

the real object of the ministry—the conversion of sinners and the edification of the saints. The church, as well as the congregation, was enlarged, and became strong and efficient. The pastor also became known, honored and influential, among the foremost men in the community. And I am told that both pastor and church now hold the very first rank in all that region for strength and efficiency in all good Christian activities.

The moral of all this is plain. Those practical business men detected the true philosophy of successful church-building. By the blessing of God, they made both the church and the pastor, to a great extent, what they are in public estimation, and in working power. They did not commit the folly—shall I call it crime—of sacrificing a good man, and their own self-respect, in order to find some preacher whose genius or pedantry might make both himself and the church famous. Now observe :

1. It is sad to consider to what an extent the true purpose of the gospel ministry is misunderstood. The ministry, as appointed of Christ and given to the churches, was not designed for the special purpose of crowding houses, renting pews, paying debts, and replenishing an exhausted treasury. It has other and nobler uses. If these things can be legitimately done, it is most gratifying. But to make a pastor responsible for these is a gross perversion of the Divine purpose. Nor is that end more commendable which seeks to gratify the pride or vanity of worldly minded members, whose only ambition is to see *their* place of worship the thronged centre of public resort, and *their* pulpit outstripping all competition in the mad rivalry for public favor. Such a degradation of the gospel ministry is fraught with certain disaster in the end. Let the preacher fill his divinely appointed sphere, and the preaching do its divinely appointed work; but do not harness them to thoughts of a worldly pride or a financial venture. Then will they be approved for doing their legitimate work, and not be blamed for failure to do what was no part of it.

2. There are many churches that are despondent in the midst of difficulties, and pastorless. They have not realized the success they desired and hoped for.

The future perplexes them. They are all, with one consent, looking for a pastor who shall lift them out of their misfortunes, and realize their most sanguine expectations. Each of them all believes that its case is peculiar, and it must have a very peculiar man; that no ordinary talent will answer in *that* place, and for *that* people. They have tried and failed; next time they must reach their goal and get the right man; a man who will overtop all others in the proportions of his attractive power. And so with fifty—or five hundred—pastorless churches, this search goes on, for a peculiar and remarkable man to secure their success. Occasionally they light upon men whom they will venture to call; but it often happens that such men do not venture to accept; and so they are pastorless still. Now, why does not such a church see, that instead of this tireless search for the one remarkable man of their imagination, there are probably within their reach fifty men, good, able, pious, capable men, any one of whom *they could* make successful, in their pulpit and pastorate, if they would. And any one of those fifty men would be an honor and a blessing to them, if they would unite all their possible capabilities to make him successful. Suppose he be not now a great man enough to satisfy their ambition, he would grow to be a greater man under their culture and encouragement. Let the church make the man, and not wait for the man to make the church. I do not say that in every instance these results would surely follow; but in many—more than we dream of—indeed, in most cases where ordinary discretion is used. Let the members of the discouraged churches resolve, by the blessing of God, that their work must succeed, and with united endeavors and consecrated energies they can make it succeed, whoever may be their pastor.

3. The influence of one single prudent and resolute man, and his importance in prosecuting the church's work, can scarcely be estimated, and is not easily overvalued. It is the great good fortune of some churches to have leaders: not vain and ambitious men, coveting pre-eminence, but wise, discreet and capable men, who know how to organize endeavor, and are able to execute judicious plans. It is the misfortune of other