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WORKING AND SPEAKING FOR CHRIST.

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THE Christian Church is divided into two, and only two, great classes—the ministry and the laity. The work to be done by them and the methods of usefulness are, for the more part, the same. The things to be believed and the things to be done for the maintenance of personal piety, and for the performance of both personal and social duties in doing good, are, with only slight variations, the same. The “blessed ones” begin alike
their experience with poverty of spirit, pass through and verify the several beatitudes, and are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. And their obvious duties are to so shine among men as to glorify God—to exert such an influence as to save men. And yet there are assigned to these classes some duties which belong to them severally, duties which ministers may not neglect and which the laity may not assume. Ministers of the Gospel are called to the special work of preaching Christ, of supervising the interests of the Church, of pastoral labor, and of leading off in all moral reforms; but not so that they may any the less do the work which belongs to all Christians. The laity may not, in the common acceptation, be called to the work of preaching, nor of supervising the wide spiritual interests of the Church. In both of these departments workers are needed. "Go work in my vineyard." "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Without specifying at length the work to be
done for Christ by all the disciples alike, by every one in his own measure and according to his ability, we collate in familiar and slightly modified form the sayings of Jesus and his apostles as follows:

"Doing good, being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible, to all men. To their bodies of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison. To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that 'we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.' By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith. By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed."

To these several matters should be added the avoidance of all wrong doings, and an "attendance upon all the ordinances of God." These Christian duties run into every avenue,
and extend over the whole field of active and useful life. They belong alike to all the disciples of Christ, whether in the ministry or in the laity.

There are also certain speaking duties which are held by all in common. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard." "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." "Let him that heareth say, Come."

But there are duties which belong to the ministry as a class, and which may not be assigned to, nor assumed by, the laity. All, indeed, are called to the relations and duties of discipleship; but some of these are called and appointed to the work of the ministry. Their chief and distinctive duty is to preach, and to "feed the flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers."
As a part of religious services in the public worship of God, *preaching* is as old as the Church, and *speaking for Christ* is coetaneous with Christian experience. Their grand and constant theme as to the radical ideas of sin, redemption, and holiness, has ever been the same. In style and manner they have undergone changes, whether for the better or for the worse we do not now consider. In the early period of the Church preaching was less expository of any *written* truths than it was declaratory of truths spoken to the clear consciousness of the preaching prophets. "Thus saith the Lord" was an authoritative introduction to their religious discourses. The style of public and social declarations and instructions in religious matters was patriarchal and conversational as truly as hortatory and mandatory. The Bible idea, essential to prophesying or speaking well and effectively, is, in both the Old and New Testaments, "speaking to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." From those early times down to the present, whatever may have been the modifications
style and manner, in special subjects and occasions, the thing has ever been the same. Whether the Greek word ἱεροσω, meaning proclaim, or εὐαγγελιζομαι, announce the good news, evangelize, be used, it matters not; for the former word is always associated with some other which makes the phrase fully equivalent to the latter in signification and use.

The great theme or central idea of the pulpit is "Christ Jesus the Lord," or salvation by grace through faith in Christ. No other should be introduced in its stead. The range of thought within and germane to this is wide, extending over all the religious and moral questions and activities of the day. There is no great interest but has its moral side, its relations to character, to reputation, to influence, to business, and therefore to Christ, who is both the wisdom of God intermeddling himself with all things, and the model teacher imparting truth to all minds. In this way is he "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification." Whatever involves sin or wrong; whatever relates to and fosters error; what-
ever bears on the good or the ill of society, is within the range of Christianity, and, therefore, of pulpit discussion and social conversation, as also of prophesying in the Church. The recognized position and power of the ministry in a community is really a good criterion of the prevailing intelligence, morality, order, thrift, and activity of the people—at least of the guiding minds among them. And yet the respect shown to the Christian ministry is less an indication of the strict intelligence and practical usefulness of individuals than it is of their morals and good breeding. But so intimately related is sound intelligence, in the domain of morals, to Christianity, that we can but stand by the principle that, in the long run and on a wide scale, they rise and fall together. They are allies.

