

forward to the ministry, on the choice which you have made. It is a high vocation, I do not think there is any higher or so high; to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, to employ the truth as it is in Jesus, to regulate conscience, and shape character, and kindle hope, and comfort sorrow, to receive the most sacred confidences of the tempted, the struggling, the sorrowful and the dying. And it is possible to exercise it, even in these exacting times, I do not say with satisfaction to oneself, but with acceptance, and with profit to the Christian people. Forgive the liberty which I take in thus singling you out in this large audience, and saying to you, Count no diligence in study, and no devotion of heart too great in fitting yourselves for such a work. "Abide in Him." Your power to guide and bless others, your power to awaken sinners and to edify believers, your power to relieve doubt and to solace sorrow will be largely in the measure of that abiding.

In reality, however, the duty and the privilege belong to all of us. So, coming back to that with which I started, I say once more to you, my dear people, who have given me such generous support and encouragement during these years, as my last word, "Abide in Him." Make Jesus Christ the object of your thoughts; the Lord of your wills; above all, make Him the home of your affections, that to which they instinctively turn. Let Him live enshrined in your hearts' best, most reverent love, and He will banish from them all that is impure or selfish. He will shed within them even in dark days, a holy calm. He will Himself abide in you.

The pastoral relationship which has existed so long must now cease; the ecclesiastical tie may no longer bind us, but the spiritual bond remains—I trust, ever will remain. Mutual interests have been awakened, spiritual connections have been formed which distance and separation cannot destroy. If we are in Christ and abide in Him, our severance is apparent rather than real; it is temporary, not lasting. We meet in Him, even when apart. In a brief period, we shall meet with Him. And so shall we ever be with the Lord, and with one another in His presence. Amen.