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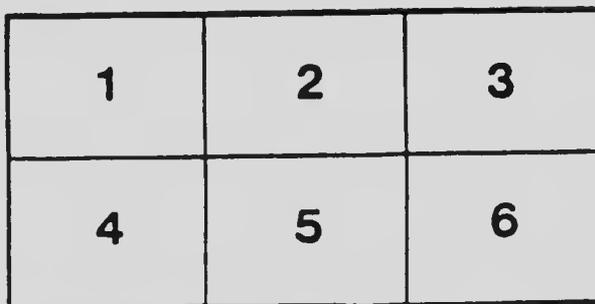
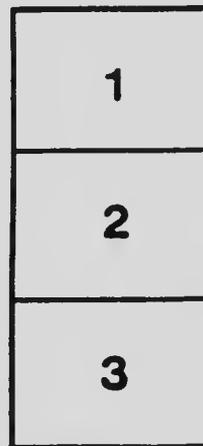
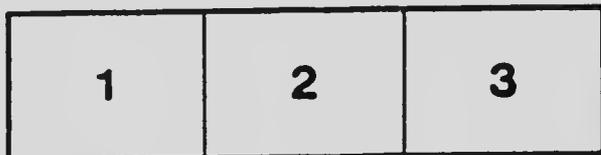
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# THE MINISTRY

—AND—

# SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

INAUGURAL LECTURE BY THE  
REVEREND PRINCIPAL W. H. SMITH  
M.A., Ph. D., D.D.

Westminster Hall, Vancouver, B. C.

DELIVERED IN SAINT JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MAY SEVENTH

ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND TWENTY

# THE MINISTRY

—AND—

## SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Mr. Moderator, Fathers and Brethren, Members of the Senate and Board of Management, and Fellow Workers:

With a profound sense of the great importance of the undertaking, I enter officially upon my work as Principal of Westminster Hall. It is also with considerable diffidence I appear before you to deliver my Inaugural Lecture, although the delivery of a lecture on such an occasion has been an honored tradition in the history of Presbyterianism. I naturally shrink from stepping into the distinguished company of College Principals and Professors associated with our Presbyterian Church in Canada, where are men universally honored for eminent services to enduring scholarship and universally loved for a transparent piety which made the class room the very entrance into the unseen holy. I will be pardoned if I linger a moment to acknowledge my great indebtedness to the two principals of my college days, the Reverend Alexander MacKnight, D.D., who stood in the front rank of scholars, and the Reverend Allan Pollok, D.D., LL.D., the grand old man of Presbyterianism in the Maritime Provinces, whose extensive and exact scholarship, teaching and preaching power, wise counsel and unflinching good cheer all combined to perfect a character at once outstanding in its greatness, sublime in its optimism and gentle as the dews of heaven in its refreshing inspirations.

The history of Westminster Hall is so well known that no extended reference is necessary. During the twelve years of service it has given fifty graduates to the ministry, and partially trained twelve others. It was launched upon the sea of theological adventure in the buoyant air of the boom days, with banners flying and multitudes cheering. The earlier years brought abundant revenue, a staff of professors, a goodly number of students and promise of adequate endowment. On account of the changed financial conditions the sky became overcast and navigation somewhat perilous. One by one the members of the staff withdrew, the

revenue shrank, the number of students dwindled and a feeling of discouragement became evident. The great war proved a time of severe testing. Many students, moved by the tremendous issues involved enlisted for active service, and the work became seriously deranged, but the doors were always kept open. Shortly after the return of peace and the coming back of our heroes, the only remaining member of the staff accepted an appointment elsewhere. At the call of the Church and the Board I take up the great task of further developing a theological college worthy of the best traditions of Presbyterianism, which shall fit men to be good ministers of Jesus Christ, provide training for lay workers, be an inspirational force in the days of reconstruction and a beacon tower of spiritual light on a coast where many fogs and fierce storms sweep the highways of thought and life.

In entering upon my new task I desire to record my sincere appreciation of two outstanding facts. First, the assurance of the cordial support of my brethren throughout the Synod of British Columbia in particular, and the Church generally. Second, the loyal and self-sacrificing spirit of the members of the Board who, during the dark days as well as the bright days, believed in the value of the Hall, refused to close its doors and faced heavy responsibilities with courage and spiritual devotion. This fine spirit is a guarantee of equally heroic service in these new days.

According to the custom of our Church an Inaugural Lecture ought to consider some aspect of the subject of the Chair to which I have been appointed. It would be comparatively easy to select some academic theme, but in view of the actual situation in the Church I have selected a very plain but vital subject, **THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP.**

I. The need of spiritual leadership is so apparent that I need not submit detailed evidence. Such things as the mad rush toward spiritualism, the eager quest for some voice of authority from the unseen, the stains of sin, the lives broken by vice or crushed by sorrow, the intellectual bondage which holds many in fear, the ignorance which fills the sky with superstition, the grinding pressure of poverty, the senseless squandering of material resources, the waste places in so many lives, the spirit of the slave instead of the glad song of the redeemed, the doubting forward gaze instead of the dominant note of final triumph all cry aloud for deliverance and leadership.

