

But this fact is observed elsewhere. There are persons whose daily conduct is determined by the passing show, the last influence that touches them, the latest creed they hear. They lack stability. They have no firmness. There are no deep currents of honor, truth and righteousness within them to give direction to their ways. On the other hand, you know persons who cannot be carried about by every wind of doctrine. You know when they leave home in the morning how they will spend the day, and you know they will come home at night unstained by the world. In other words, the source of their strength is within them, and not outside of them. There are waves of temptation, tides of evil doings, winds of cheap, ugly gossip, eddies of dishonest practices, but these cannot harm the person whose life is hid with Christ, and who is so rooted in the truth that he is unmoved by the outside elements. In a world so broken down morally as our own, it is encouraging, to say the least, to see persons, young and old, who refuse to be a toy of evil forces. They are strong in the strength Christ gives them.—Lutheran Young Folks.

MINISTER OF CHRIST FOR THE TIMES XXV.

"In conversation."—I. Tim. iv, 12

The minister for the times is a social man. He is much alone, and yet is much in company. He is not seen in every circle. He seeks not conversation merely that he may pass pleasantly a leisure hour. It is not simply relaxation and enjoyment that is coveted; but he throws himself amid society in order to prosecute still the great end from which his eye never, never wanders. He contemplates all men as travellers to a destiny of infinite importance—a destiny which his own influence is to modify and exalt to the utmost. He has contemplated, too, the wonderful power of speech; and that not only in the studied address, but in the more familiar aspect of the social circle. He has learned that careless men are sometimes "won by the conversation" of righteous companions and friends; while the Bible has taught him of a species of words that "minister grace to the hearers." This is enough with a man, the passion of whose soul is to save the lost, and lure them to eternal life. He converses largely and faithfully. They are mostly gracious words that proceed out of his mouth. The topics that are wont to engross the conversation of most men, are, in the comparison, lightly esteemed by him. The great themes of the Bible are those on which he mainly expatiates; aiming, by direct remark, or by attractive allusion or illustration, to press upon the attention the things of God. He cultivates an abundant facility of bending worldly conversation heavenward. He aims that Jesus should enter and stand in the midst, though the "doors were shut;" or, if there be companies where his Saviour may not be admitted, he speedily retires. Why should the minister—one of the watchmen of these solemn times—parley with the things that have an end? What conversation, what word has he, except for Christ and heaven? Are not thousands listening to his conversation—marking, scrutinizing the tenor of all he says? Knows he not that, by his use of the social talent, he will be judged by multitudes?—and that, by this, every one that knows him will be quickened or hindered in respect to the most importance of all interests? Is he ignorant

that the power of his preaching is mysteriously enhanced or prejudiced by his good or ill conversation? All this is plain. Hence, he converses much, and converses evangelically. As necessity may be, he instructs, or warns, or reproves, or encourages, or exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine.

He converses impartially, forgetting not the poor, the aged, and infirm—even the evil and unthankful. He neglects not the remote, but flies where they are, bearing the divine message.

He converses constantly. Few days pass over him in which he does not breathe a heavenly savour by his conversation. From house to house he passes as an angel of goodness, bearing ever the sweet burden of his spirit—the salvation of the lost; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

He converses judiciously and timely, studying earnestly the selectest modes and opportunities for impressing sacred and saving truths upon the heart. When mourning and bereavements come—when riches take wings—when awful Providence enshrouds this world in gloom, and shuts away its hopes forever,—in such times especially will be heard the whisperings of the man of God, pointing to a better and more enduring substance.

He converses modestly and carefully, and, as often as may be, "privately," adapting himself to the prejudices, ages, stations, or infirmities of the varied multitude.

He converses benevolently and affectionately; for he loves the sinner—loves his eternal good; while his whole aspect and every word bespeaks a soul overflowing with profound affection and good-will toward the souls of men.

And yet he converses faithfully and earnestly. His eye is upon success. He longs to compass his end, namely, a saving influence. He wants the soul for heaven—to place him a star in the Redeemer's crown;—to see him saved from hell;—to listen to his harp in the New Jerusalem.

POINTS FOR THE PRAYER MEETING LEADER

Begin the service on time. This encourages more people to come than some folk suspect. Sometimes the leader will sit and talk to one or two about other things until past time to begin the service, and the people are waiting for meeting.

Try to get everyone to sing. A lively song service attracts attention and helps to increase the spirit of worship.

Be brief. Do not take all the time yourself nor let anyone else talk too long. It may be that some are not enjoying the talk as much as the speaker. There are others who would like to testify. Give all a chance to testify and get blessed.

Speak from a simple subject that can be easily understood and impressed upon the minds of the people.

At times assign portions of scripture and request the people to study them and come to prayer meeting ready to comment on them. The thoughts of different persons will be a blessing to others and will encourage Bible study. Have a well chosen list of subjects. It is not usually well to have a list of subjects to be followed week after week. The continual practice of this may lead to too much formality.

Do not let the meeting get away from you. Sometimes during a prayer service everyone

begins to talk at once and the meeting seems more like a talking convention. This is especially so in cottage prayer services.

Be as informal as possible. Be prayed up; have the blessing of God upon you and others will hunger for salvation.

Never let the service drag. This discourages a great many people and makes it uninteresting, especially to the visitor.

Remember this service is not a lecture or Bible study. Often the whole time should be devoted to prayer but it is only through prayer that the Church is going to accomplish that which God has called it to do. Prayer is the source of spiritual power.

Give opportunity for thanksgiving and praise. In so doing the discouraged will often be encouraged and sinners will desire to know God.

Always aim at and look for conversions. Sinners sometimes come to prayer meeting and are desiring to know God.

As leader of the service, stand at the door and shake hands with the people as they leave the church. A warm welcome encourages people to come again. Sometimes a good handshake does more good than half an hour of talk.—By William Armstrong in the Pilgrim Holiness Advocate.

MR. FINNEY AS RETIRED MINISTER

Charles G. Finney, mighty man of God, evangelist, president of Oberlin College and professor of theology, had been also pastor of the college church for thirty-five years. Now eight years of age, he must retire.

Dr. James Brand was chosen as his successor in the pastorate. The biographer says, "When he preached his first sermon in the evangelist's presence he was naturally very nervous, but the next morning he met Finney, who dissolved all sense of fear from his mind."

"A more genial, tender, sympathetic, child-like character," said Dr. Brand, "I never met. * * * During the two remaining years of his life, though still living among a people who idolized him, and to whom his word was law, he never * * offered a suggestion or made a criticism. * * * He always sent me away a wiser man and with deeper longing to win men to Christ."

Which reminds us that there are two kinds of retired ministers.

The one is a liability. He may not be bad, but he does not know how to keep out of the pastor's way. Accustomed to lead the people, he seems to wish to do so still. I have known of cases where such ministers, members of a conference, actually attended the meetings of the official board! Sometimes he is critical of the pastor. Sometimes he will talk a prayer meeting to death. Such a preacher should reverently and sincerely pray, "Lord, if I do not have enough grace and sense to do more good than harm, please teach me, or if I cannot learn, take me home."

Most men who have served long as pastors have at some time had the other kind of retired minister—the kind that Mr. Finney was. Their lives are as ointment poured forth. If a superannuate will keep his place, what a blessing he can be!

Do not let your head run upon that which is none of your own, but pick out some of the best of your circumstances and consider how eagerly you would wish for them, were they not in your possession.—J. O. House, Observer.