

CIRCULAR LETTER.

THE PASTOR'S OFFICE AND RELATION TO HIS CHURCH.

Being impressed with the importance of the Pastor's office and the vital union he bears to the church, we beg leave to address to you dear Brethren on this subject, this our Circular Letter.

THE PASTOR'S OFFICE.

Of all callings that of the Pastor or under-shepherd is the most sacred. In its origin it is divine. It belongs distinctly to God and Christianity.

The Protestant Pastor goes forth, not a mere professional official or humanly appointed priest but a divinely commissioned and God called laborer in the Vineyard of his Lord. His credentials are from on high.

The Pastor's hope of success is, that God has called and qualified him, and hence will approbate and bless him in the work.

THE PASTOR'S OBJECT.

is to bring men to Christ; the noblest that can occupy the mind. This implies more than adding names to a church-book, or even the gathering in of sinners.

The building up of Christian character is as important a work as the conversion of sinners. If the Pastor succeed in developing a healthy Christian life in the Church, it in turn, becomes a co-worker with him in the spread of gospel truth.

He is to feed the flock which Christ purchased, and protect them from the many dangers to which they are exposed. To do this, he must have a perpetual oversight, and care of the church.

In this work he deals, not with his own opinions, or even human wisdom, but with divine truth as an irresistible force. In the power of that truth he should have a sublime confidence, knowing that "My word shall not return to me void."

In viewing the Pastor's office we get an idea of the sacred relation he bears to his flock. He stands in their midst, a member of their body and their presiding officer. They have chosen him for their spiritual instructor.

But alas; In how many instances are these relations severed and obligations broken.

For example: A man goes into a community where there is a small Baptist church. He can talk fluently and possesses the faculty of exciting the emotional nature; and, doubtless as a lay member would be useful in the church.

The new Pastor soon learns that it is to his interest as well as that of the people's, to seek another field of labor, or, as is often the case other employment.

Such a Baptist church, counselled by two or three others of similar views, has transacted business of the most sacred and important character, and the denomination as an intelligent body has to accept, yea, even suffer from the acts of said church, yes, we say suffer.

I ask what right has any man, thus leaving the church that ordained him, to interfere with a settled Pastor? And what claim to consistency or even honesty, can the church or any individual member of it make, who becomes the abettor of such men, in unsettling their pastor, with whom they have entered into the most binding obligations.

church take hold of and be counselled by a man of whom they know little or nothing; when in doing it they regret the counsel of a Pastor, who has proved worthy of their confidence.

But very much of this unpleasantness arises from the idea, first on the part of the church, that it is an independent body having a right to ordain any man and unsettle him at pleasure. And second, on the part of the denomination that the man thus unsettled, is a regular minister of the denomination, and it is our duty to accept him as such and receive his counsel; and though we have a Pastor yet we are independent and not obligated to heed his gifts.

Then I ask what right has that church, to, in a few months, turn that man upon the denomination and under what obligation are we to accept him as a regular minister? Many of our churches appear to think they ordain men for the denomination which is inconsistent with their idea of church independence.

Let, we say, the circumstances and needs of a church with the man of their choice for Pastor be presented before the intelligence of our denomination. Let the Brethren consult not the momentary feelings of church or candidate, but upon what will ultimately benefit the cause of God and be for his glory.

And it appears to me that the church refusing to be thus counselled, abuses its independence and fails to exhibit the spirit of Christ. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." Such sacred relations should not be entered, when the church is being borne along on the flood-tide of excitement, but with calm deliberation and in the fear of God.

"And we beseech you Brethren to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." 1. Thes. 5: 12-13. "But watch thou in all things endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2. Tim. 4: 5.

JOSEPH CAHILL.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT BY THE WAY.

BY REV. J. E. CRACKNELL.

"He careth for you." 1 Pet. v. 7.

Sweet thought; believer, Jesus cares for you. Obscure, despised, unworthy though you deem yourself to be, the Lord has interest in you.

Are we not tempted sometimes to think that we are too small, too insignificant to be under the notice, or to occupy the concern or attention, of the God of heaven—that it is inconsistent with his dignity to be occupied with the petty interests of his creatures?

While God cares for all, and "is good to all," he specially careth for you, O humble believer in Jesus, bought with the Saviour's blood, and sealed with the earnest of the Spirit as a child of God, and an heir of glory.

1. It is paternal care. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." How full of meaning the Saviour's words, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

2. It is conjugal care. In the Lord of glory, in the person of the Son of God, the union is formed. "Thy Maker is thy husband." We read of the "bride of the Lamb's wife."

3. It is regal care. The Lord of glory is the King of saints, and his subjects are brought to his throne to confide in his care and rest in his continued protection and all-wise government.

4. It is pastoral care. David said, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." He remembered how he had led his flock by the still waters—how he had made them to lie down in shady nooks by the side of the river—how in the summer's heat he had led them on the high hills that they might have the cool air, and how, when the winter set in, he had led them into the valleys that they might be hidden from the cold.

This care is perpetual; in all the various difficulties, in all the multiplied sorrows, in all the tribulation through which you may pass, remember, thou pilgrim to a better land that he who has borne thy sins carries thy sorrows, and bids thee cast thy care upon him with the promise that he will sustain thee; and never shall a time come when it will cease to be true "He careth for you."

York Town, Surrey.

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