

# The Evangelical Practice of the Pastors

by Karl F. Krauss

The subject of evangelical practice can be treated very expansively. In this essay I shall restrict it to the evangelical practice of the pastor. I have the feeling that there have been many shortcomings, failings, abuses, and mistakes in dealing with situations, conditions, and cases that arise from time to time. Many times disagreeable dealings that synodical officers are compelled to conduct can be traced to the ineptness of pastors in dealing with a situation. When a matter has not been handled in the right manner, it is bound to have unpleasant consequences. Such unpleasantness could have been avoided, if the approach and procedure had been thoroughly evangelical.

This is something of which we pastors ought ever to be mindful. Where the evangelical spirit in our dealings is lacking, the results will be evil and harmful for the Church. Much bitterness, strife, and loss has been caused by unevangelical practice, for which someone must render account to God and man. It is therefore not amiss that we remind ourselves from time to time what it means to be evangelical in our dealings and practice.

## I.

In order to get the proper background, let us remind ourselves of the Scriptural concept of the Christian pastor and the functions of his office.

*The Christian pastor is a servant of Christ.* Paul says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," I Corinthians 4:1. Again, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us," II Corinthians 5:20. It follows, then, that God is our Lord and Master, and we are His servants. "The servant of the Lord," says Paul, "must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," II Timothy 2:24–26.

As a servant of God a pastor may not act and deal as he pleases. He may preach only that which God has committed unto him. He may not depart or deviate from God's Word and will, in order to please men. A pastor may not seek his own, but that which is his Lord's. He preaches the Word of God by God's command and in His place. Whom he rebukes, the Lord rebukes. Whom he comforts, the Lord also comforts. "He that heareth you heareth Me." Whatever the servant does by command of His Master is as valid and certain as if the Lord dealt with us Himself. For that reason the pastor must always deport himself as a servant of God, as Paul wrote, "But in all things approving ourselves as the Ministers of God," II Corinthians 6:4. The pastor will have to render account to God for all his words and actions.

The pastor becomes a servant of God, not by his own faith, but by God's call. A king chooses his own servants. It is a high honor to be the servant of an earthly king. What an exalted position is that of the pastor, who is the servant of the King of kings! God chooses, calls, and commissions His servants; and God alone can terminate their call and commission. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," II Corinthians 4:5. Paul and Timothy referred to themselves as "the servants of Jesus Christ," Philippians 1:1. How important that pastors and congregations understand this properly!

*The pastor is a co-worker with God.* "For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building," I Corinthians 3:9. "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain," II Corinthians 6:1. His is the soil that we till; His is the house that we build. We are His helpers. God alone created the world and redeemed mankind; but in the work of saving souls He uses us as His co-workers. What an honor and privilege, that we should be chosen of God as His instruments for the seeking and saving of immortal souls!

The pastor *is not to be a men-server.* "Be ye not the servants of men," I Corinthians 7:23. "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of

Christ”(Galatians 1:10). In our preaching we are to be governed and guided exclusively by the Word of God; we are not to tickle itching ears. In our pastoral dealings we are to guard against laxity and looseness, by which we may incur favor and good will with men, but lose our standing with God. We are not to be swayed by the intellectual attainments, prominence, position, or prestige of certain members, to be lenient and liberal towards them in order to curry their favor. It is tragic to see pastors fall under obligation toward certain members in the congregation, which vitiates their preaching and practice and renders it of none effect. We are to aim not at the acclaim and applause of men but at the acceptance and approval of God. “But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord,” I Corinthians 4:3, 4.

*The pastor is the servant of the congregation.* “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave every man?” I Corinthians 3:5. “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God” (Colossians 1:25). Paul clearly understood his role: “Ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake,” II Corinthians 4:5. Our office is one of service, a most blessed service: the cure and care of souls. He who does not want to serve had better look to another calling. It follows, then, that every phase of the pastor’s work, whether it be preaching, administering the sacraments, or teaching is done in the name of the congregation.

The pastor must therefore also render account of his activities to the congregation. He ought to be willing and ready to let his members know how he spends his time in his ministry among them. He should not hesitate to report on his pastoral activities. Every other officer of the congregation must give account of his stewardship, why not the pastor? It is not humiliating to be the servant of the congregation, any more than it is humiliating to be the servant of a king. There is honor and privilege and joy in serving the royal priests of God. It is an expression of dignity when one is spoken of as a minister.

*The pastor is to rule but not to dominate his congregation.* “But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many,” Matthew 20:25–28.

