rival in the field, "the Prince of the power of air." Indeed there is a triple force against which the minister must contend—"the world, the flesh and the devil," for these are all arrayed against the minister of God. Fearful position this, awful responsibility this! truly, "our sufficiency is of God." In order then to the accomplishments of his tasks the true minister must walk and talk much with God. For by the help and blessing of God he will ever strive to make the sanctuary a place of joy and profit to his people, and the very gate of heaven to their souls. That these are solemn and responsible duties must be obvious to all. It is indeed quite easy to preach smooth things unto the people. For this, the eager multitudes ever clamor, saying to the Seer, "See not; and to the prophet, speak unto us smooth things." But the true minister must cry aloud and spare not. He must lift up his voice like a trumpet, and show the people their sins. Not sin in the abstract only, not sin as it floats on the breeze and poisons the atmosphere, but sin in the individual—sin in high places. The bolts of divine truth must be discharged not only into the homes of the poor, but into the mansions of the rich.

So the call came to Nathan the prophet: "Go show David his sin." The king had sinned, he had committed a dreadful offence. He had murdered Uriah and taken Bathsheba to wife. He had kept his crime shut up in his own bosom, but there it burned like a raging fire. As David looked into the blue of heaven, where he was want to read much of the divine glory, all he could now see was one word—"Murder!" It covered the whole face of the sky, relieved only by the name of "Uriah" and "Bathsheba." Even in the charm of the holy temple there was an undertone of sadness and sorrow, which told David of his shame. No need of the whips of scorpions with which to lash the guilty conscience. David is now seated upon his royal throne, the court preacher, Nathan, enters. After the usual salutations, he laid before the king a small matter for judgment, which he cast in the form of a parable: "A certain poor man had a little ewe lamb. It was dear to him as a daughter, ate of his food and drank of his cup. His rich neighbor had many flock and herds, but when his hospitality was needed he spared of his own possessions, but took the little ewe lamb." Here the king broke in, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." The decisive moment has come! Draw your blade, O prophet of the Lord; a sermon in a thrust—"Thou art the man!" The iron entered David's soul. Smitten with guilt, he sees himself stripped of purple and ermine, a sinner before God. The king forsakes his royal seat and staggers up the winding staircase to his secret chamber. He is on his knees. Hear him pray: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Against thee, fore, that some of you may be in doubt as to the wisdom of your choice, if not the validity of my calling. But let not too hasty judgment pass your lips, we will know each other better later on—"for by their fruits ye shall know them."

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we must not forget that He who said: "Feed my sheep," said also, "feed my lambs." He is a wise pastor who gives proper attention to his young people, and has a part in the sermon for them. Mr. Spurgeon has most aptly said that some preachers put the food so high up in the rack that neither the sheep nor the lambs can reach it, and they read the text as if it said, "feed my giraffes." Yes, there must be the development and education of the young. For the crown is not placed on the head of the one who begins well, but the one who runs well the christian race. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne." The individual who would be saved must make salvation the chief business of life. And so intense will the struggle be by times that he will seem to feel the very flames of hell licking his heels and the cries of the lost ringing in his ears. Neither can the mission of the gospel be carried out by a church that has only a form of godliness. But the christian must possess a better character and live on higher plans of thought than the rest of mankind. For if the minister is called of God, so is every true member of the church of Christ, "called with an holy calling," "called to be saints"; called to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into light. You expect such men and women to live above the little meanesses and dishonest practices of the world, and you are justified in making such demands upon them. He who takes as his example the only perfect life, and stamps the common things of every day with the image and superscription of the Son of God, will be nobler and truer, than the stranger to the covenant of His grace. These, dear friends, are some of the solemn obligations and sacred duties which lie within the circle of church influence on earth. May you as a church walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you have been called.

III. Lastly, let me point out the relation which should exist between the minister and his church. The one is adapted to the other. A church in order to do her best work needs a pastor, and the pastor must have a church to lead, guide and feed—"what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Between the pastor and his people God has established a very close and sacred relation, second only to the marriage vow. Believing as we do, that the office of the minister and the mission of the church are both divine, it may not be out of place here to give, in brief outline, what the one should reasonably expect of the other.

(1) The minister should expect from his people punctual and regular attendance upon his ministry. The absence of a member is a loss of power to the preacher. If you want your minister to do his best, be regular in your attendance; punctuality is necessary not only to profit and happiness of the individual, but to the welfare of the whole church. It is divine service from invocation to benediction. When Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius the congregation had assembled; and when he asked, "For what intent have ye sent for me?" Cornelius replied: "Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all the things that are commanded thee of God." An ideal church that, all present to hear the message from God's servant. There must be something wrong in the moral make-up of the individual who sets lightly by the opening or closing exercises of a religious service. Indeed there is something opposed to good order and decency in habitual late attendance. But I need not remind you, that when the heart is right with God, there will be regular and punctual attendance at the sanctuary.

