

## **"The Necessity Of A Trained Ministry"**

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Special training and equipment is the order of the day in every profession and line of business. This is due to the higher and more general diffusion of intelligence in the present time and the consequent advance in the arts, sciences, literature, etc. Not many years ago the young man who purposed to enter the medical profession did not think it necessary to take any prescribed course of study. The personal patronage, help and advice of a good old doctor, together with some home study on the part of the youngster, were regarded as amply sufficient. A course of study was finally required, consisting first of two years, then of three. Now, in many institutions, a course of four years is required; and a post graduate course of one or two years added to this is considered very beneficial, if not in some way necessary. In our country are scores of schools with millions of endowments established for the express purpose of fitting men to do special work along special lines. If the carpenter feels that his success depends upon the thoroughness with which he has applied himself to study; if the farmer has learned that he can not harvest a paying crop unless he is able to take advantage of the varying conditions of the soil and climate; if the soldier marches to the field of battle with the consciousness that the victory depends largely upon the years of technical training to which he has subjected himself, how can the man of God, the minister of the gospel, the interpreter of the word, the man who is to separate truth from untruth, the man who is to superintend and direct the transformation tell them where to go and what to do things carnal, corrupt and transitory to those enduring, and God-like.

The minister is more than a shepherd in the common acceptance of the word. He not only leads to where the food is, but he has largely to do with its preparation. One ignorant of the whereabouts of the pasture can not lead to it, to say nothing of his inability to administer the proper diet. Preachers, then, are not sent forth to make noise, although they may make some in the going; nor are they sent to preach their experience, yet they may relate some occasionally by way of diversion. Ministers are sent forth for one specific purpose: to preach

the word; other things will follow as a necessity. But they cannot preach the word unless they know it. It is beyond the power of any being on heaven or on earth to teach what he does not know. A call to preach is no guarantee of the possibilities. A longing and burning desire without knowledge is of very little advantage; it may be a positive disadvantage both to the man and to those who are made to listen.

The minister teaches men to think along right lines. No one is better than his thoughts. Our thoughts constitute a sort of moral thermometer. The Bible is the source of the highest and most noble thoughts. It teaches the truth and the truth frees from the power of sin and iniquity and transforms the old man into the new. But no one can teach the truth unless he knows it. The minister does not know any more about the Bible than any other Christian man unless he studies it more. His call in itself does not fill his head with Biblical lore. As a teacher of truth, of right-living and right-thinking, the minister himself needs the broadest and most careful training.

The minister needs the best possible training, because he is the real leader among his people. No other men are so much leaders. Politicians have their measure of influence, so have other classes of men. But no other men have such privileges and immunities in the family circles, no others are so frequently and intimately consulted on all subjects as ministers, no others are so looked up to and have such influence as they. If he is guided by right views, the preacher can be a tremendous force and wield an incalculable influence for good in the community. People usually seek his advice in matters of education. He thus has opportunity to do a great deal to stimulate the young people of both sexes to educational efforts. He can interest parents and impress them with importance of giving their children every educational advantage. The public schools would be able to boast of much better attendance if all ministers possessed and expressed right views. Go into the rural school district where the pastor takes no interest in the education of the people and you will find the public schools poorly attended; and the teachers employed are usually imported from other parts of the State. There are such communities in which not a single person of either sex is sufficiently qualified to teach in the public schools. Wherever you find such a community you will also find, upon inquiry, the pastor seldom, if ever, speaks either in public or private upon the subject of education. When the church or community is blessed

with the well trained pastor, the people are more intelligent, they live in better houses, buy more homes, wear better clothes and in every way they present the appearance of thrift and energy. Such a pastor does not think the people are providentially spared only that he may get a living out of them. He does not speak against men of progress and industrial enterprises.

From a moral standpoint, he largely the backbone or lack of backbone in the community. As a moral force, his efforts have a delicate but broad field, one which most vitally concerns the whole people. The moral fitness is the one to which the most interest and importance are attached. It constitutes the foundation as well as the top-stone of our success as a people. Here the minister has the greatest possible opportunity for doing good or evil.

The minister should be a model and example in the community in dress and conduct, both in and out of the pulpit. While extravagance in dress is to be avoided, carelessness is to be equally avoided. No emphasis has been put upon the spiritual training because it is too well understood that spiritually is a necessary accompaniment of ministerial success.

There ought to be broadness of heart and mind; narrowness and bigotry should find no place in the minister's outfit. Proper training will make him recognize the kinship of all mankind; he will look upon all men as his brothers and God as the Father of all; sectarianism will not destroy his sympathy for his brother ministers; in fact, he will be more the servant of Christ than the servant of any peculiar "ism" or "dogma."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Albert W. Pegues, D.D., *The United Negro: His Problems and His Progress Containing the Addresses & Proceedings the Young People's Christian and Educational Congress, Held August 6-11, 1902* (Board of Directors Of The Congress).