We must not lose sight of the fact that there is quite a difference between secular government and church government. “But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ,” Matthew 23:8–10. We shall do well to take heed to the example of the apostles in this regard. Paul says: “I speak not by commandment,” II Corinthians 8:8. Again he says: “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand,” II Corinthians 1:24. And I Peter 5:3, we read: “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”

The Christian pastor may not command anything that is contrary to the Word of God. “We ought to obey God rather than men.” The pastor has no right to act single-handedly in deciding matters of indifference; he must counsel with his congregation. He may not presume to lay down rules with regard to adiaphora and stubbornly insist on his own viewpoint and opinion. Neither must he ever arbitrarily and independently excommunicate anyone. Nor should he take it upon himself to institute changes in the services or things of a similar nature.

The pastor has just one commission: to preach the Gospel. He has just one spiritual authority: the authority of God’s Word. He must always deal with Christians as children of God. He should administer his office, not in his own name, but in the name of Christ.

If the pastor could dictate and decree, it would be hazardous to call a pastor. The more a congregation observes that the pastor demands nothing more or less than obedience to the Word of God, the more willingly and readily it will heed his counsel, especially with regard to adiaphora. The humbler a pastor is in his own opinion, the more influence he will be able to exert and enjoy. He who has dictatorial desires and designs, hierarchical ambitions and aspirations, will not hesitate to employ hypocrisy, deception, and falsehood. He, who

usurps power, robs the church of liberty. This does not mean that everyone may believe as he pleases. Matters of faith must be decided by “It is written.”

But the fact remains that the pastor must always treat his congregation with deference and respect. After all, it is an assembly of God. It is composed of souls loved and redeemed by Christ. Think of the high and holy titles ascribed to these souls: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” I Peter 2:9. Even the congregation at Corinth where Paul found such as were “puffed up” and “carnal,” was a congregation of God. The pastor who regards his flock as a crowd of evildoers and hypocrites increases the burden of his office and makes his work more difficult. His preaching will not improve and edify the members but irritate and incense them. If the pastor regards and treats his flock with all love, gentleness, patience, and respect, he will have, relatively speaking, a paradise on earth.

## II.

The pastor is to display an evangelical spirit in his public preaching and teaching.

*He is to divide the Word rightly.* It certainly should not be necessary to go into great detail in pointing out that the pastor’s primary function is “to preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season,” II Timothy 4:2. We are living in evil times, which exert their baneful influence also upon our congregations. In such times, especially, it is necessary to “preach the Word.” That means Law and Gospel; both must be preached and rightly applied. Here we might heed a word of caution. In times like ours it is very easy to become lopsided in our preaching. By that I mean, we are prone to get into the habit of scolding about the evils that are rampant in our time; we become extremely stormy about it; we often rant and rave; and we bawl the people out. We have become lopsided; we no longer rightly divide the Word of Truth.

But does not God expect us, as Paul says to Timothy, to “reprove, rebuke, exhort”? He certainly does! But he does not say that we are to do this to the exclusion or neglect of the rest of God’s counsel. And he adds that we are to do it “with all longsuffering and doctrine.” This requires calmness, self-restraint, forbearance, gentleness, and patience. We are to apply the truths of God’s Word unsparingly and without compromise or abrogation; but let the application be tempered with mercy!

You say: “But we must preach the Law.” That is true. Without the Law the Gospel hangs in the air, a house without a foundation. On the other hand, the Law without the Gospel is a foundation without a house. By means of the Law the ground is to be broken up to receive the seed; the Gospel is the sunshine and the moisture that causes the seed to take root and grow. We are to preach the Law to bring men to knowledge of their sins. It is the function of the physician to cure. But he must sometimes resort to the knife. However, in applying the Law we only make the diagnosis, and the diagnosis is not the cure. You cannot expect a harvest, if you only plow the soil! Let us beware of a lopsided employment of the Law! Let us not seek to achieve by the Law what can be achieved only by the Gospel. The Law can work neither justification nor sanctification.

We must preach the Gospel—the only power unto salvation. This is the prime and primary function of the Christian pastor, “Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,” I Corinthians 1:6. Noah, for example, was “a preacher of righteousness,” II Peter 2:5. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth,” Isaiah 52:7. “Do the work of an evangelist,” II Timothy 4:5. Redemption—salvation, that is the theme of all preaching in the Scriptures, and it must be the theme of all our preaching.