II. From time immemorial humanity has sought spiritual leadership in religion. In its most comprehensive interpretation religion is the reality of God in human life, the sum total of all the bridges between God and man. The non-Christian religions seek

to bring men into touch with the gods, so that their lives may be helped by these higher powers. The religion of the Hebrew people recognized that the universe was the expression of one thought springing from one mind and directed toward one purpose. The great central reality was God. To be in fellowship with God meant peace and power. This fellowship was effected through sacrificial offerings under the ministry of priest and prophet. Christianity recognizes that the God of the whole earth was revealed in Jesus Christ, and that in and through Him we come to an abundant life. In this new life men are guided by divine intelligence, comforted by divine love and fitted for the larger life beyond death. With such fundamental experiences the place of religion in spiritual leadership is a logical necessity and the history of humanity abundantly confirms this view. India, China, the Anglo-Saxon world today are what their fundamental religious conceptions have made them. In the broadest sense religion is the union of the spirit of humanity with the spirit of the Unseen Almighty will and power we call God the Father. When this union is vital there flows a life vastly superior to any life wedded to earth born achievements. This is so universally recognized that the conviction that world leadership must be found in the higher spiritual realm is practically unanimous. Those who associate their lives with organized religion openly admit it, and those who ignore all organized religious expression are found seeking communion with the unseen in many ways, some of which, under the influence of war experiences are assuming strange proportions. Amid all the pressure of materialism the human spirit is firmly convinced that the guiding star is from above, rather than from science or commercialism. As one has recently said, "An education which takes no account of religion is deliberately cutting itself off from every true source of inspiration, whilst an education which makes much of religion will go far toward reaching its goal."

III. There is a wide spread conviction that the Church, as the organ of religion has in some degree lost its place in spiritual leadership. Two observations ought to be made in this connection.

First. Within certain areas the Church unquestionably still has the controlling power and influence in the life that surrounds it. The great war has revealed the abiding place which organized religion has in the serious business of life and death. It is apparent to all who closely observe the life of their fellows that there are many persons in all our Churches whose lives are far removed from the appeal of selfish motives and whose fellowship with God makes them conquerors over fear and death. These belong to that goodly company who by loving service are seeking to make

righteousness dominant in the world. A careful study of religious statistics and the various branches of the service carried on by the Church will convince anyone seeking information, that instead of the Church falling in leadership the Church is steadily gaining in true spiritual authority and guidance. By its ministry to all classes, its development of the spiritual life, its persistent presentation of the perfect life of Christ, its sanctifying influence in daily life the Church has had no rival in the struggle for human betterment. It has been the human source of the unseen oil of grace which keeps the fires of conscience burning, and leads the individual to follow Christ in stern conflicts. Further, the Church has been the direct inspiration of all genuine reform movements. Nine-tenths of all the social workers in America are members of Christian Churches. The vast and varied philanthropy of the land is fed by the same spring. Trade has been softened, the home purified, men and women saved from vice or raised to virtue, intemperance and unclean living have been made to appear as intolerable monsters, politics broadened, social injustice challenged and overcome, and the spirit of brotherhood developed because of the conscience created by the Church. Anyone may well envy the minister of Christ, his place and power. Under God he is doing foundation work, beyond sight and beyond measure. His influence cleanses the atmosphere of life, purifies the motives and inspires the energies to service which will stand the searching eye of the Master of Life.

Second. Notwithstanding what has just been said it still remains true that over large areas of human society the Church does not directly exercise any spiritual leadership. But it is not true to say that here the Church has lost her spiritual leadership, for within these areas the Church never had such leadership, the work has not yet been accomplished. Doubtless many individuals who once accepted the spiritual leadership of the Church are now indifferent, and many who were once indifferent are now enthusiastic supporters. Looking at the present situation, there can be no doubt that within the Church many yearn for a leadership which they do not find. Their soul abhors the modern substitutes for genuine Christianity and they turn from organized Christianity to any school of thought which claims authority, even if such authority does violence to reason and fellowship. Others, feeling that the spiritual note has declined in many Churches, turn to social reform as a practical means of spiritual satisfaction. The whole situation demands careful study.

IV. Can we form any intelligent conception of the agencies which have contributed to this loss or lack of spiritual leadership?

There are two general considerations entering into this complex situation which require careful analysis.

First. Certain factors in the environment of the Church are responsible for much of the unsatisfactory situation.