(2) The minister should have the sympathy, prayers and most charitable judgment of his people. His public conduct will be open to public criticism; but from his own church he should expect and receive the most tender consideration, and most charitable judgment. Where two constructions are possible give him the benefit of the more charitable. There will be tongues enough to slander and censure him without yours being added to the number. The minister feels himself strong and valiant in proportion as he possesses the prayers and sympathy of his church. The world may rage and the devil howl, but all will be in vain, if his church stand firm. He can endure any sort of an external tempest, while the most gentle zephyrs of an internal discord will enervate and cause him to shorten sail. May it be my joy to labor here among a people of a charitable and sympathetic heart; and who will stand ready to second all right and wise efforts of their pastor for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. Our success here, in the work of the Lord, as well as our personal happiness, is largely committed to your care. If the spirit of earnest believing prayer shall hover over us, all will be well. "Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified . . . . . and that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men." What an inspiration, what an added power, for the minister to know his people are praying for him. Without prayer, much prayer, we shall fail. "*Brethren pray for us.*"

But turning now to the other side, what should the church expect from her minister.

(1) She should expect faithfulness and punctuality in all the services of God's house. It is required of a steward that he be faithful. Above all men the minister must be faithful and punctual. Not only in his ministry, but in all his dealings with men; he must in all things be an example of that which is good and upright. He should at the same time be a man of a single purpose, seeking only and ever the glory of God and the highest good of his people; and doing this as one who shall give an account, not unto men, but unto God.

(2) But there are some things which the church should not expect of the minister. You should not expect every sermon to be better than the last. The minister is a man subject to like passions with other men. There are times when the physical triumphs over the spiritual in the minister as in all others. Sometimes you find it easy and pleasant to exhort in the social meeting, at other times difficult. But as a rule you have a way out, you keep silent, or say little. But the minister must preach whether he feels like it or not. There are times

with him as with yourselves, when freedom of thought and utterance forsake him; but there are also times of overflowing, when thought piles upon thought and speech flows freely and pours her wealth at his feet, then, it is easy to preach the everlasting gospel. Therefore you must be discriminating and considerate.

(3) You must not expect the pastor to do all the visiting that some people demand of him. But he must be faithful here as in all other duties. For he must ever keep in mind that his office is twofold—preacher and pastor. Dr. Cuyler says: "The faithful minister will study his books in the forenoon, and the doorplates of his parishioners in the afternoon." But the minister is pastor of the whole flock, and if he is not at your home today, he is doubtless at the home of another, and, perhaps, where he is more needed. For the true minister, the faintest whisper from the sick room will be sufficient to summon him to the bed-side of the suffering and dying, by day or by night, to lend his deepest sympathy. In a word, he will do all in his power to minister to the needs of his people, and spend the best energies of soul and body in his Master's service.

"As your pastor, I come to you in the best of my days. I am willing to die with you, should it be the will of God; but I will not stay one hour longer than the cloud of the Divine Presence shall indicate departure. And should you as a church, at any time, desire a change, you will find me easy to approach. But whether our union be brief or protracted, let it be characterized by love and kindness, and by honest toil for the Master. Let each one aim to be useful in God's vineyard, and striving ever for the progress of the Kingdom. I am a Baptist, and spell it with a big "B", but the liberty I claim for myself I freely concede to all others. I plan to live at peace with my own church, and with all other branches of the great Household of Faith.

In conclusion, dear brethren, let us remember, "we are not our own; we are bought with a price"—a great price, a sufficient price. Remember also, that the tongue of the busybody is ever ready to exaggerate our imperfections. We shall need help, help from the sanctuary above. GREAT SPIRIT! HELP TODAY AND EVER! Amen and Amen!

HEADS WITHOUT HEARTS.

Within the last few months two well-known public personages have been called away from the busy and prominent spheres they both occupied; without warning or chance to prepare for the silent future which rolls on forever.

Lobanoff, the Russian diplomat, and North, the self made nitrate king both filled positions in the world with becoming grace from the world's point of view. It was said about them and not without emphasis that these men adorned and filled with particular appropriateness their separate walks in life.

As a diplomat, Lobanoff, was the compeer of many brilliant predecessors, superior to them in many respects, he never made a false move and consequently was never check-mated; war in his estimation was a last resource, deprecated on account of the brutal usage it involved, yet to be taken into account when all the finer and mysterious methods of intricate diplomacy failed to achieve a successful issue. It seemed as if no weapons were too ignoble for this man of ways and means to use, provided they promised not to upset by one jot or tittle the even tenor of a career directed towards a single goal of complete success for self and the utter discomfiture of all, in any opposed to his plans.

Lobanoff professed to bow the knee to Christ—the judge, at whose feet he must one day seek judgment, tempered with mercy—yet the bitter wail of his christian brethren in Turkey fell on his ears unheeded. Worse,—the efforts of a christian nation to bring prompt and substantial relief to a persecuted people, were opposed by this man of brains, resulting in further persecution and the almost entire destruction of an entire people.

Contrasted with such inhuman means of procedure, war would have been hailed as a blessing in martial disguise—a veritable godsend. Peace prevailed and the janizaries of the worst wretch outside the pale of christendom, sharpened their scimitars afresh, for the purpose of wholesale extermination.

