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ARTICLE II.

THE RELATIONS OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

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THE human heart has always been conscious of demerit and of accountability to some being higher than itself. This consciousness demonstrates the existence of a religious sentiment in man wholly distinct from the gifts of grace through Christ. The natural heart has sought to do away with demerit by sacrifices and the interposition of a priesthood. In this way all nations have attempted to make atonement with their deities. What is the essential idea of this priesthood?

There is great difficulty in forming a conception of a spirit. There is difficulty in satisfying one's self of the actual fact of communication with a spirit. From this fact man has had recourse to some visible mode of expressing the aspirations of his heart. An altar flaming with the burning sacrifice was one of the earliest methods which man adopted. The more it struck the senses, the more it probably seemed to man to attract the notice of God. Cain and Abel were their own ministers at the altar. As population increased, one man would offer sacrifices, and become the priest of many. At first, from the relation of guardianship and authority in which a father stood to his family, he probably ministered at the altar for them, and stood, as it were, between them and God. As families clustered in communities, the gray headed patriarch would naturally assume this office, as well as the governing power, for the whole tribe. And, when his duties of government became numerous, the office of the priesthood separated itself from the governing power, and was confided to a separate class in the community. In this way, mankind have established a communication with the Deity through the mediation of a sacrifice and a priesthood ministering at the altar. The first element, then, in the idea of a priesthood, is a middle point, a mediation between God and man; a something to supply to man a sensible object of approach, to represent God to the eye. And, inasmuch as the first history of mankind was a history of action, not of thought, another primary element was a reconciliation to God by means of an outward act.

Man was not then ready for the announcement: "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." If, from this starting point in the development of a priesthood, namely, a mediation that should strike the senses and give scope for action, we come down, we shall find the first idea variously modified. It will be sufficient for the present purpose to say, that the priest came to be considered a necessary intervention between man and his Maker, without whose offices man could not make acceptable approach to God.

Taking this to be the natural course of the development of man's religious instincts without the aid of revelation, we see, on the one hand, the origin, offices, and proper limitation of a priesthood, and, on the other, how the wisdom of God gradually prepared the heart of man for the manifestation of a Divine Mediator, God manifest in the flesh; and how, moreover, this Mediator was the grand perfection of the idea of a priesthood; an idea naturally developed in the religious consciousness of man. In addition to this preparation for the coming of Christ, a single people, the descendants of Abraham, were selected and especially trained for a more enlightened understanding of the offices of Christ. A system of sacrifices for sin was instituted, and a particular family was set apart to present these sacrifices at the altar, to make atonement for the people. In these priests we see an institution similar to that which the religious instincts of the natural heart had brought into being among the nations of the earth; made more effectual by the interposition and immediate oversight of God working through direct manifestations on the hearts of the Israelites to educate them for the personal appearance of the Saviour. At the appointed time the Saviour came, fulfilling the desire of man's religious sentiment, and crowning the Jewish institutions. Here terminated the *necessity* of a human priesthood. Henceforth man was to come to God, not by the mediation of his fellow-men, a changeable, imperfect and temporary priesthood, but through one Mediator "who because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood." The priesthood, necessitated by man's religious consciousness and established by the Jewish law, "had infirmity," a liability to error and sin. But our High Priest is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once when he offered up himself."

Christ, then, is High Priest for the whole world, and in him has terminated the necessity of a human priesthood. But no one needs to be told that not all even of those who have the knowledge of Christ are content to make him their sole High Priest and Mediator. Christ crucified is to "the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness." The natural disposition of men is to stay behind in the old dispensation of a human priesthood. This is something of their own creation, they fancy. They linger on the ruins of a scaffolding, unwilling to recognize the glory of the new structure from which the scaffolding has fallen away. They spurn a free gift. This is the action of the natural heart. And the heart renewed by grace, from the want of a teachable disposition, or humility, or light, may not have submitted all its natural instincts to the power of its new life, to be newly directed or wholly cut off. Hence the natural propensity to seek reconciliation with God by some human instrumentality, to debase the mediation of the great High Priest by the intermixture of the old idea of a human priesthood may be found lurking in the hearts of many in the church in our day. It may be that some are unconsciously regarding their pastor as in some sense a priest after the old dispensation, and weakening his power over themselves and his efficiency in the church, by misapprehending his true position in the plan of redemption. It is, therefore, well, by way of contrast, to consider the essential character of a Gospel ministry.

1. The minister is a *teacher*.

In the first ages of Christianity there was to be built up a church out of an ignorant and idolatrous world. The doctrines and principles of this church set themselves in opposition to the whole current of established religions. Its Gospel struck at the root of self-righteousness, preached self-sacrifice, and introduced to the religious consciousness the new element of a Divine life, a principle of redemption not proceeding from within the natural heart, but coming from on high, and mingling like leaven with the elements there till the whole should become pure. There was a necessity, therefore, for reiterated instruction, "line upon line;" and, accordingly, we find the last command of Christ to the apostles to be: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." The apostles were teachers of their own and succeeding generations. They travelled about, establishing and instructing churches, and writing letters for the confirmation of the new

disciples. From the character of the new converts, from their difference in nationality and religious belief, it was hard to preserve the purity of the original Gospel. The converted Jew could not at first see how the Gospel dispensation did away the dispensation of the law, and was for imposing on the gentile convert the law of Moses. The converted pupil of oriental or Greek philosophy could not free his mind from the mystical doctrines of his heathen teachers, and was for interpreting the mission of Christ by the false dogmas of his former faith. Occasionally a bold, presumptuous, ambitious, untruthful man would draw off the unsteady and the lovers of new things, and would seek to build up himself and a party, and not Christ. So that, in the first century, great errors crept into the church; and even the divinity of Christ and the grand characteristic of his mission, salvation by the cross alone, began to be disputed. The necessity of teaching, therefore, continued to be urgent after the first dissemination of the Gospel by the apostles, and the same reasons have urged the indispensable duty, down to the present time, of maintaining a separate body of men in the church devoted to the work of instruction. What Paul says to the Hebrews can be fitly said to all churches among us: "For when, *for the time*, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you *again* which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat."

2. The minister is a *governor*.

The church is an organized society, and there is no more inherent objection to government and rulers in it than there is in a State. Once establish a union of individuals, for any purpose, and we must admit rules and rulers, constitutions and governors. In this respect, a religious community differs not from a community established for civil ends. The common sense of man has acted on this necessity in all societies. The question, then, is, where in the religious community shall authority be vested? The Apostle Paul has given us glimpses of the organization of the primitive church (1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv.). In these we see that authority was recognized as a necessary element in the church constitution. This authority was vested in a class called "elders," who had the superintendence of the interests of the religious community. Without considering whether originally there was a distinction between the *ruling* elder and the *teaching* elder, it will be sufficient to show that subsequently, before the last of