(a) We begin by recognizing the fact that the appeal of the Gospel, which is the basis of spiritual leadership, falls upon human life which in its natural state is not responsive to spiritual values. The Biblical doctrine of sin finds its confirmation in the facts of the worldly life as at variance to the things of God. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit until these are spiritually revealed and discerned. Jesus in His ministry met this fact and deplored the hardness of heart and spiritual blindness of men who in the presence of his matchless preaching and marvellous works remained selfish and sinning. The minister is engaged in a task demanding on the part of his hearers a spiritual response to all that is highest in life. The fact of sin in the human heart is responsible for much which the world places to the discredit of the modern ministry. Will the critic also impeach Jesus because his enemies did not obey him? The popular idea that the work of the Church in overcoming iniquity is comparatively easy, fails to grasp the fact that sin is the deepest, most persistent and deadly fact in the world. Only those who seriously give themselves to the salvation of the sinner know how terrible the conflict is. The criticisms of the Church on account of failure to bring in the golden age of industrial and economic harmony show a pathetic ignorance of the actual changes to be effected in human hearts before social conditions are changed. If the task of the Church is as simple as the critic assumes, why has he not, with his superior wisdom, taken the work in hand and demonstrated the worthlessness of the Church and the superiority of secularism? Such a transformation of society as he advocates would crown any man with imperishable glory. The fact that the critics are not accomplishing what the Church has not yet achieved shows that they too find the task beyond their wisdom and leadership. That terrible word, sin, still has meaning and its wrecking power in life remains a contradiction of the theories which deny its reality.

(b) There is the further fact that the worldly minded in every Church, failing to grasp the seriousness of the task, often criticize the minister adversely as a visionary and weaken his real power. The worldly minded have no real desire for spiritual nourishment but demand preaching and service which are spectacular and entertaining, with such evidences of success as large crowds, collections and social activities. This element in every Church insists

upon a programme of visible results, almost on a commercial basis, instead of being willing to pay the personal price for genuine spiritual efficiency.

(c) Another element making for loss or lack of spiritual leadership is the unwillingness of many Christian people to safeguard the very foundations upon which such leadership is based. The mad rush for wealth, the crumbling family altar, the growing love for entertainment, the desecration of the Sabbath, the fondness for display and the desire to become social leaders of fashion all rise as a barrier before the spiritual appeal of the preacher for self-denying service. The worldly Christian creates an atmosphere laden with poison in which the finer aspirations toward leadership fade and die. Even Jesus could do no mighty works because of the unbelief of the people in his own city. How can the modern minister be expected to succeed under conditions which limited the Son of God in his mighty ministry of blessing?

(d) There is also the disastrous effect of scepticism regarding the Scriptures as a revelation of God to man. In the presence of such doubt the voice of spiritual authority weakens, and this factor is in large measure responsible for the spread of isms and fads as well as the uncertain note heard in many modern pulpits. There can be no genuine spiritual leadership if the minister is not sure of his message, and the people will not prepare for the battle if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound.

These and other facts which might be noted have created an environment hostile to the cause of spiritual leadership. Every great prophet has faced the same facts in various forms. If the critic understood his own heart and the failure of his own effort to make himself all he ought to be, he would say less about the failure of those who work and die for the good of others where he is either idle or seeking his own ease and success.

Second. We pass now from the environment of the Church to the Church itself. And here there are certain conditions which have contributed to the loss or lack of spiritual leadership. The attempt to point out these conditions occasions a sense of pain as if one would criticise his mother, and the Church is the spiritual mother of us all. The equipment of the Church in buildings, training and organization, the vast army of volunteer workers, the great financial resources, the inspiration which yearly calls battalions of young men and women from worldly opportunity and sends them forth joyfully to the dark places of the earth to claim the nations for Christ, the same inspiration which grips men and women of wealth and scholarship and leads them from their comfortable

homes down to the slums of our great cities there to save the fallen, the spirit which has faced the deadly opposition of cruel and ungodly men for ages and which emerges from each struggle with a richer song of triumph and a more glorious record of heroism, these things cannot be regarded as superficial or commercial. Therefore, any attempt to deal with the failures of the Church must also remember the magnitude of the task to be done, the work already achieved and the spirit which still unflinchingly presses forward to final triumph. Let us now turn to some of the facts which have contributed to the alleged loss or lack of power in spiritual leadership.

(a) The lack of a consuming passion for the things of God. We have just emerged from a great war which has tested the Empire and the Church. The heart of victory was a demand for righteousness which became a passion and drew all resources to its side. This spirit of passion in life is the heart of all true greatness, not only in war but in commerce, exploration, invention, scientific and academic research. It has been the white light of the evangel in every forward march for Christ. In its inspiration and power great things have been done by every Church but these have been done not so much by the Church as a whole as by the much smaller band of zealous spirits. What would the Church become if all her members shared this passion in life for Christ? Think of the multiplication of power if every preacher, singer, teacher, leader, giver and prayer became the abiding place of this consuming passion. The whole community would feel the uplift and turn to the source of its new found life.