The time was when preaching was almost the only means of imparting, in a popular way, educational and religious knowledge to the people, and when conversation served in the place of modern newspapers. "They spent their time in little or nothing else than
either to tell or to hear some new thing.” In this way was Apollos, “an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures,” taken by Aquila and Priscilla, and taught “the way of God more perfectly.” And who does not know that, not only among the Fathers but in later times, learning was limited mostly to the ministry, to the professions, and the nobility and wealthy? The former were teachers, preachers, lecturers. The latter classes were conversationalists, talkers. To them belonged the libraries of their age. They established and sustained schools. Books were few and largely in manuscript form. Oral teaching constituted the chief means of popular instruction. Before Christ learned men were, in all nations, sacred men who combined the offices of teacher, priest, and scribe. And our Lord was both the “good Teacher” and “the High Priest of our profession.” His apostles were oral teachers whose duty was “to teach—make disciples of—all nations.” And every minister of Christ should aim to be abreast with the leading minds of the age in all that concerns
the highest and best interest of the people. The power of speaking for Christ should be cultivated and popularized by all his disciples. And though, because of the Press, there is in these times such a division of mental labor as that every man may have his specialty in the sublime combination of the enlightening and reforming forces, yet the pulpit and conversation, that is, speaking for Christ, have their place and work, for which there are no substitutes. The great people at all instructed in correct morals are indebted for the more part, for such instruction, to the active and working disciples of Christ, and that, too, in their proper and legitimate fields of labor. God has so ordered it, and so it will remain. Says William Cowper:

"The pulpit (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effective guard,
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.
There stands the Messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear."
By him the violate law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong; restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, arm'd himself to panoply complete
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect."

An agency of such power should be well
and skillfully used. Its utterances should be
clear as the ringing of bells, inviting as the
voices of welcome, and direct as the mandates
of authority. Cold platitudes, wire-spun
theories, merely scientific theses, and aimless
verbiage, are out of place in the pulpit. "See-
ing we have this ministry, as we have received
mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the
hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in
craftiness, nor handling the word of God de-
ceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth,
commending ourselves to every man's con-
science in the sight of God."

In order to be successful, all who work and
speak for Christ must have certain incentives to action. Ministers should have "credentials clear," that is, a conscious call to their work, an inward persuasion of duty, and then they should seek and possess certain personal qualifications that fit them for their special line of duty. And, further, those who prophecy should study so to "speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort," as to win souls. An idea of duty that may not be resisted without condemnation, and that may not be laid aside capriciously nor at will, is implied in this call. Though every Christian may, in an important sense, have vocations and avocations in which they legitimately and very properly labor, and to which they earnestly devote themselves, yet the Head of the Church, in conformity to a higher and more specific principle, designates and calls from the broader circle of his disciples, where genius, taste, and education alike play, some persons to the special work of preaching the Gospel. Without a consciousness of such a call there will be but little zeal and as little
success; there will be no Pauline sense of “Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.” But this professed call is to be further tested by the Church whose convictions also, arising from a knowledge of the character of the candidate, of his manner of life, and of his capacities, are more or less strong and definite. These twofold convictions unite on him whom God calls to the work of the ministry.

In what we have thus far said we mean to embrace both preaching and all other duties of the pastoral office, namely, evangelizing, teaching, and prophesying. And yet we do not mean to say that other Christians have not their appropriate spheres of activity and usefulness in order that the whole body of Christ, which is the Church, may be “fitly framed together, and may grow unto a holy temple in the Lord.” They have important functions in the family, in social and business circles, in the Sunday-school, in the room of sickness, among the poor, in the choir, in prayer-rooms, and wherever else they may think and speak and act for God and humanity.
The personal qualifications for success in working and speaking for Christ are radical. Christian experience is one. It engenders such a desire to do good, and such a zeal in efforts thereto, as will seek opportunities to do good.

Another element of success is a positive devotement or consecration of self, of business, and of life to the Church. Without deterring in the least from a reasonable application to business, as it is commonly considered, or even from needed recreation and desirable pleasure, this devotement will rather add to them. “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” All Christians should do business on this principle. “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,” is a Christian maxim worthy the attention of all who would be useful.