Paul's epistles were written, the teacher in the church was spoken of as possessing authority. Paul says to the Hebrews: "Remember those who have the rule over you," namely, "those who have spoken unto you the word of life" (13: 7). "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account" (13: 17). By those who are mentioned as "speaking the word of God" and "watching for souls" are meant the teachers of the church, and Paul plainly declares that they possess authority, and calls on the church to obey them. The apostle's requirement of obedience would have the good effect, alike on the Jewish and Pagan converts, of checking that arrogance of man's judgment which disdains the position of a humble learner, and which thus fails to acquire a docility of mind and submissiveness under God's own discipline and instruction. There is an interesting connection between docility before a teacher and humility before God. Or rather, there is a law of the mind which associates one with the other, and where we find the former we see the latter, or are well-nigh confident of its near approach. There is in some minds a love of the truth which pays an unconscious reverence to all its sources, and which is prepared beforehand to adore Him "who is the way, the truth, and the life." The more docility of mind is made a habit, and, especially, the more the young are trained into a teachable disposition, the more readily will the instruction of God be received. In requiring obedience to religious teachers, there seems to be an adaptation to this law of our minds. But the "rule over" the churches implied an authority embracing all the religious interests of the church, and not simply that influence which is naturally exerted by the teacher in imparting religious truth. That this power is not absolute, is manifest both from the New Testament, where the church as a body is spoken of as having a voice in the election of officers and in the discipline of members, and from the spirit of Christianity, which tends to develop the liberty of the individual in all his relations to his fellow-men. For the thoughts of his heart man is accountable to God alone. As far as these are concerned, he is free from all subordination except to his Creator. It is when man comes into relations with his fellow-men that he subjects himself to constituted earthly authority. Of course, this authority can exert itself only so far as thoughts express themselves in speech or in outward acts. For it is by

these that man comes into contact with his fellows. And when these tend to thwart the aims of the social compact, he is bound to submit himself to the authority of this compact, and to its outward representatives in the person of the ruler. To apply this principle to the relations of a Christian to the church of which he is a member, we have, *first*, to observe, that the pastor, who is the Scriptural ruler, does not by virtue of his authority interfere with freedom of thought. The Christian cannot well help having his own opinions, and he is entitled to them, always remembering that he is accountable to God for a right use of his reason and knowledge in forming those opinions. And, by virtue of the element of brotherhood in the church, and the oneness of all in Christ, he is entitled to advise with his pastor in view of the adoption of any religious measure. And, according as his gift is a gift of common sense and sound judgment, and his life has established for him a reputation for purity of purpose, so far his advice will be influential. But, in the *second* place, we observe, that, when a religious measure has been decided upon, it is the duty of the individual member to submit to the judgment of his pastor, and readily cooperate in carrying out the measure; since a holding back, and a public questioning of the pastor's judgment, or a fault-finding spirit, interfere with the designs of the church organization. These designs are the perfecting of the whole body by the effectual working of *every part*. There will sometimes be honest differences of opinion about religious measures without any impeachment of the piety or zeal of the individuals. What is there to be done, if there is nowhere a power of decision and an authority to give this decision a certain sanction? if, in addition to this, the authority does not so appeal to the conscience as to require individual preferences to be laid aside? The essential condition of success in the church is good-will and harmony. And it is with this sentiment that Paul exhorts the Thessalonians "to esteem" their pastors and teachers "very highly *in love* for their work's sake," as if the nature of the pastor's work required that he be regarded with affectionate feelings. And the exhortation is added: "Be at peace among yourselves," there being an intimate connection between unity in the church and a feeling of good-will and love for the minister. And these two admonitions of Paul precede sundry exhortations to Christian duties, and stand, as it were, the necessary conditions to their proper performance.

Our habits in our relations to the State may lead us astray in our conduct as members of a religious community. To question publicly the propriety of certain acts of magistrates, may lead to no serious evil in the State. These acts may be criticized on the street, in the store, and by the fireside. The success of the State does not depend on harmony of feeling among all the citizens. A strife of words is no scandal. While all are patriotic, opposing parties are founded on the different theories of administering the government. The existing administration is of course out of the hearty sympathy and approbation of a part of the people. And all this is so far from obstructing the design of government, that it is even thought to be wholesome. In the point of open criticism, the relations of a civil and a Christian community are not analogous. The church is set in the midst of a hostile world. Its vital principle is love; and captious eyes are on the watch for a violation of this principle, and hearts are ready to deny the claims of Christianity because its followers do not live up to the principle of brotherly love which they profess. To teach the various applications of the law of obedience in the daily life is, perhaps, the province of that special grace of God by which he enlightens the mind of the humble and devout believer. The fact that the New Testament enjoins the duty of obedience, cannot be too strongly impressed upon the church for the sake of its own efficiency against the powers of sin, and for the efficiency and permanence of the pastoral office.

3. The minister is a *pastor*.

The word *pastor*, and expressions which conform to the same figurative allusion to the duties of a shepherd, are strictly an argument for clothing the ministerial office with authority. They are used in the Epistles with reference to the supreme authority of a shepherd over his flock, tempered by his interest in and affection for them. But we would use the word *pastor* here, as it is limited by common usage, to express the Christian intercourse and watchfulness of the minister among his people in their daily life. When Christ compares himself to a shepherd who tenderly leads his flock, he addresses himself to the liveliest affections of his disciples, and discloses himself in the tenderest relations to them. As a teacher he instructed their understanding. But the kingdom of God is emphatically a kingdom of love, a communion of the affections, without which so much of this kingdom as is manifested externally in the visible church

is a mere form without life, hypocritical and untruthful. Christ, therefore, as a shepherd, a pastor, drawing his true followers to himself by the sweetness of his affections and the tenderness of his sympathy, has impressed his own image on the church, and given it that vitality and expansiveness which have sustained it to this hour. It is because the apostles, and through the apostles the whole church, have seen the Divine Saviour with their own eyes, have read his wealth of affection and sympathy in his countenance, have seen there his sorrow and suffering for the sins of the world, have followed him day after day, have reclined at the same table and listened to his familiar conversation and his gentle admonitions, have shared his privations and loneliness, and have been led by him in prayer to their Father in heaven, have seen him crucified, have broken bread with him after he rose from the dead, victorious over the grave, and have seen him ascend on high where he evermore liveth to make intercession; it is because of all these appeals to our senses and affections that the kingdom of God is so mighty in us "to the pulling down of strong holds," and that it has taken hold of the strongest under-currents of our nature. By this relation of affectionate oversight and intercourse, Christ established himself in the hearts of his disciples, and prepared the way for the reception of his truth. It is, therefore, no harsh inference to suppose that the religious teachers of the church occupy a similar relation to their people, and possess in this sphere an important part of ministerial labor. The prevailing usage of the word *pastor* in this sense, shows that this impression has stamped itself on the mind of the church.

We find there that it is the office of a minister, "to hold fast the form of sound words, to teach wholesome doctrine; to exercise authority, to rebuke them that sin that others also may fear; to watch for the souls of those committed to their charge, to feed the flock of God." To teach, to govern, to be the Christian adviser and example in the daily life, these are the elements of the Gospel ministry.

The distinctive mark of the priesthood is wholly wanting in our idea of the offices of a minister. Nowhere do we find any support of the notion, that a minister of the Christian dispensation can mediate between God and man, or that his intervention is any way *necessary* to atonement. On the contrary, such an assumption would strike a blow at the corner-stone of the Chris-

tian religion. Christ is the only mediator in the Gospel dispensation. An intelligent Christian in our land would not be apt to mistake on so clear a point as this; he would not knowingly present to himself any other mediator. But the temptations to error and sin become more subtle in proportion as the Christian advances in knowledge and watchfulness. The natural proneness to seek a mediation between God and himself, and the obstinate aversion to accepting this mediation as a free gift, make it altogether likely that a man, whose intelligence admits there can be no Saviour but Christ, will unconsciously rest in some other mediation than that appointed by God, and, sliding back into the old dispensation of a human priesthood, consider his pastor as in some sense his priest.