At the very feet of his worldly master, this monster of ingenuity, who never so much as unsheathed a bayonet throughout his career, is translated in the twinkling of an eye. No time to repent or prepare fresh deeds fraught with more merciful intent. Too late Lobanoff, thou art gone beyond recall—by their fruits ye shall know them—prepare to receive the adjudgment of that judge, against whose verdict there can be no withstanding.

Of humble origin, North, the young mechanic, overcame all obstacles and became a millionaire, a merchant of money, promoter of one thousand and one commercial ventures. Unvaried success was his, there were no blanks in his lottery, money bought him a palatial residence, money purchased social success,—yet not content with these eclipses he must needs seek fresh pastures, greater developments which a shrewd head surmised would bring forth a hundredfold.

Almost the last business compact arranged by this plutocrat was the acquirement of rights and properties at Ostend, for the purpose of inaugurating on a most stupendous scale the biggest gambling hell in Europe.

Leopold the King favored the plan and no obstacles presented themselves to dim the futurities of success. All contingencies were not taken into calculation. At high noon, the financial arbiter was snatched away. Earthly monarchs might grant properties in fee simple; they could not put back the hands of the clock.

For he reigns on high and ever has regard for the souls welfare of his loved ones. Though in one case he permits persecutions, yet in this he perceives hideous design. Temptation is removed, and the fashionable rous must still travel to Monte-Carlo, in order to satiate his desire for gain, for the proposed half-way house to hell cannot be established within easy call of half a dozen professedly christian countries. God reigns. The sudden extinction of Lobanoff-North speaks aloud. We do not glory or exult at their sudden decrease, nay, but we marvel and wonder at the power which acts so profoundly, silently, swiftly, and extinguishes the flame.

Ponder over it all who fear God, believing ones, trusting ones and doubtful ones.

. . . . . "in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

If we only look around we can see many instances shaped in various guises.

The two men so suddenly called away, brought desolation and sought to afflict humanity, may they be gently dealt with for sweet mercy's sake, for the lessons taught by the flight and collapse of meteors are not lost, they scourge out the sore places and readjust misshapen courses. FAITH.

Age Should Increase Power.

"Such as one as Paul the aged." We marvelled as we spoke to a minister, aged sixty, how it might have fared with Paul had he been a minister in England in these days. Our friend, like many more of whom we have heard, was thought to be too old for a certain church, which had made up its mind, or at least the deacons had made up their minds, that the new pastor must be a young and vigorous man. Now, spiritual fitness is not decided by the length of a man's years—the young may be rich in the knowledge of the truth, the aged may be poor in it; but ordinarily it would be, and ought to be, the other way; and it is by spiritual fitness, not by animal vigor or mental eagerness, that the work of God is wrought. A young man may be chosen; his preaching may be after the wisdom of this world; a crowd may be gathered, because it finds something suitable to its low standard; but such results have little, if anything, to do with the great ends for which Christ died and rose again.—London Christian.

In the Shadow.

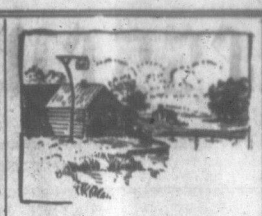
We must all go there sometimes. The glare of the daylight is too brilliant; our eyes become injured and unable to discern the delicate shades of color, or appreciate neutral tints—the shadowed chamber of sickness, the shadowed house of mourning; the shadowed life from which the sunlight has gone. But, fear not; it is the shadow of God's hand. He is leading thee. There are lessons which can be learned only there. The photograph of his face can be fixed only in the dark chamber. But do not suppose that he has cast thee aside. Thou art still in his quiver; he has not flung thee away as a worthless thing. He is only keeping thee close till the moment comes when he can send thee most swiftly and surely on some errand in which he will be glorified. Oh, shadowed solitary ones, remember how closely the quiver is bound to the warrior, within easy reach of the hand, and guarded jealously!—Rev. F. B. Meyer.

Literary Notes.

"McClure's Magazine" for October will contain a biographical and personal study of Ian Maclaren, the author of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," by the Rev. D. M. Ross. Mr. Ross was associated with Ian Maclaren in a circle of students who lived in special intimacy at Edinburgh University, and has lived in intimate relations with him ever since. The paper will be illustrated with portraits of Ian Maclaren, views of his various homes, and scenes in and around "Drumtochty."

A story of the time of Shakspere, written by John Bennett, will be the leading serial for the new volume of "St. Nicholas." It is called "Master Syklark," and will deal with the romantic events of the Elizabethan age. The great dramatist figures as one of the leading characters, although the hero and heroine are a boy and a girl. Another serial, "The Last Three Soldiers," by William H. Shelton, has a novel plot. It tells of three Union soldiers who became veritable castaways in the Confederacy. Both will begin in the November "St. Nicholas."

One man said: "I never accomplished anything until I had thoroughly learned the lesson that God did not intend me to be a great man." There may be others whose usefulness will be increased by a study of that lesson.



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