Now, where these several things exist in full measure, there will be the tender and winning fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, against which there is no law.”
To faith as a fruit of the Spirit should be added, as matters of personal experience and as elements of character, "virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love." "If these things be in you, and abound, they make you neither barren (idle) nor unfruitful." They beget activity and success.

Though, in a technical and restricted sense, all Christians may not preach, nor perform other functions of the ministerial office, yet doubtless all may speak effectively for Christ. The story of the Cross is simple and easily narrated. Personal religious experience instigates to speak of it with a fervor and naturalness that win their way to the heart. As Andrew hastened to his brother Simon, and Philip to Nathanael, with the evidences of the Messiah come, so all recent converts and earnest Christians love to tell to sinners the fact of their own salvation. The disciples who, on the persecution of Stephen, "were scattered abroad, went every-where preaching the word," that is, telling the doctrine of the good news. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual
songs, when sung with grace in the heart, are means of teaching and admonishing in the Lord. And as all disciples may sing and prophesy, so “in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female,” as there is neither bond nor free. Both Scripture prophecy and history teach that all the disciples of Christ should be alike baptized with the Spirit and may speak of their experience. The only seeming objections to this universality are the advices and directions of St. Paul to Timothy and to the Church in Corinth. And these advices are thought by many able divines to be less general directions to the Church at large and in all time than they are special directions limited to those somewhat peculiar times, peoples, and circumstances. But it is proper to say, further, that in the New Testament are five different words, each having its own shade of meaning, which are, in our version, translated by the one word “teach,” so that the real intentions and precise ideas of the writers are somewhat obscured. One of these words (matheteuó) means to teach in the sense of making and in-
structing disciples, as, "Go, teach all nations." Another word (paideuō) means to educate and care for a child. A third, (didaskō,) meaning to teach in the sense of giving authoritative direction, admonition, advice, is the one used in the first epistle to Timothy, where the apostle says, "I suffer not a woman (wife) to teach, or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The accompanying clause shows in what sense and way the apostle discountenanced teaching by a wife, that is, so as to rival or displace her husband. The nominal form of this word is applied to Christ by Nicodemus, "Thou art a teacher (didaskalos) come from God;" and by the young senator, "Good Master, (agathos didaskalos,) what shall I do," etc. Both the word itself and the scope of thought show that the apostle did not allow woman (or wife) to teach with authority unbecoming her relations, and that he had no reference to that prophesying and praying which accompany salvation, and in reference to which he in his epistle to the Corinthians, and for the sake of becoming-
ness, gave special directions both to men and to women, whether married or unmarried. The other two words have each their own shades of meaning, which our word teach cannot without circumlocution be made to express.

There are also three words, each having its own meaning, that are translated by "speak." One of these (eipein) means to say something; another (legein) means to tell something; the other word (lalein) means to speak carelessly, idly, to talk much, hence to prattle, to babble. Our childish expressions in mockery, "yah, yah, lal, lal," convey the idea in ridicule of a thoughtless talker. And though this last word is often used in the New Testament, it is commonly in an accommodated and popular rather than in its strict sense. But when the scholarly apostle Paul wishes to discriminate carefully, and to express a precise idea as to what is proper for wives in religious assemblies and in ecclesiastical bodies, he uses words in their proper biblical senses. And this word lalein is the one which he is careful to use in
his advices to the Church in Corinth. For the purpose of securing orderly and becoming services in that dissolute city where the social relations of women, and particularly of married women, were not in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel, he advised: "Let your women [wives] keep silence [quietness] in the churches [assemblies]: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, (lalein,) but to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women [wives] to speak (lalein) in church." This advice or inhibition very evidently has reference to that kind and manner of speaking in orderly and Christian assemblies, which savors, in reality or in appearance, of authority co-ordinate with or superior to that of man, and of a disregard of conjugal relations. And we submit that these directions are in harmony with all well-ordered society. A character and manner of life in such a beautiful harmony with our profession and relations aid greatly in securing access to the ear and confidence
of the people whom we would win to Christ. There grow out of them certain amenities and suavities that open and pave the way to the hearts of all men. The practical workings of the Gospel between man and man, move on the principle of winning and persuading rather than of repelling souls. When an apostle says that he became "all things to all men that he might gain some," he did not mean to say that he violated the great principles of Christianity which he elsewhere and most strenuously inculcated, but rather that he was pliant, affable, or argumentative and scholarly, and that whatever things might be yielded for the public good was cheerfully yielded by him. He spoke, therefore, of those variable qualities and preferences which enable us to adapt ourselves to circumstances and to fit in anywhere and every-where, so that while we are true to the right and adherent to the truth we are not boorish in manners, angular in demeanor, nor out of joint with refined society. Work is the order of God. Speaking the truth in love is commendable. And all Christians
who cultivate and use these elements of character and usefulness, be they ministers or laymen, male or female, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, will, in their appropriate spheres and relations, as also according to their several abilities, work and speak effectively for Christ Jesus their Lord. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. . . . Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. . . . Uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”