One way in which this tendency is shown, embraces the system of public Sabbath worship, and so places the minister in a wrong light, that the chief design of his ministrations is thwarted and the service becomes a sacrifice, after the manner of the Jewish economy. If a person lives in the world six days in the week with no higher aim than to succeed in his business or pleasures, and gives to these his undivided thoughts, and, when the Sabbath comes, goes up to the church with weariness of body and the stupidity often of a vacant mind, he either means nothing at all and is conscious it is all a sham, or unconsciously he offers his attendance and his prayers as gifts on the altar, and, with his natural emotions excited by the glow of his pastor, fancies himself accepted in the acceptance of the minister, and goes down to his house self-justified. This case is not an uncommon one. The church is clogged with such. Nor is the temptation to this error always gross and palpable. It is more or less refined, according to the nature of the mind it attacks. It may be accompanied by a delicate self-flattery on the success of an elaborate preparation for service, by the excitement of a throng where many eyes are cast about, and sometimes by the gratification of a luxurious refinement of the senses in the architecture and adornments of the church. It may put on the guise of an ardent desire for self-culture, or of a fastidious refinement, or of a natural goodness of heart and love of virtue. In every case it hardens the soul against humility and self-sacrifice. It interferes with the proper influence of the ministerial office. For, while the preacher's theme is Christ the *only* Saviour, the hearer is filled with self in one form or another, and makes his

pastor the medium of communicating his good gifts to God. The pastor becomes a priest, offering up to the Lord the sacrifices of the congregation. It is manifest that any misapprehension of the relations of a minister to the church, diminishes his influence. So wide a misapprehension as this is destructive. The parishioner himself fails of salvation, and throws on his pastor a greater burden than he can bear. He exacts from *him* a much higher standard of holiness than he sets up for *himself*; for the complacency of the hearer in his own factitious righteousness is measured by his fancies of the piety of his minister. If this sinks below a given point, the hearer's comfort is taken away. Thus an unreasonable difference is made between the preacher and the hearer, the whole economy of the Gospel dispensation is practically misapprehended, and the hearer slides back into the feebleness of a human priesthood. He assigns his minister a duty wholly foreign to his office, a misconception which closes the heart against the influence of the preacher in his proper sphere, and cripples the power of the pulpit. The minister is a teacher, and no more indispensable to the general plan of redemption than the hearer. Both are workers, laborers together, each needing the assistance and sympathy of the other, and each affected, like a member of the body, if another member is weak, or sick, or asleep. Says Paul: "The whole body" (that is, the church) "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body." If one part ceases to work, the growth of the whole church ceases. The economy of the Gospel dispensation is an enlightened coöperation of all Christians, each cheerfully and energetically doing his work, and all bound together by good-will and Christian charity. The economy of the old dispensation of a human priesthood, was a patient instruction of the human heart in its childhood, not yet prepared for intelligent action, or even for an apprehension of the greatness of the work under the Gospel of Christ. The misconception of the present day, which makes the pastor a priest, not only throws one out of the circle of Gospel action and sympathies, but fails to make the ministry do the work of a priesthood, simply because it cannot be so wrested from its proper sphere. Thus there is brought about a grating friction in the operations of the church, and an uneasiness of mind which relieves itself by finding fault with the minister for

not coming up fully to these ill-defined and erroneous expectations, and at last, perhaps, by causing him to resign the pastoral office. Let the whole church come up fully to Paul's idea of the true church, and, especially, let each member feel that he himself is responsible for the success of the church in this world, according to the faithful performance of his duty, and there will result a harmony of action and cordiality of feeling now lamentably wanting among many who profess to be brethren in Christ. Let it be sincerely felt that a higher standard of holiness is not to be demanded of a minister than of his people, or, rather, that each Christian *must* set for himself that standard of piety which his sense of Gospel requirement now demands of his pastor, and many practical hindrances to the success of the Gospel will be removed. The Christian will learn by his own difficulties to use a larger charity for the short-comings of his minister. The feeling that he can indulge himself in things which he denies to his pastor, can conform to the world without compunction, while he says: "It will not do for a minister to do such and such a thing," will disappear. The disposition of a people to watch the daily life of their minister in order to see whether he conforms to their notions of ministerial propriety, will vanish. A thousand causes of dismissal, like ghosts of midnight, will melt away before this new morning light. Every Christian will feel with regard to himself that "whether he lives he lives unto the Lord, and whether he dies he dies unto the Lord," and with regard to his pastor that "to his own Master he standeth or falleth;" and the sentiment of Paul will be felt as a living principle: "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

But, let a church come unconsciously to regard their pastor as a priest, and, as a natural consequence, to exact a more perfect manner of life than they require of themselves, and what is the state of things? They consider the minister, we suppose, as set apart in a peculiar manner from the rest of the world, and, by his consecration to the ministry, to be under especial obligations to lead a sinless life. As with the priest and Levite, it is a desecration for him to mingle in secular affairs. His sole business is to minister at the altar, and perform kindred religious duties. The tabernacle of the Lord is his sphere, out of which he must not step, for "he is holy unto the Lord." Such, reduced to form,

are the vague, floating notions of the ministerial office. And what is the result? Just as it belonged to the Levites to carry the ark of the Lord while the whole congregation of Israel followed on, so the progress of the spiritual ark of the Lord, the growth of the church, often meagrely held to consist in additions from without, is thrown upon the shoulders of the pastor. Consequently, if no advance is made, the blame is cast upon him. The people say: If we had different preaching, if we had a more active pastor, in other words, if our minister would only take up the ark of the Lord on his own shoulders, we could follow on. The mutual relations of pastor and people are affected by this misapprehension. Instead of looking at the minister as a co-worker, whose office it is to instruct the people in their duties, not himself to discharge these duties for them, the people impose on him burdens it was never meant he should bear, while they themselves withhold assistance. Thus the minister is disappointed, and the people are disappointed. Mutual sympathy begins to decay. Uncharitable remarks are made by the people. Too often the feelings of the minister and family become bitter, and the fireside begins to hear unkind and caustic reflections on the conduct of the people. Both parties are ready to magnify indiscretions into faults, and both begin to discuss the propriety of a separation. Or it sometimes happens that indifference instead of uneasiness results, and there arises the habit of leaving almost entirely to the minister the labor of watching for the general interests of the church. Regarding the pastor as consecrated "to do the service of the tabernacle," they withdraw from coöperation and the work of supervision. They settle down into a worldly state, giving to their business or pleasures their first attention during the week, and satisfying their conscience with a regular and perhaps patronizing attendance at church on the Sabbath. Some who are more devout fall, nevertheless, into the same error of supposing themselves uncalled to an active zeal and labor in promoting a healthy piety in the church. This mistake is a fatal obstacle. It keeps the church down, makes it inefficient and secondary. And so it will remain till all the members feel that their relation to the church of Christ is paramount to all other relations whatever, whether of business, or politics, or friendship, and that "whether they eat or drink or whatever they do they must do all for the glory of God." Ask any pastor how many sympathizing deacon Elys he has, how