(b) There has been a dimness of vision in the majority of the members of the Church. This doubtless accounts for the lack of passion. The people of God today do not see the urgency of the task as our Lord saw it, or as the great prophets and preachers of all ages have seen it. The sense of sin and the appreciation of holiness are dull, the needs of the victims of our social system and industrial monopolies are but indifferently recognized and the heavy hand of materialism not felt. Amid the confused voices of the age the clarion call of the prophets of the Lord has been heard, but it has not been welcomed by the people. These voices have been welcomed by the spiritually minded but viewed with suspicion by world Christians and rationalists. The priest rather than the prophet has been in the seat of authority, but here as elsewhere all priestly ministries fail when the prophetic function becomes secondary in the Church.

(c) There has been an unwillingness to make the sacrifices necessary to establish the rule of Jesus in society. Within recent years there has been a growing recognition of this fact and a

determination to make fuller surrender. The Forward Movement brought into clearer light what was believed by many before, that the programme of the Church has been too small to challenge large sacrifices. With ever growing wealth, ever increasing membership and ever expanding knowledge of the needs of humanity at home and abroad, there must be a corresponding programme in order to maintain the active demands of faith. There has been a failure to place the missionary ideal of Jesus where he placed it. There can be no doubt that the evangelization of the world is the great business of the Church. Yet in the face of this the missionary programme has been in a secondary place. The amount of thought and money expended on the Church at home when compared with the corresponding service abroad emphasizes the shortcoming of the Church. The conviction is universal that failure to make the evangelization of the world at home and abroad the ideal of service has led to failure to win universal peace. Had the ideals of Jesus been sufficiently well known to be the determining factor in these days of reconstruction, the day of brotherhood would have been ushered in. The sacrifices in war and the clearer vision as a result have so seized the spirit of the Church that there is reason to believe that the new programme will be dominant, masterful, all conquering, demanding a sacrifice adequate to its ultimate success.

(d) There has been a failure to meet the requirements of religious education, which is the foundation of our whole spiritual structure. Every one must recognize the invaluable services of many of our Sunday School teachers who, without any technical training but with knowledge of the Gospel and a passion for souls, have profoundly influenced the lives of their pupils. Yet it is the firm conviction of those best fitted to know that the Sunday School, as a soul winning and soul inspiring agency, is not adequately fulfilling its function. No secular school could maintain its standard without properly trained teachers. The work of the Sunday School is much more difficult than that of the public school teacher, yet in many of our Churches absolutely no provision is made for teacher training. The Church cannot win the world for the Kingdom of God until it wins the children, and in order to win the children the home and the Sunday School must be trained for the great task.

(e) Another serious drawback is the low standard of morality so painfully evident in prominent leaders in the Church. Lack of perfection is universal and many failures are due to lack of training and bad environment. When, however, those who assume the place of leadership are found guilty of serious offences against

the principles and spirit of Jesus, guilty of business methods and a makeshift morality openly repudiated even by the ethics of the business world as criminal, the cause of spiritual leadership suffers a severe shock. The discriminating can discern the hypocrite or moral weakening within the leader, but the masses judge the Church by the leaders. If there had been a consistent life behind every profession the Church would be invincible.

V. We come now to consider how the Church may attain more fully her rightful spiritual leadership in the world. There is but one remedy and that is to begin where we have failed and return to the fountain head of knowledge and power. In order to appreciate the problem it is necessary to remember that Jesus appointed the Church as the representative of his kingdom on earth and endowed the Church with the necessary equipment for spiritual leadership. No one claims that the Church as organized on earth is the perfect embodiment of the Kingdom of God. At the same time the Church is the visible embodiment of that Kingdom and was entrusted by our Lord with the great task of establishing his Kingdom among men. The closer the Church approaches the ideals of Jesus the more vitally does it manifest the spiritual glory of the Kingdom. It will assist us in our inquiry if we recall the fact that when Jesus began to establish a spiritual leadership on earth he called men into his service and trained them for their great task. They were working men but in his school they became outstanding leaders. The question we ask is, How did they become leaders? The answer is simple and direct. They became leaders because they became subject to Jesus' mind and will, the temple in which he abode, the medium through which he worked for the redemption of the world. Jesus assured them that if they would surrender to him that he would give them victory individually over evil, and equip them for world organization. He declared that when he was lifted up from the earth he would draw all men unto himself. Their great business was to declare the gospel of the uplifted Christ. This proclamation was a gospel, not a philosophy, and peace and power came when men by faith accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord, even before they understood enough about it to construct a system of theological interpretation. He declared his life within the soul would become a well springing up unto everlasting life, a constant supply of satisfying spiritual power. Thus Jesus as the revealer of God to man becomes the source of power within his disciples for spiritual leadership. It is now necessary to further examine the claim that the life and message of Jesus is the essential for such leadership.