That we may determine what is the proper sphere of each and every Christian—our own as well—we have only to study the gifts, graces, and qualifications of each, and then to see to it that both we and they are in the way of doing good according to the several abilities. Sometimes, as in mechanics, the point of contact is the place of power; and the means and methods of reaching that point are the ways and means of applying the power, of lifting the weight, or of moving the object. Human society has its points of contact that
must be reached in order that the people be effectually moved in any reform. Sometimes the circle of influence, as in electrical phenomena, is the region of subtile but effective power; and society has its circles of influence, where the power of sympathy, confidence, and persuasion are felt. In the Church these influences are tenderly moving. Sometimes what is called the right place is the place of power. In the adjustment of men and agencies all great corporations seek those who are adapted to and qualified for the several places to be filled and the several things to be done. It should be so in the Church. In the mind of the great Head of the Church it is so. There is but one body, the Church, though the members are many; and "God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon them we bestow more abundant honor ... so that the members should have the same care one for another." "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are
differences of administrations, [ministries,] but the same Lord.” Among these several “ministries” are “apostles, prophets, teachers, and helps.”

Now the ways and means of using these several agencies in a well-organized and efficiently working Church are to be wisely adapted to the ends to be secured. Every minister of Christ, no matter what his ecclesiastical relation to the Church, is both a preacher and pastor. The duties of these offices are somewhat distinct, though never separate. They are alike important. They aid each other. Pastoral labor bestowed in full sympathy with humanity and its wants, with society and its relations, with the Church and its work, with Christ and his mission, takes the minister out among the people for the sole purpose of supplementing his pulpit instructions with practical exemplifications in teaching “every one, young and old, to be inwardly and outwardly Christian.” Conversation, advice, instruction, and persuasion in the spirit of the Master, as also prayer suited to
the wants of all, enter into the work of a pastor. And what better method of following up these positive labors with readable assurances of pastoral solicitude than by putting into the hands of each some plain, pointed, and instructive Tracts suited to their conditions? At small cost pastors and other functionaries may supply themselves with a good assortment of this kind of popular literature on every subject within the range of practical religion. When given by an affectionate and faithful pastor and friend, they will be accepted and read. The more learned, courteous, and estimable he is, the more welcomed and valued will be his visitations and services. Be he a Bishop having the oversight of Churches and their pastors; be he a Dean looking after subordinates in cathedral or town; be he a Deacon or Class-leader, his office opens to him a door for usefulness in this special work. And possibly there is no ecclesiastical officer who can more easily and naturally engage in the work of tract distribution—as the Methodist Episcopal Church is constituted—than he
whose duty it is to make quarterly visitations to all the Churches within his district, namely, the *Presiding Elder*. His duties are supervisory and executive. He comes into contact with many representative men of the Churches. Presiding in the Quarterly Conferences, where all the interest of the several Churches are inquired into, as also their obligations and relations to their own communities and to the general Church, he has rare opportunities of moving the members of those bodies to active work in doing good. And it is hoped that the series of tracts now being prepared especially for their use will obtain through them a wide circulation among the pastors and several officers in the Church.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.” “Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.”

HUNT & EATON, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York.
CRANSTON & STOWE, Cincinnati.