many who heartily take hold of the laboring oar. Or, rather, let each man ask himself whether he is an earnest worker for Christ; whether his minister is not bowed down by extra burdens that he ought to help carry. Let each man picture to himself the attitude of the church as it would appear if roused to its full height and strength. Let him in his imagination behold the visible church all in reality the church of Christ. Let him see every member exalting his fellowship with the Saviour above every and all earthly associations. Let him see a spirit of self-sacrifice for the sake of his Lord, like that of Moses, which "esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Let him see a sober-minded, earnest conduct in daily life, "showing out of a good conversation its works with meekness of wisdom." Let him see that victory that overcometh the world, even faith in Christ. And this, not here and there nourished in a few individuals by the discipline of suffering, but universal, the church presenting an unbroken front, Christians uniting with their pastors in opposing the power of sin in the world. It is a pleasant picture to dwell upon. But the contrast with the present distracted, ever-shifting, misapprehended relations of pastor and people, is painful. Whatever else can be or ought to be done, Christians must learn that their pastor should not be left to sow alone and reap alone. His labors and his tears are precious in the sight of God. But it surpasses the economy of the heavenly kingdom to accept the labor of one for the labor of a hundred.

The same misapprehension may present itself in another aspect. From regarding the minister as set apart, consecrated in a *Levitical* sense, the people come to consider him as shut off from all expression of concern in secular matters, and, especially, matters pertaining to the State. The argument seems to be that the ministry is a sacred calling in a sense that no other calling is, and that its followers must, therefore, be sacred, and keep aloof from secular affairs, in a manner that is required of no other profession. Thus misapprehending the spirit of Christianity, which makes every man in his daily avocations a minister of God, the prevailing feeling of the heart has limited the sphere of a minister to the round of his religious duties. And when he has given public utterance to his convictions on any matter of civil interest, the cry in many quarters has been: The clergyman has no business to meddle in these matters.

It is his duty to take care of the church. Let him leave the State to us.

But this feeling, though generated by the natural tendencies of the human heart, and fostered by the Levitical notion of a priesthood, and by an ignorant application of this notion to the Christian ministry, is not at all countenanced by a correct interpretation of the Gospel. Every pious person is a citizen of two communities, the community of Christ's disciples and the community of the State. And the majority of men are so much like children in being most strongly impressed with what strikes the eye, that they all the time probably exalt in their minds their relation to the State above their relation to the church; the organization of State government is so much more imposing than the church organization. The operations of the church are humble, and appeal less to the proud and vain-glorious spirit of man than does the machinery of a great republic or empire. So it happens that the magnitude and true glory of these operations are lightly esteemed and hold a second rank in the estimation of man. The sphere of the State is far above, and out of, the sphere of the church. But it is not so in reality, nor is it so represented in the Scriptures.

In times so ancient that we have no authentic record but the Bible, Egypt was a mighty nation, the most so, perhaps, in the world. The Israelites at the same time were a despised and enslaved people among the Egyptians. But they were the chosen people of God, among whom he had planted the seed of his church, and the time of their deliverance had come. The proud Egyptian king refused to let them go. The Lord then announced to him the relative importance of his kingly position and his State: "And, indeed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." We have a reliable history of the Israelites from a period anterior to this down to modern times. The only record of *this* Egyptian generation arises from their transient connection with the people of Israel.

Again, when Babylon, in the time of the prophet Jeremiah, was one of the four first kingdoms of the world in power, and had extended her conquests to the borders of Egypt, she had overrun the land of Judea and carried the princes and many of the people into captivity. This captivity was to last seventy years. Nearly two hundred years before its appointed close we

find Cyrus declared to be their deliverer, and the Lord prophesying of him by Isaiah: "He is my Shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built." The annals of Jewish history throughout show that God directed the course of events in surrounding nations so as to sustain his own purposes among the Jews. At the first, some heathen tribes were left in the land "to prove Israel, that it might be known whether they would obey the commands of God." And when the children of Israel sinned, the Lord stirred up against them a neighboring tribe or a distant nation, and gave them into long captivity. Thus the author of Judges says: "The Lord strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord" (3: 12). "And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan" (4: 1, 2). "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years" (6: 1).

It is no less a conviction of reason, than a spontaneous feeling in the devout Christian's breast, that now also the history of the church is the central point of interest; that the kingdoms of this world are overturned; that the earth reveals the secrets of ages, and that knowledge is increased to further the cause of Christ. The Christian is specially interested in the progress of the world *because* he is a Christian. The warmer his sympathy with his Saviour's cause, the more lively will be his interest in the changes and developments of men. He, more than any other man, can say with true feeling:

Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto;
 "I am a man, and feel an interest in all mankind."

Believing that Christ is the King of kings, that the credentials of every earthly potentate read: "Thou couldst have no power at all except it were given thee from above," he does right in exalting the position of the church. He thinks that, so far as there is any vitality or efficacy in earthly governments, they derive these qualities from the spirit of Christianity. He thinks that, so far as States are enlightened to promote the welfare of individual citizens, they have been enlightened by the truths of the Gospel. He sees, moreover, that the forms of government best adapted to this end are most of all founded on the princi-

ples of the Bible. He cannot, therefore, help feeling that his adoption into the kingdom of Christ qualifies him to be a better citizen than he was before. He now feels the sacredness of the oath by which he took on himself his citizenship. If he is a minister, he cannot be persuaded that he has lost any of these interests or privileges by becoming a teacher and governor in the church. But the more his life of religious study, his habit of looking for the success of his Master in every revolution and progress, have brought him into sympathy with the mind of Christ and fitted him to judge the harmony of men's conduct and laws with the will of God, so much the more do his duty to God and his duty to the State force him to give his convictions to the people of his charge. If his long study of the Bible and his entire devotion to religious exercises give him that "wisdom" the Apostle speaks of, and which means a deep insight of Divine truths and a knowledge of their practical application, this application must be made to all things that pertain to the welfare of the church, whether in his parish or in the State. If his qualifications to teach mean anything, there is no reason in excluding him from a critical observation of those movements which engross, to so great a degree, the attention of his people, and thus indirectly, as well as directly, by the very complication of human agency in unfolding the purposes of God, affect their character.

Another mistake is owing to the same misapprehension of the nature of the Christian ministry. It consists in supposing that a church member is not required by the spirit of Christianity to make as much self-sacrifice for Christ as his minister is. The difficulties in the pecuniary relations of pastor and people rest on this mistake. On the one hand, it is deeply rooted in the religious consciousness of a people that their minister ought not to be seeking after self, but that he ought to live up fully to the idea of self-sacrifice which every Christian has in his mind but which most apply only to ministers. On the other, the pastor is urged by a strong outside pressure, and, perhaps, a strong one within, to keep some pace with his people in his mode of living. The doctrine of Christianity is: "Lay not up *for yourselves* treasures upon earth," and it says to all Christians: In the acquisition of power, social position, and wealth, seek those treasures that you may use them for Christ and not for yourselves. The spirit of Christianity enters the heart of man and calls for a surrender of all purposes to gratify self rather than God. It demands

