

power to attract a congregation is nothing in itself, for an eloquent unbeliever could do that, or an eloquent mountebank. The success of the minister is seen after he has got his congregation, in what follows in dealing with them. Here are again three points. He presents converting truth to the sinner, and is the instrument under God of saving and gathering him into Christian communion. He presents edifying truths to believers, and builds them up into a holy temple. He is also constantly exercising an educating influence over the younger members of the flock. The man that does these three things well, is the successful minister in my judgment, and it is such ministerial success of which I attempt to lay down some conditions in this paper.

I presume you all desire to succeed in the great calling to which you have devoted yourselves. So, no doubt, have all the men who have been in the same position in the colleges of our country. Yet it is an unpleasant fact that a certain number have not succeeded. After finishing their college course, and making trial of the ministry some have left it altogether, not we may be sure without struggles, questionings, and sore heart burnings. Not only so, but they have caused questionings, weariness, and unprofitable days of Christian worship on the part of numbers of people gathered in congregations.

There is this difference however between the failure of a merchant and the failure of a minister. Although a merchant may fail to acquire competence and to pay his debts, he may still have been rendering service to the community in supplying them with useful goods. If the minister fails, he fails in the very essence of his work, that is, when reduced to its simplest elements, his failure is a failure to be servicable, a failure to answer the very end for which all ministry exists.

Failure or success are rarely due to accidental circumstances. I have often said this with regard to the ordinary business of life, and I now say it to you, students for the ministry with all seriousness, with a full remembrance of the higher influences that go so far towards success in this highest of callings. I say, nevertheless, that success or failure flow inevitably from the character and course of conduct of the man himself. There are certain aptitudes, and certain courses of action which, under God, we may reverently say will command success. There are certain deficiencies of aptitude, followed up by certain other courses of conduct, which will inevitably result in failure. Mark