(a) We begin with the stupendous claim that Jesus Christ

is not only the light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world but it was by him the worlds were formed and by him all things consist. Science is pressing along the highways of experiment and demonstration in the attempt to grasp reality, and every new discovery but confirms the claim of Jesus that the universe is the expression of divine reason and radiant with a benevolent purpose. The development and destiny of the universe is determined by a creative will, working toward a goal worthy of him whom we call God and Father. On account of sin the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain waiting for the day of deliverance. Jesus, the centre of all being, lived the overcoming life of spiritual leadership. His own declaration is, "Because I live ye shall live also." This overcoming victory he bestows upon those who yield themselves to him for spiritual leadership.

(b) We now approach the secret of power for spiritual leadership. In the light of the New Testament it comes in the vital union of Christ with the resources and powers of the human soul. Paul, Peter and John each retained their individuality but each shared the indwelling spirit of Jesus, and in this oneness is the secret of their testimony and power. How is this union formed? What is the process in man's spirit? How did the disciples enter into it? How can we enter into it? In the language of the New Testament there is great variety of expression but one great announcement. Such terms as faith, trust, belief, look, come, all lead along one great highway to the centre of the soul's life where a great transaction takes place which we call choice, decision, acceptance, or better, the Biblical term, "faith." This is the personal, moral resolution which takes Jesus as Saviour and Lord. The mighty fact of Jesus as Lord of life, peace, joy, immortality is at the heart of reality. Let a man accept this, and he is constrained to a mighty service, and enters a unique experience. The call of such a leader is more imperious than the call of the Empire to our Canadian men. The response is masterful, all conquering, inclusive of all interests. The waves of spiritual power are as real and valid as the tides and the sunshine, and as easily demonstrated as the laws of gravitation. The minister does not create these spiritual facts. He accepts them, links his life to them and becomes the medium of their transmission to the world. Just as the scientist works with great facts, according to their own inherent possibilities, and thereby produces the splendid results of his ideals, so the Christian working with the great facts of the spiritual realm, according to the inherent principles of these same facts, produces the higher order of character called the "new creation."

(c) It is easy to show that vital faith soon issues in spiritual leadership. Such faith carries its note of spiritual authority and instinctively men feel that it is a voice from the eternal. Every great book, every great song, every inspiring message finds its appeal in the spiritual vision which has awakened the faith of the soul in the higher realities. Abraham beginning his journey, Paul finishing his course with joy, Daniel calmly facing the lions, Greenfell battling with icebergs off Labrador and Gipsy Smith winning by his tender appeals, all have the vision of God, the union with the unseen spiritual world which brings fellowship, peace and power. The man of faith who accepts the revelation of God in Christ and who already feels the glory of the Kingdom has such an inner sense of the values of the spiritual, that he will rather, than compromise his inheritance, die with his face to the enemy as the dawn of the Son of Righteousness falls upon his closing eyes.

(d) And here we face the crucial test of leadership. We all recognize that there are those whose faith and consequent spiritual victory are beyond question. Yet this type has not become the dominant influence in the Church. The fact is well known and various explanations are offered. Why do so few Christians reach the uplands of an all conquering faith? Can only a few choice souls ascend? Must the great majority of Church members live on the lower level or is it possible for all to win the victories of the great saints? Why the present unsatisfactory condition of the Church with its lack of spiritual leadership? Some claim that it is due to the failure of the pulpit to present the truth in dogmatic form. These hold that dogmatic authority would produce the higher type. Others claim it is due to the failure of the pulpit to interpret the gospel in terms of modern thought. These claim that the gospel is not understood scientifically. Nothing is more indefinite than this term, "modern thought." In the minds of many it means rationalism in religion and Unitarianism in Christology. But these views are very old. They have been tried and failed so often that no need experiment further. But if by modern thought is meant in terms of the knowledge and experience of this age instead of the knowledge and experience of the people in the days of Isaiah, Paul or Luther, we reach the most serious problem confronting the Church. In what manner can the substance of the gospel be presented to the masses who come to the Churches, so that they may know the constraining love of Christ and be moved by faith to take Him as their Saviour and Lord, and then go out to live the overcoming life?