this as the very essence of discipleship. The acquisition of money is not forbidden. Gold is the great lever in the world. It is no unimportant lever in the church. But the acquisition of wealth for the gratification of luxurious tastes, or for a base competition with the world in ostentatious display, is forbidden. The fitting conscience of the world stigmatizes the miser. In his case it goes so far as to say that the acquisition of money is a base passion. But it speaks only relatively. The world despises the miser, because his desire of money bespeaks no generosity, no refinement, no pride. Let a man become fully imbued with the self-sacrificing spirit which gives up all for Christ, and he looks on the spirit of the world in acquiring and spending money as further beneath the Christian standard than the spirit of the miser is below the standard of the world. The world feels contempt for the miser's unworthy use of money. Let it once learn what is the worthy use, and it will feel contempt for its own. The church stands yet in this half-way estimation of the value of money, which the world occupies. It also despises the miser and spares no sarcasm when one of the members shows a covetous disposition. Paul would say: "Wherein thou judgest another thou judgest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things." The condemnation rests on the spontaneous feeling that it is base to seek money for its own sake, that the nobler instincts of man are forgotten by a covetous spirit. The Christian standard of using money condemns both the miser and the world, because the genuine spirit of self-sacrifice is forgotten by both, and because it sees in both only different manifestations of the same selfish spirit. In one particular, the church has come up to this standard. It demands of its members a practical exhibition of the Christian theory. It exacts the pound of flesh. But with regard to itself, we speak of the prevailing feeling, it has not yet learned what the spirit of Christianity at the present day requires. Gold is now the god of the world. The feverish race is after gold, and everywhere there is a falling away before its power. The church is practically dead, powerless in the world, because the unbelievers see so little difference between Christians and themselves in the worship of mammon. In the scramble for money, the competition in display, church member vying with the unbeliever in ostentation, the distinction between Christianity and a worldly spirit is lost, and the unsanctified moral sense rebukes the life of the professing Christian.

We have said that the church applies a pretty clear law of self-sacrifice to ministers. Is it a right law or not? The universal conscience of the church says it is right. What does it mean that such a universal conscience exists? Where did the church acquire it? It is the "law written in the heart," but, through self-indulgence and slothfulness, limited in application to the teachers of religion, and limited to them because of the Levitical conception of the ministry, which makes the profession of religious teaching more sacred than any other profession, and throws on ministers peculiar obligations to deny themselves for their Master. What, therefore, is required of the church is to apply to itself, in all its strictness and comprehensiveness, this law of self-sacrifice for Christ. Whatever the conscience of the church declares to be in the minister an improper mode of spending money, let it make this declaration a law unto itself. The profession which every Christian makes, sets him apart and distinguishes him from the world in no less degree than his pastor is consecrated. And whatever mode of expense or indulgence he considers inconsistent with the sacredness of a minister's vows, he indulges himself in at the expense of his Christian character and sensitiveness.

But suppose a church to conform to the Gospel standard in the use of money. There is established, at once, a mark of distinction between the church and the world. While the worldly man will not scruple to use all his income in gratifying his personal tastes, and will think only of this in the acquisition of wealth, the Christian will devote to the cause of Christ all that he can lay by in store after meeting the necessary wants of the body and mind. He will be no longer cursed with the love of money. He will feel that riches are a gift of God, bestowed for his discipline and to prove his discipleship. The sordidness of a worldly life will appear more strongly by contrast with the simple and unselfish life of Christians. The self-denying spirit of Christianity, held forth by the example of its disciples, will appeal to the conscience of the world with added power. The ministry of the Gospel will be sustained without grudging or littleness of spirit. The payment of a salary will not be considered a gratuity or an unwelcome tax, but the rendering of a just due and a Christian duty. And when the church shall have adopted the Gospel law of self-denial, the general sentiment will see that the minister's family is set above the fear of want, and supplied

with all the comforts which it considers proper for any household; or, rather, it will give such a salary, promptly paid when the time of payment comes, as the minister himself shall have decided to be sufficient.

Very pleasant pictures of the daily life of the primitive Christians have been handed down. Simplicity, avoidance of vain show, regard for spiritual welfare in all domestic arrangements and appliances, mark their character. There was a great contrast between them and the world which they had renounced. Origen speaks of this difference when he says: "The Christian communities compared with those among whom they dwelt are as lights in the world." Holding that worldly gifts are subordinate to the gifts of grace, and that the new spirit of Divine life consecrates these goods from selfish to pious uses, these early Christians conformed their dress to a modest and sober taste, giving no indulgence to a vain spirit. Such of them as were able to furnish their dwellings in a sumptuous manner, chose to forego this luxury. They found that a gratification of the senses and of a luxurious refinement would exclude a chastened spirit, and would be continually drawing them back to a love of the world. Some, whose faith was weaker, and whose love of self-gratification prevented them from appreciating the heroism of self-denial, said: "All these are the gift of God. Why may we not enjoy what we have?" To this, Clement replied: "Even though all things are *given* us, though all things are *allowed* us, though all things are lawful for us, yet, as the Apostle says, all things are not expedient. God has created our race for doing good and communicating; He has created everything for all; everything, therefore, is a common good, and the more wealthy should not make it an exclusive possession. Such reasoning, therefore, is not humane, does not correspond with our social affections. Love will rather speak thus: 'I have it, why should I not bestow it on the needy?'"

We should do wrong to the families of ministers did we not affirm our belief that they care little, as a class, very little, for display in their mode of life. As far as the wants of the body are concerned, we believe they would say with Paul: "Having food and raiment let us therewith be content." But if we give our credit to testimony, we must be constrained to believe that this language is uttered by many in hope of, by and by, possessing this ground of content rather than in the present enjoyment

of it. For this state of things many causes have been assigned. There certainly is fault somewhere. We suspect a portion of the blame must attach to the minister. According to the true theory of the Christian dispensation, all Christians are laborers in the kingdom of God. But there is a necessity, on account of the frailty of human nature, that some should devote their life to teaching and admonishing the rest. This is for the health of the Christian body. The minister's calling is his business, by which he must support himself and his family. And there is no natural incongruity in considering those who labor all the time in spiritual things entitled to a support from the worldly possessions of the rest. Paul, in confirmation of this, says: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" and again: "Let him who is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The minister's engagement is a contract by which a society agrees to give a certain sum for services rendered. It is proper to make this contract in a business-like manner, with a conviction that shall awaken the same in the opposite party, that it is a just remuneration which is stipulated. There should be no affected indifference or scrupulosity. And the popular preacher who leaves the terms of his settlement wholly to his people, wrongs many of his brethren who cannot command a similar liberality, but who must in some measure conform to the fashion of settlement set by him. This excess of delicacy has done something towards causing the salary to be considered a gift, and to be regulated by the people's notion of ministerial sacrifice rather than by that sense of justice which gives wages in some proportion to the value of the labor.

