

THE PASTOR AND HIS RELATION TO SECULAR EMPLOYMENT*

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To work or not to work, at secular tasks, is a problem which confronts many pastors. So far as I know, there is no definite "thou shalt," or "thou shalt not," in the Scriptures touching this matter. We can find grounds there, upon which to argue, for or against, as we choose. It may be pointed out, and often is, that Paul made tents for a living, while engaged in the work of the ministry. On the other hand it is equally true, that Peter and Andrew, James and John, were called from secular labour, and so far as we know, never engaged in it again after they began their active ministry, and this was evidently what Jesus intended they should do when He called them.

Those men who were accused of turning the world upside down, spent little, if any time, in secular work. Even the very important task of caring for the needy they felt should be taken care of by others, while they, by prayer and fasting, kept themselves ready for the more important work of feeding souls. I am sure most pastors find that preparing two sermons and a prayer meeting talk every week, reading to keep abreast of the times, studying to rightly divide the word of truth, keeping himself spiritual by prayer and meditation, and the work of calling on the sick and needy, is a full time job.

It seems the charge which a pastor holds will do much to decide whether or not he may take up any secular work. The attitude of his people should be considered conscientiously. A pastor can do some things while holding a country church, which would be very impracticable in a town or city charge, not merely because of the attitude of the people, but also because of the demands on his time. In any case his pastoral work must have first place. The problem confronts us, can a man divide his time and service, and still give his best to his ministry? If a church has faith and confidence enough in a man to call him as their pastor, haven't they a perfect right to expect full time service, and the best he has to offer, providing they pay him a reasonable salary?

However, there is another side to the matter. I think many a man will say he has been able to do better work as a pastor, while doing some secular work on the side. The argument may be offered that the greatest and best preachers have been men who did no secular labour. I am not so sure about that. Paul was rather successful, and success, not merely fine sermons, will decide which is the best and greatest, in the final test; and as already mentioned, Paul made tents for a living, and preached to the glory of God quite successfully. Furthermore, to compare one man in the ministry, who does engage in secular labour, with another who does not, is hardly the way to reach a fair conclusion. The talents and capabilities of one may be greater than the other. It is fair, however, to compare the pastor when he is giving full time to the pastoral work, with himself, when engaging in other work part of his time. When this is done, I think the man in charge of a country pastorate who does a moderate amount of secular labour, has little to fear from the comparison. I have heard a number

of pastors bear testimony to the fact that moderate secular work rested their minds, and sent them back to their pastoral duties with new zeal. If you will excuse personal testimony, I have found that often parts of my better sermons have been thought out while I have been busy at some secular task. Perhaps David could hardly be called a preacher, nevertheless he gave us some rather deep sermons in his psalms, and some of the deepest of these were evidently not thought out in the temple, or the palace, but in the sheepfold, or on the hillside, as he watched his father's flock, and some of them, even on the field of battle. Then when the work was over, he penned what had been thought out while he had laboured.

It is hard for me to see much ground for the objection that it hurts a pastor's dignity to engage in secular work. If the work is honest, it isn't so much what he does as how he does it, that gives dignity to the worker. David, with the shepherd's staff and sling in his hand, is as dignified as when he plays the harp, or holds the sceptre. His excellence and worthiness are in his character, not in the work he does. If he keeps in God's will he needn't worry about dignity.

This last statement suggests, what to my mind, is the real problem and the great danger. Can he engage in secular work, and how much can he engage in it, and still keep the full blessing of God on his soul, and on his work? Can he engage in any other line of work and not give it first place, but keep first things first? How much other work can he do and still keep it from interfering with his pastoral duties? I am persuaded no man can answer these questions for another. Guided by an active conscience, and the Word, every pastor must be a law unto himself, and do that which is right in his own eyes, remembering that whatsoever he does, must be done to the glory of God.

*A paper given at the Ministers' Conference at Moncton.

OBITUARY

Charles Hubbard

The funeral of Charles Hubbard, of Charlesville, N. S., was held at the home of the deceased on Nov. 13th, conducted by Rev. B. D. Price.

The late Mr. Hubbard was a life-long resident of this place and for a good many years Justice of the Peace." He was also a devoted Christian and deacon of the Christian Advent Church until his death. I had the privilege of working with Brother Hubbard in the church for a year and found him to be a great inspiration and help as a deacon and brother in the work, and on his dying bed he witnessed to the assurance of meeting me over yonder.

Our deepest sympathy goes to his widow and family of children and grandchildren.

Mr. Barry Sherwood

The death of Mr. Barry Sherwood, of Canaan Station, N. B., occurred at Moncton City Hospital, Nov. 20th. Funeral service was held at Tuttle's Funeral Home, Moncton, and was conducted by Rev. B. C. Cochrane, assisted by members of the choir of Moncton Church. Interment was made at Coates Mills, N. B.

THE VETERAN'S APPEAL

Oh, men of God, we're coming home in ships
by score on score,
Our bodies crippled, gashed and maimed, our
hearts all sick and sore;
Our haunted souls, our hunted souls are crying
out for Life;
We want God's Peace, God's Love, God's joy
in place of man's mad strife.
We left your shores strong lusty boys, with
hope and ardour filled;
We're coming back with countless gaps and
more than bodies killed;
The visions of our minds today make havoc of
the past;
Our tortured sleep brings back again war's
withering, wasting blast.
The blinded eyes can ne'er behold the beauties
of the earth;
The shattered lips can not again join in the
world's rude mirth.
We're boys in years, in suffering men; we've
come through shot and shell;
We've forged a way to Peace and Home
through fires of deepest hell.
And now we want the Great and Good; we
want the Pure and True—
Oh, ministers of God, we ask, can heaven be
found through you?
We were not plaster saints; ah, no! black Sin
has seared the soul,
But can you tell of One who came to make
poor sinners whole?
It is not pealing organs and spires on lofty
heights,
It is not architecture and glowing window
lights,
For which the Veterans hunger and call on
you today;
But for the Man of Nazareth who trod our
death-strewn way.
The blazing sands of Egypt have dimmed our
eyes to see
The beauty of a cushioned pew, but crave for
Galilee;
The slimy oozing trenches have blotted out
of mind
The intellectual essays, but brought the Christ
who's kind;
The scream of whizzing bullets, of bursting
bomb and shell,
Spoil symphonies in D, but not the tale the
angels tell.
The wounded mates around us, the cries of
dying boys,
Break in upon the anthems with sore discord-
ant noise;
The solos may be faultless, by singer trained
to please,
But Gospel hymns are greater and grander
far than these.
The "Great White Comrade" reached us in
many a battle fray;
Say, man of God, is He the One you offer us
today?
We're sick of Drink and Lust and Sin; we're
sick in soul and mind;
But, oh, we're fiercely longing for the One
who's good and kind.
We'll troop to church in thousands, we'll
crowd each hall and aisle,
If you'll only speak of Jesus and win for us
His smile.
If we knew you agonized for us in sweat and
blood and prayer.
As we have fought and sweat for you, you'd
find the Veterans there.
—B. L. Cowie, in National Voice