Let us begin with Jesus' ideal and method. He came to seek

and save the lost. He was profoundly interested in people, went where they were, talked to them, worked with them and urged them to follow Him for their own spiritual good. He made them feel their vital need, and also that their real help was in Himself. It was the personal attitude and interest, sympathetic, faithful and persistent. His passion was personal, seeking the lost, teaching the saved. His attitude to speculative, abstract, intellectual questions, dogmatic and doctrinal issues, was altogether secondary, and when such were presented to him he immediately turned the discussion to personal responsibility and opportunity. This leads us to the open door of spiritual leadership, the fundamental and all-absorbing passion for the spiritual welfare of the people. Is the ministry profoundly interested in people for their salvation, or merely interested in subjects, in themes, in doctrines, in Church organizations and Church programmes? Are the members of the Church interested in the lost? Sweeping statements are surely not warranted in this connection, but judging from the conduct of the ordinary Church member, can we say that he is vitally interested in the things which were the heart of Jesus' activities? Yet it is clear that if Christian people are not personally interested in the lost and needy, they cannot win them, and hence cannot lead them. Here is one of the weaknesses of the modern Church, and here also is the starting point for regaining spiritual leadership. As Jesus' spirit and method made him the world's Saviour by being the world's servant, that same spirit and method will confer spiritual leadership upon the Church. This passion is the real missionary spirit, whether at home or abroad. The connecting link between Jesus' almighty power and the inefficiency of the Church is the Master's love for the lost and delight in the saved. Reinstating this in the Church, and every congregation will become the centre of the most aggressive and sane evangelism and the home of the communion of saints and a real brotherhood. Such a Church would abound in joy, harmony, brightness, heroic service and power. It will be so attractive that every normal man and woman, boy and girl will be eager to become partners in such a life. To accomplish our great aim we must make spiritual realities interesting to the people. To do this we must interest ourselves in the people to whom we would preach the gospel. In the New Testament story the secret is fully unfolded. The disciples did not come to their power by simply holding certain views, but by beholding Jesus Christ. He was the one who appeared to them in the indefinable charm and attractiveness of a divine revelation. The uplift of life was in and from Him and they followed with undying enthusiasm. It is ever thus. Jesus Christ fascinates the life that beholds Him. He wins and holds the life that enters into His life. Christian enthusiasm is not something originating in some view or theory or

attitude toward any doctrine or system of doctrine, but the native and natural response of the soul of man to Jesus Christ. It is the overflow of the soul's deepest joy. The problem of regaining spiritual leadership is just the problem of returning to the Lord Jesus Christ for that fulness of life which will grip, organize and constrain the ministry to this all-conquering service. The same principle applies to the membership of the Church. Suggestions as to other ways of presenting the truth, new organizations, more doctrinal preaching, and larger liberality, all have value, but the abiding and all-sufficient source of guidance is the indwelling Christ Himself fully understood as revealed, and interpreted as experienced. Anything which suggests anything else as adequate to meet our present needs, is offering the shadow for the substance.

VI.—We come now to examine the bearing of this upon the work of training men for the ministry. In view of the position just emphasized, only a brief reference is necessary. The Church is facing a world convulsed, aroused, hopeful, if fearful. A new social order is being evolved. It is an opportunity of unparalleled significance.

The Theological College must make a very valuable contribution to the life which will dominate the new age. There are several things essential in a well-equipped college, such as proper buildings, proper equipment, competent staff of professors, consecrated students and a praying, sympathetic constituency. All these are before our minds, and with their mention I must pass on to consider the spiritual elements involved.

Theology is the science of God, the knowledge that the very nature of things, the guiding power of the universe, the ultimate destiny of man is God, who as moral ruler and Saviour of mankind stands in definite relation to every soul. Theology has been named the "queen of sciences." It is vastly more. It is the final philosophy of the universe, the ultimate metaphysic of being and reality. God as the living God has revealed his nature in the Person of Jesus Christ, and the record of that revelation is the Bible. He has declared his glory in nature, has registered his judgments in history and re-affirmed his gospel in human experience. God has not only spoken in the past, he speaks now, not only was, but is, and is to come. The facts of theology are as unchanging as God Himself, but theology, the interpretation of these facts, as science the interpretation of nature, and philosophy the interpretation of human life, all come dressed in new garments with every intellectual, moral and social springtime. It could not be otherwise. Should our conception of God become static, human intelligence would become mechanical. The true interpreter of the spiritual world is

the prophet or preacher, who in vital fellowship with the realities of spiritual life unfolds the purpose of God until perfection is attained. The priest has long dominated the world. In the new age the prophet will lead the hosts of the Lord to victory.

The problem of theological training is the interpretation of the facts of theology, such as the absolute perfection and goodness of God, the Incarnation of God in human life, the atonement God has made on account of human sin, the new life of fellowship because of that atonement, the kingdom of the spirit, the unity of the race, the sovereignty of love, and the deathlessness of the soul. In this great sphere what is the function of the theological college? Time will permit only a few suggestions.