As we have said, there is much testimony to show that the compensation of some ministers is below the point of a comfortable support; that there is even pinching poverty, where the parish is able to give at least the comforts of life. That this is so is a reproach to the church that allows it, and in some sense a reproach to the religious community at large. There ought to be such a sentiment of Christian liberality that no church could stand under the odium of this offence. For a minister to be *compelled* to sell his pen to an editor of secular books, and to turn his house into a school, and to till a few acres of land, all to eke out a subsistence which the parsimony or indifference of his people denies him, is hard to believe. Nevertheless, this is

no picture of the fancy. It is not easy to say what is the remedy in such a case. It is easier to predict that the people, when they shall be called to give up their pastor, who has spent the whole of his professional life in their pulpit, who has visited their sick and buried their dead for more than a generation, will find no young man, and no man at all, to serve them for the compensation they now give. It needs to be felt, that it is a crying sin to permit such a necessity to lie on the pastor; that there is a natural connection between spiritual death and the enjoyment of unrequited pastoral labors. The proper duties of a minister are enough to engross his time and energies. They are so great and so responsible as to require a solemn sense of duty to overcome a fear to assume them. Free a minister from anxiety about the support of his family, give him all the appliances of study he needs, and he will yet say: "Who is sufficient for these things?" With this pressure of obligation and real demand for his undivided labors, he cannot be diverted into any side-employment for support, without loss to himself and to his charge. If he is drawn down from his post of observation a part of the time, the enemy will enter, in various forms of error, and gain a lodgment before his presence is suspected. Both from a lack of preparation and slackened zeal the pastor will be unequal to the emergencies of the times. And the people, enjoying all the Gospel privileges without self-sacrifice, will learn, by a worldliness of heart and ungodly households, that a religion that prompts to no self-denial, is worth nothing at all.

It seems hardly necessary to say, that a successful prosecution of ministerial labor requires a larger salary than is necessary for a comfortable living. There are other wants besides those of the body, wants which the people are not so ready to appreciate, but which are keenly felt by the pastor. The catalogue of any theological seminary will show how large a furnishing of the mind is deemed necessary by the fathers in the church. The experience of the last forty years does not make the church disagree with the fathers on the importance of a thorough intellectual training of candidates for the ministry. Christians have endowed these seminaries and they continue to pray for them. But the course of preparation here is partial. It was not intended that it should be complete. From the nature of things it could not be. The student is started in the proper method of studying the Bible, in the nature of its defences, the history of oppositions

to it, oppositions which he will have to meet and which it is important he should know *how* to meet. The whole method of the defence of the Bible, is a science needing a life of study and a library of helps, and the seminary, with all its labors, only gives the key. And a people, by withholding from their pastor the needed assistance in continuing his study of the Bible in its history, its relations to science, its claims to Divine authority, and its exegesis, is giving aid to the enemy. So far as there is a deficiency in this preparation, so far does the ministration of the word fail in power to overcome error and infidelity, and even those forms of unbelief which infest all hearts, and owe their influence and permanency to ignorance of the truths and defences of the Bible. When the French armies returned from fighting for our Independence, they left behind, in the minds of many, an admiration of their scepticism. This continued for a long time. And when Dr. Dwight became President of Yale College, the students were infected with infidel notions. So prevailing was their disposition to scoff, that an open advocate of Christianity was scarcely to be found. It was the custom of the senior class to give in to the President a number of questions for debate, that he might select one for the next discussion. It was agreed to give him, among other subjects, the Divine authority of the Scriptures. To the surprise of the class, President Dwight chose this theme. At the proper time, it was debated before him with much earnestness. He gave his decision, and defended the Bible with such learning and force, that the cause of infidelity was demolished. The open advocacy of scepticism became as rare as before it had been common and fashionable. Every clergyman needs to be so furnished with all the defences of truth, that he may promptly meet the ever-shifting devices of unbelief, whether in bold infidelity, or in false philosophy, or in the amiable heart where only one thing is lacking.

On the other hand, we have no sympathy with the disposition to overrate the requirements of a minister. It is possible to overlook an earnest piety in stating his qualifications. A ministry well furnished in mind but lacking the complete preparation of heart, would be like the army of dry bones in the vision of the prophet, after the sinews and the flesh had come upon them and the skin had covered them, but before the breath of the Lord had breathed into them the spirit of life. The work should be considered with some reference to the limitation of the powers

of man. And to state the case in swelling words weakens the force of the appeal. It is true the "greatest native and acquired talents" have never found the field too narrow for their energies. But the silent inference of such a manner of putting the case is not true, to wit, that all candidates should be men of great abilities, native and acquired. What the church needs is a thorough discipline and full equipment of the mind where the heart is consecrated to Christ.

In view of the mental work required of the ministry by the peculiar state of the times, a young man feels reluctant to enter the profession, foreseeing, as he does, that no more than one church in ten will supply him with the needed helps. The same advance in knowledge which has increased his studies, has enlightened the people also. The same spirit of inquiry and investigation which has led to the defence of the Bible in broader fields, has led many to new modes of assailing this book. Darkness as well as light is the offspring of the present activity of mind. The oppositions of science, falsely so called, and the seductiveness of a vain philosophy, may be with some only the refuges of a hatred of the truth. It may be said that, if these are refuted, the natural unbelief of the heart, strengthened by habits of sin, will find a vent in some other direction. But it must not be forgotten, that the great mischief of these temptations lies in their power over the youthful mind. The real contest between truth and error is here. The pastor is called to fortify this mind, in anticipation of such assaults, with the truths and defences of the Bible. Now suppose he is too poor to investigate the harmony of science with the Scriptures, and to take periodicals that show the progress of error and its modes of attack, and to study the history of infidelity and doubt, as they illustrate the unbelief of the heart, this field is virtually given up. The enemy may come in and sow tares, and reap the harvest to himself. If, to this destitution in the library, is added the embarrassment of debt and the necessity of resorting to some side-employment to procure the means of living, the people join ingratitude and cruelty with a suicidal neglect of their spiritual interests.

The pureness and devotedness of Paul's character have made a deep impression on the church, and all he did comes to our minds with the force of authority. His "working with his own hands," in order not to be a charge to his converts, has doubtless had some effect on the existing relations of pastor and people in

the matter of pecuniary support. In his address to the elders of the church, he says: "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities." To the Corinthians he says: "To the present hour we labor" [in the ministry] "working with our hands." And again: "If others are partakers of this power over you" [liberty to receive recompense for spiritual labors] "are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power." So in other places this Apostle testifies of his refusing to be a charge to the people among whom he was laboring. Now if this is an example for ministers of the present day, it becomes them to refuse all recompense, and the churches are exonerated from the duty of maintaining their pastors. But the circumstances in the case of Paul were peculiar. He went from city to city preaching a new Gospel to people of a heathenish religion. His labors excited a fierce and bitter opposition. The religious prejudices were attacked, and the State, including in its own system the religious system, and considering the worship of the national gods a part of the duty of the citizen, felt an attack on false religion to be an attack on itself. The popular hatred would show itself in petty persecution of converts, and, as in modern mission stations, the rivalry of mechanical and other trades would cloak itself under religious zeal, and seek to throw the converts out of their employments. Moreover, the spirit of the new religion required the abandonment of all trades connected with idol-worship, such as image-making and the adorning of the temples. In these ways many men and their families would be thrown on the charity of the church for support. Many converts would originally be poor. And the death of a man by martyrdom, or otherwise, might bring his family into the class of the destitute. Here, then, was a large demand upon the benevolence of the church, very likely so great as to require the largest liberality, and certainly the cause of frequent appeals in Paul's Epistles to the bounty of Christians. And in this we find one reason of Paul's maintaining himself. It was important that an example of industry should be set such as would induce all men to work with their hands, if need be, to meet this extraordinary tax. When Paul recalls to the minds of the elders his ministering to his own necessities and to those of his companions, he adds: "I have showed you all things how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak" [in this world's goods] "and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more

blessed to give than to receive." And he says to the Thessalonians: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not the power" [liberty to be so chargeable] "but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."

There was another difficulty to overcome. It seems to have been charged upon Paul that he sought his own advantage. The history of moral reformations of the present day abounds with charges against pure philanthropists of speculating for their own profit. Nothing is more common with those who have their wealth or support by abuses, than to raise the cry of "speculation" or "selfishness" against the reformers of these abuses. And, indeed, it is a very natural feeling to despise imposters in philanthropy and to test the sincerity of a reformer before we give him our confidence. In the first years of Christianity, the prevailing ignorance of the character of Christianity made it necessary to guard against such misconceptions as would obstruct its free progress. And when the ignorance of the people or the malice of false teachers raised an objection to the new religion, on account of Paul's maintaining himself by preaching, he repels the objection by resorting to his trade. He prefers this to putting a stumbling-block in the way of any. "Nevertheless," says he, "we have not used this power" [liberty of maintaining himself by the Gospel] "but suffer all things lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ." "Not seeking mine own profit but the profit of many that they may be saved." "For I seek not yours but you."

But all along Paul maintains that the nature of religious institutions and the spirit of the Christian religion necessitate the support of the ministry by the church. He says, again and again, that he possessed the liberty to throw himself on this necessary law of Christian prosperity. Moreover, as if admitting that his conduct was a violation of this principle, after referring to his being no charge to the Corinthians, he says: "Forgive me this wrong."

That the position of ministers is less independent now than it was a century ago, may be accounted for in different ways. The demands made upon the ministry then were less. The pastor's time was not all engrossed in pastoral duties; and, where there was a disposition, there was a freedom to till a few acres

of land. The term of settlement was almost always for life. And the losses and derangement of moving were little known. The terms on which a young man was settled were more liberal. As expenses of living have increased, and wants have been multiplied, other professions and employments have looked out for themselves. By a corresponding advance in their prices, nothing has prevented a provident and thrifty accommodation to the changes of the times. Their object being to make a living and lay up money, they were open to no charge of seeming to act contrary to their professed rule of acting. Meanwhile clergymen, too, have been subject to the same increase of expenditure without possessing a similar means of relief. The parishes which should have taken the lead in doing for their pastors what they had individually done for themselves, in most cases have done nothing. Perhaps the change in expense of living has been so gradual as to attract little attention while it has been going on. Whether unwittingly or consciously, the people have not kept the salaries of their ministers in the same course of change. And the ministers thus left to themselves have felt a conscientious delicacy in taking a step which might bring on them the charge of covetousness, and have preferred to suffer all things rather than hinder the Gospel of Christ. The effects of all this are apparent. Not the least unhappy is the soreness, the sense of wrong, that has settled down on the minds of many ministers. It seems to have been gathering for a long time, and now that the publication of a tale of ministerial suffering has given it a voice, it breaks out here and there, from the old parsonage and from the farm, giving sad evidence of a breaking down in hope and kindness of feeling. The change brought about in such a case is analogous to the prostration of spirit and manliness produced in the slave. The minister goes about among his people and into the pulpit with a feeling that injustice is done him, and that too, by his neighbor whom he visits and the church whom he meets at the table of the Lord. His heartiness fails him when he sees his family suffering for the want of those things which are the common mercies of many of his people. And when he considers the meagreness of his library, his heart is not warmed any more towards a people that exact the "tale of bricks" without furnishing the straw. If he were preaching to the heathen, he would not despair as he now does. He would feel that whatever else was the result

of his labors, his hearers were not growing harder in heart by living in conscious opposition to their profession of self-sacrifice for Christ. He would feel that they did not see in him a person from whom they were getting the most for the least pay.

Another result, is the spiritual desolation of the people. The spirit of Christianity devotes all things to Christ. It condemns the least of that feeling which uses any gift, whether mental endowments or earthly possessions, for selfish ends. It proves its presence in the heart by inspiring a desire to make sacrifices for the cause of Christ. And where this desire does not exist, there is no living principle. The Christian heart is dead. A worldly spirit stunts the growth of piety in the heads of families. The children see no attractive harmony of Christian life and Christian profession, and follow the example, rather than the precepts, of their parents. The world reigns at the fireside and at the table. It is the sum of all the thoughts and aspirations of old and young. The visions and hopes of the religion of the Bible are shut out by that sordid view of life which magnifies self to the exclusion of God. And when at last, in answer, perhaps, to the prayers of those who are least in the world but greatest in the kingdom of God, an awakening begins to appear, the church understand so little the methods of God's grace in the heart, that it concludes the work to be done when, after a season of unusual effort, a few have been added to the church. It then sinks back into spiritual sloth and worldliness. The new converts, received into this unhealthy community, are swept along in the general current. Some there are who, through the injudiciousness of unenlightened zeal, have been urged into a profession of religion without a change of heart. This class is of all men most miserable. One of three courses awaits them. And all three are such as the debilitated religion of the church has no remedy for, but rather necessitates and accelerates. *One* is, the course of self-deception. The individual, taking the piety of the church for his model, and seeing nothing in its character to rebuke his own life, continues in the delusion that he is a Christian till death undeceives him. The *second* course is, a life of hypocrisy. The new professor soon discovers he has made a mistake, and, having now no inclination to correct it, and seeing no mode of throwing off the vows of the church, he concludes to keep his discovery from the knowledge of every one, and live the life of indifference which he observes the mass of Christians

are living. Perhaps he suspects that he is not alone in this hypocrisy. The *third* course is taken by the more ingenuous and open-hearted. These burst the bonds of their profession on the first discovery of their mistake, withdraw from communion with the church, and, by the very force of breaking away, plunge further into sinful courses than they would otherwise have gone. It is hardly necessary to say, that such additions add little to the strength of a church.

It remains to consider some other causes which diminish the usefulness of ministers and shorten the term of their connection with a people. 1. The disposition to discuss the literary qualifications and fine abilities of the pastor is a prominent evil. Its tendency is to make the minister an essayist and the pulpit a theatre for oratorical display. The preacher cannot help feeling the presence of such a spirit, and he will very likely yield himself to it. In preparing his sermons, he will be apt to write to please the understanding and delight the fancy. The solemn sense of ministerial responsibility will be little felt in comparison with the pressure of this demand for fine writing. The sermons will be polished, and ingenious, and learned, but they will be feeble just where they should be strongest. Because one who is learned, or eloquent, or imaginative, can use these several gifts to drive home the arrows of Divine truth, it does not follow that all men can wield the same weapons. And any ambitious striving after impossibilities is only an exhibition of weakness. A Bunyan would not preach like an Arnold, or an Edwards like a McCheyne. Each would preach the word as God had imparted his gifts. Each would hold his peculiar gift in subordination to that one spirit in which all would share; a desire so to manifest the truth as to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This spirit is all in which preachers can hope to be alike. As for the rest, every man's nature must dictate the style of preaching, it being always remembered that grace is paramount to nature. On the other hand, the people suffer through this demand for fine talents and fine preaching. Their pastor, as we have said, is stimulated to such attention to art and style as to neglect the grace of God in his own heart. His sermons do not disclose the relations of Divine truth to the moral nature of man, or make the hearer feel himself to be in the immediate presence of his Judge. Earnestness, solemnity and holy unction are wanting. Thus having stifled the Gospel in

the sermons of their pastor, the people languish in their piety for the want of earnest convictions. Instead of being made solemn by the truth, they criticize the sermon. Their children grow up with the belief that the minister preaches for the intellectual gratification. These too go to church to be pleased, and listen to criticize. By this training their hearts are hardened against the impressions of Gospel truth. Divine instruction is a secondary thing in the public services of the Sabbath. Doubtless many who would not break the Sabbath by worldly conversation, talk about their minister and his preaching because they really have nothing else to say. Their piety does not amount to a deep feeling, or their religion to a solemn conviction. Their religious experience has furnished them with scarcely a thought. They do not know what religious meditation is. What else can they do but talk about what they have seen and heard in the church? Such have need to learn that they profane the Sabbath as much as if they discussed business, or the latest excitement.