(a.) It is to interpret these facts of religion so that under the Spirit of God they will fire the enthusiasm of the student with a passion to know reality, feel the glory of the new experience and then preach this truth to others. Vital living is the true preparation for vital preaching. It ought to be taken for granted that this is universally recognized, but it is to be feared that some theological colleges have presented these great truths as a mere source book of information to be learned in college and then passed on to congregations for their information, a purely intellectual process, leaving the soul indifferent and the heart cold. Preachers with such an attitude may present much valuable material, construct great arguments and present weighty didactic sermons, but there can be no passion for evangelism, no personal consciousness of God's presence and no winsome appeal to the sinning, sorrowing world. In my judgment a theological college ought to be an institution where the student is led into the very presence of God, where he not only learns about the great facts of religion, but is also profoundly moved by these same facts, where he not only passes examinations on the subject matter of training, but also has a yearning desire to proclaim the message therein contained. The doctrines taught must become matters of experience. The Deity of Christ is not a speculative dogma, but the very foundation of our loyalty to Christ. For if He is not the Son of God as He claimed, can we, ought we to follow Him? And if He is the Son of God, must we not be absolutely loyal to Him and His great task? The doctrine of Immortality is not a pious hope of life beyond death, but the incoming of a spiritual power, even life eternal, by which men live now and in virtue of which they live beyond the death of the body. A theological college, in addition to making great scholars, as is its privilege and duty, must also assist in the making of great saints and great evangelical preachers. Here as elsewhere the imparting of facts and theories is but preliminary to education, its true purpose being to inspire people for the business of living.

When the spirit is alive to the highest realities, facts and theories become so much material to consecrate to the achievement of the ideal. Without such vital experiences all the facts in the universe are impotent to unlock the door which leads to the realms of spiritual glory. This principle is recognized universally. There must be life before it can be interpreted. If a theological college does not make a large contribution to vital Christian experience in its life and teaching, it will contribute but little to the history of redemption on earth in the record of its graduates.

(b.) A theological college ought to provide practical training in definite Christian work. I do not mean provide lectures and text books on practical training, such as are given in every college, but provide the student with some definite Christian work and assist him in doing that work successfully. Colleges which have required this have shown a wisdom which has been fully justified in the records of their graduates. For this reason students, during the session, ought to undertake Christian work as part of their regular training. The college must be a spiritual clinic where professors, city pastors and Christian workers come to relate their experiences, discuss hard cases, deal with situations found trying, and handle actual facts in concrete relations. A student passing through three years of such hand to hand work goes out as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Christian work will mean something of a definite type of service to be rendered.

But to undertake such work will mean a definite change of policy in Westminster Hall. Today almost every student is engaged in mission work every Sabbath to secure financial support necessary to remain in the Hall. Under these conditions the student must not only devote much of his time to prepare for his Sabbath supply, but he has no opportunity of engaging in work in connection with the college. Many colleges have solved the financial problem for the student by making provision for scholarships and bursaries adequate to the needs of the students, thereby enabling them to give all their time to their college work and as part of it take definite Christian service in connection with the city Churches under the supervision of the college. I desire to strongly urge this consideration and appeal to the Church to so equip the Hall with scholarships that every student can have the opportunity of undivided study and training. Such a change of policy would within a short time revolutionize the emphasis in theological training.

In connection with practical training the theological ought also to afford the opportunity of training for all classes of Christian workers. Reference has already been made to the failure of

the Church to provide teacher training. The college can lead in this, and already Westminster Hall has taken steps whereby a school of training will be opened in the autumn, offering the Churches the best service toward the solution of their difficulties in the work of religious education.

(c.) The theological college ought also to become a great missionary centre, fostering the spirit which makes the evangelization at home and abroad a vital conviction. A minister is trained, not to serve his own interests, but the interests of the Kingdom of God. World evangelism is the goal of the Church, and this includes many activities. Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Social Service, Redemptive Work, Gospel Missions and Educational Work ought all to have a prominent place in the life of a theological college.

In addition to the general situation there is much in Vancouver which suggests that Westminster Hall ought to become the centre of special missionary training. The opportunities for such training are evident when the fields are noted, such as Home Missions, a large Oriental constituency embracing all the languages needed for foreign service, a Community House with rapidly extending influence, a General Hospital, University, a fine spirit of inter-denominational fellowship and desire for co-operation in theological education. With such open doors we ought in co-operation with our sister Churches, build up a training school for missionaries. Instead of going abroad to acquire the language, the preliminary studies could be taken here, while at the same time the students would become a band of active workers, which would do much to link the Churches in aggressive sympathetic evangelism with the incoming nations.

These suggestions indicate the lines along which Westminster Hall will endeavour to make its contribution to the realization of the Kingdom of God. Every effort will be made to secure the ablest professors, to give the most thorough academic training and the most intimate acquaintance with the actual work of the Church. We aim at the finest scholarship on fire with true evangelical zeal, consecrated to definite Christian work. There is no valid reason why a theological college should not be the home of the most profound scholarship and warmest Christian devotion. I fear that there has been some drifting away from the faith once delivered to the saints. The spirit of the age with its rationalizing tendency, its literary criticism and its worship of scientific evolution, has misled many within and without the Church. The result is that much preaching has degenerated into lecturing on scientific, literary and social subjects, without any vision of the eternal