It is true that an individual is impressed in a different degree by different modes of presenting the truth. One method may be better adapted than another to awaken his attention and conscience. The constitution of his mind may find more sympathy with one preacher than another. He might have listened with more profit to Wesley than to Whitefield; to Mason than to Nettleton. But to feel that it is unpleasant to hear any but the favorite preacher, is honoring the messenger at the expense of the message and Him who sends it. It is exalting the secondary above the chief essentials of the ministry. It may be asked, when this natural preference for one kind of preaching over another may be manifested. When a candidate presents himself before a people, he submits to a critical examination of his mental qualifications as well as of his piety. The people may and do then thoroughly discuss all these points. If they give him a call to settle among them, they do it from the belief that he is so fitted by natural abilities and discipline of mind as to satisfy their own habits of thought and cultivation. The ordeal is passed, and the minister, now settled, ought to be able to feel that his people will henceforth listen to him as a preacher of righteousness, and not simply as an educated man and a fine writer; that they will regard him as one set to watch for their souls. The people have no business now to criticize his literary qualifications or his abilities. The time for that has passed.

If these were not satisfactory, they should not have called him to be their pastor. It was in their power not to do so; and it would have been a greater kindness to the candidate to reject him than to receive and salute him with fault-finding lips. But if these qualifications are satisfactory, they ought to have so much concern for the cause of religion as to look first for piety and truth, and to encourage their pastor by showing that this is their disposition; and they ought to have so much regard for their unbelieving friends as not to turn away their attention from the true object of preaching by commenting on the manner, style, and defects of the preacher.

2. Another obstacle to the success and permanence of the ministry, is their deficiency in an important branch of preparation. Their seven or ten years of preparatory study are to many a cloister life. They know how to mingle with literary men. They are at home with a graduate, and especially with a fellow-minister. But they are unprepared for a ready intercourse with the mass of men. They fail to apprehend the ways of thinking and feeling in daily life. They do not know how to take the world. They are awkward and shy, as if out of their element. They could scarcely be greater strangers to the ways of society and of our American world, if they had been brought up in China or in Persia. The consequence is, they stumble on the threshold of their ministerial life. They are good ministers for Sunday, but too clumsy or too sensitive for week-day work. Their preaching is in a measure inefficient, because they are incapable of giving a practical illustration of their precepts in familiar intercourse. Perhaps they produce the impression in some minds that religion is too nice a thing for every-day wear. Especially do they give a wrong impression of Christianity by their false delicacy in business transactions. They fear lest an economical regard for their own interests should seem to be covetousness. They meekly submit to an imposition. They are conscientious in this, but we think their conscience is weak. An attempt to impose on a minister, by making a hard bargain, or paying him with the poorest market, is a sin which he ought to rebuke at once. He ought to know how to meet such dishonesties with a natural indignation. A complete exhibition of the Christian character shows the frowns of justice as well as its smiles. Just as a true father finds it necessary sometimes to punish a child for his good. A minister ought to carry his sense of justice,

as well as his disposition to forgive, into his intercourse with his people. Ministerial faithfulness requires him to represent *all* the attributes of God in his week-day life no less than in his sermons. Our sense of the heinousness of sin is wonderfully increased by the sureness of the punishment with which God visits the violator of his laws. And we cannot help feeling that the man whose strong sense of justice awakens his indignation against dishonesty and fraud, exerts a greater power over their vices than do a host of men who overlook these sins and forgive the perpetrators before they show repentance.

In law and medicine it is thought necessary for students to spend some time in observing the practice, as well as studying the theory, of their professions. It may be a question whether it would not be well for students in theology to unite the old method of studying with the present, by spending a few months of the year with a settled pastor, and not all in the seminary. By so doing they might avoid the stumbling-block over which some fall at the beginning of their course. Looking on life in the world through the coloring of life in the seminary, a young man expects to meet the same charity and disinterestedness that he has striven to make his own standard. He is received with lavish attentions and compliments. He sees nothing but smiles and good-will. He commits himself to his people without reserve, as if he were in the bosom of his own family. While he may preach as though they were all sinners, he acts as though they were all saints. In this respect, as well as others, it is necessary to follow the example of Christ, who did not "commit himself" unto his first disciples, "for he knew what was in the heart of man." He guarded himself against the fickleness of human nature. On the other hand, the people may err at the starting point. The tendency is to look very favorably on a new minister, to magnify his excellencies, to be blind to his defects. This is a strained and unnatural state, and, when the reaction comes, the church may have a feeling of disappointment because their pastor is not all they, in their excitement, thought him to be. He suffers now by contrast with the exalted estimation in which he was held, and his preaching fails to reach the heart which is pre-occupied with these unjust comparisons.

3. The common misapprehension of the proper sphere of a minister's wife, is a serious hindrance to a minister's work. She is looked upon as the chief prop of all female organizations,

especially in country towns, and so is drawn off very much from her duties at home. At the same time, her husband is expected to be constantly occupied in his duties as pastor and preacher. Between these two demands, the minister's household economy and domestic comfort must suffer, unless the husband and father takes upon himself a portion of the cares: But the appropriate duty of a pastor's wife is so to relieve her husband from the oversight of the household arrangements as to give him all possible leisure for his peculiar duties. In doing this she does all a parish can justly ask. If more is demanded, the people must suffer in the diminution of pastoral labors and of the fruits of ripe study. It is recorded of the wife of President Edwards, that she took on herself the whole ordering of domestic concerns, and gave her husband the privilege of devoting all his time to his invaluable studies and his people.

4. The state of piety in families is another great obstruction to the success of the Gospel. It lies at the foundation of nearly all the evils in the relations of pastor and people. It preaches one thing and the Gospel preaches another. It says to the children of the church, in language the most persuasive of all, the language of a silent influence: The business and pleasures of this world are the first concern; success in life is the chief end of man. This lesson is taught in the lines of the countenance, in the tones of the voice, in the first words of the morning and the last at night. It is the language of the heart, and no family devotions, no Sabbath-day lectures and lessons, whether serious or formal and perfunctory, overcome the impressions of the *daily* life. And as for the sermons and ministrations of the pastor, they are unheeded by the young of such households, and serve only to increase a distaste for all religion. The godlessness of *family* life in the church, is the great obstacle to the power of Divine truth. It is a practical denial of Christianity. So long as it continues, so long will the young devote themselves to the world or to a formal religion, and so long will the pastor's instructions be powerless. Christians must conform to the principles of Christianity in their households, before the church can exert its due power in the world, and the pastor's connection with his people become a means of holy influence on the minds and hearts of the young.