verities which alone can redeem the soul and fire the Church with a passion for God and humanity. But this is only accidental or incidental, not necessarily bound up with the spirit, ideals or results of true modern scholarship. It is the result of failure to penetrate into the heart of things, of failure to include all the facts in one's philosophy of life. The last generation felt the weight of materialism and rationalism in its thinking. The present tendency in science and philosophy is strongly in favor of idealism and a spiritual interpretation of the world and human life. In the front rank of scientists and philosophers stand many men eminent for their loyalty to Jesus Christ and the things of the Kingdom. There is nothing to fear from true scholarship in any department of human thought. In scholarship, as in life, the one thing to be feared is falsehood, unreality, sham, pretence. Every scientific fact, every achievement of the human spirit makes a real contribution to preaching power. The world is always in danger of attributing to scientific and commercial achievement a power these do not possess, and of overlooking the real springs of human leadership. The very success of the material, commercial and scientific interests tends to fasten attention upon the concrete, the visible, the things even which perish. But the guiding star of all human daring and achievement which have contributed so largely to human betterment, has been the idealism of the spirit which leaped beyond the visible, the material and the perishing, to find their explanation and justification in the light of some eternal principle which, if followed, leads on to perfection, harmony of being and God. Religion has always been an essential to the highest success, as it alone appeals to the highest in thought, and consequently, the only thing which has lifted men beyond the selfish and fixed their gaze upon eternal realities.

The modern preacher need not be ashamed to stand with the one perfect man the world has ever had, the Son of Man and the Son of God, with the Old Testament Prophets, with the Apostles who followed our Lord, with Paul, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Augustine, Savonarola, Huss, Luther, Know, Wycliffe, Wesley, Moody, Brooks and Beecher. Every great age has largely been the creation of a great preacher. When Israel was drifting into idolatry it was always the prophet who lifted up his voice and aroused the nation to save it from disaster. When Italy was stagnant and sin-soaked it was a preacher, Savonarola, who smote the sleeping conscience and made possible a new day for his nation. When Europe was playing a parrot's part and trafficking in virtue it was a preacher, Luther, who shook a continent to its foundations until only the things which could not be shaken remained, and a new age was ushered in. When Scotland was sunk in ignorance and devoid of

aspirations it was a preacher, Knox, who challenged the old order, defied the tyrants and called the people to walk the highway of freedom, the achievement of which has not only made Scotland great, but enabled her to make a magnificent contribution to the world's greatness. When England was becoming decadent it was a preacher, Wesley, who sounded the danger signal and awoke her to her great mission. When the passion for the lost aroused by Wesley died down and formalism reigned it was a preacher, Booth, who stirred the world with his clarion call to service and gave new hope to millions. Every preacher true to Christ is releasing and transmitting a spiritual power which breaks upon the shores of the soul as waves of heavenly light. With the elevation of the spirit of man every commercial, scientific and social value is immeasurably increased. This is an age when the heart of man cries out for reality and spiritual efficiency. As the great war has passed into history, the Christian forces are girding their loins for a great campaign to crown our Redeemer King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In this great undertaking the preacher will have his true piece of leadership. The psychological and spiritual conditions are such as to warrant the hope that we are on the very threshold of an age of great preachers . . . preaching.

It is ours to maintain, equip and strengthen Westminster Hall so that as a training school for the ministry its contribution may stand unashamed beside the great Presbyterian colleges of the past and present. The outlook is most inspiring. Already funds for a new building have been guaranteed from the Forward Movement Thankoffering. Within a reasonable time the Hall, in its new home, ought to stand beside our University, a credit to Presbyterianism and a challenge to ministerial service. Today there are thirty-one students studying for the ministry of our Church. Of these, seventeen will be in the Hall this session, and the others are making their way through the preparatory stages. We face great possibilities, but our needs are great. We need another professor to take up his work next session, bursaries and scholarships to meet the urgent needs of the students and provide for advanced studies, and a more generous financial support to carry on the regular work. In these days when we live in the blaze of generosity and self-sacrificing devotion to the service of God and humanity, it ought to be a great joy for many of our Presbyterian people to invest their money in this college, which stands as the home-base for universal service. If you take Westminster Hall to your hearts as the youngest child of our Church in this province, nourish it in faith, prayer and love, support it with your means and send your boys and young men to be trained for the Master's service, we can with assurance believe that within a few years

the days of small things shall have passed away, and instead shall stand forth a college strong in the affections of the Church, strong in spiritual and academic leadership, strong in the men who shall go out to fill the ranks of the workers, and strong in the building up of those principles which shall mould the life of the community for the Kingdom of God.

Let our united prayer for the Church be the prayer of the sainted leader for the mission dear to his heart:—

"Shine on, O Church, thy radiance bright  
Shall spread o'er all the eastern sky;  
Morn breaks apace from gloom and night,  
Shine on, and bless the pilgrim's eye.

"Shine on, O Church, till earth redeemed,  
In dust shall bid its idols fall;  
And millions, where thy radiance beamed,  
Shall crown the Saviour Lord of all."

With such an ideal, prayer and consecrated passion, the spiritual life of the Church would soon become so dominant that the ministry would become the leader of victorious armies awaiting the return of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.