The Gospel must be leaven that permeates the pastor’s entire activity. In this way he provides the acceptable time for himself and for his congregation. We spoil many things for ourselves because we lack the truly evangelical spirit. This so often becomes evident in our preaching. We all know that there is a five-fold use and application of the Word of God: indoctrination, refutation, reproof, admonition, and comfort. Do we always note how beautifully this lends itself to truly evangelical preaching?

*A pastor is to teach, to indoctrinate;* in other words to preach doctrine. Right here I feel constrained to inject a few observations which may be a little beside the point, but I feel they are in place. In doctrinal

preaching, let us guard against a stiff, formal, dogmatical, and technical presentation. This may make the preacher appear as a learned theologian, but it is not going to move hearts. The hearers must be brought to the realization: “This means me; this is for me.” Instead of saying: “This is what you must believe in order to be saved,” we should rather seek to awaken faith. We must preach into our hearers and not just at them. By doctrinal preaching Christians are confirmed and deepened in their faith; but not if the preaching is dry and cold; that kind of food is as stale as a bun left over from a picnic—it is neither attractive nor palatable. Let our doctrinal preaching be in words, which, as Kipling so vividly puts it, “may become alive and walk up and down in the hearts of the hearers.” The Gospel is warm and living and electrifying. Let’s present it that way!

*We are also to refute error.* That means to testify against all manner of false doctrine. To do this, it is necessary to unmask and expose error. But let us not mistake vituperation and noise and denunciation for refutation. To storm against error does not convict or convince. Error can only be exposed by placing it alongside the truth, by shedding the light of God’s Word upon it. Our Lord Jesus did not merely denounce and condemn the Pharisees; He exposed them by explaining why they were wrong. He let them condemn themselves by pointing to their suppression and perversion of the truth. I would call that refutation in an evangelical spirit and manner.

In this connection it might be in place to say a few words about the spirit and manner in which we deal with the false doctrines and practices of others, especially other congregations and synods. Sarcasm and irony may sometimes be in place; but rarely is it conducive to settlement and peace. We have seen many issues submerged in personalities to the detriment of the truth. Defending the truth and refuting error can be done tactfully and courteously without sacrificing conviction and firmness.

So often we get into a rut by constantly harping on a certain error. We become specialists in this regard. Or we fall into the tendency of engaging chiefly in polemics. I find this to be true in our circles to such an extent that I feel constrained to sound a warning against the signs and symptoms of ossification, petrification, in other words, of dead orthodoxy, which are becoming evident among us. There is nothing evangelical about a dead orthodoxy. We are keeping our swords sharp to defend the truth and cut down error; but are not our hearts loveless and our hands listless when it comes to propagating the truth we so zealously cherish and champion? We must do the one, but not neglect the other!

*We are also to reprove sin.* We are to do this because God commands it, because great harm will result if it is not done, because we owe it to our hearers, because of the grave responsibilities that rest upon us, because of the examples the Scriptures set before us.

We are to reprove publicly in our preaching and teaching. But we are to be careful and cautious in doing this. We must not deal with personalities in the pulpit. The public sermon is no place for private feuds, nor for personal attacks against which the attacked cannot defend themselves. The pulpit has suffered much in this regard. We have had unpleasant dealings in cases that have grown out of the misuse of the sermon for the grinding of personal axes. While this is believed to be a subtle way of letting someone know what you think of him, it is usually so obvious that no one is left in the dark as to the identity of the target. There is only one way to reprove sin publicly, and that is to make each hearer feel that he is being addressed.

When reproofing, we are to be earnest but amiable, firm but friendly, unwavering but unwarlike, vigorous but not violent. So much reproof is ineffectual because it is not constructive; it hits and hurts, but does not help and heal. Utmost care and caution must be exercised in reproofing. It must be done prudently, wisely, gently, and impartially, so that everyone senses and feels that it comes out of a fatherly heart that seeks only and always the well-being of the soul. Much, very much, depends on the manner in which we apply reproof!

Oftentimes the pastor who is called to another congregation makes the mistake of castigating certain evils, of which he was apprised previously or soon after arrival. He immediately launches an attack on the evil in his sermons. Surely it ought to be evident to everyone that such a course will accomplish little in the way of correcting the evil. We must be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” One must make haste slowly, and exercise care and caution. Before attacking a problem, it is necessary to make due and deliberate preparation; and once the attack is underway, it should be continued with all patience and instruction. Rome was not built in a day. Remember, if certain evils prevail in a congregation, it is due to a lack of care and concern, instruction

and action, on the part of the pastor. If a congregation is lodge-ridden, it did not happen overnight. Nor can the problem be licked and the evil rooted out by using the ax and chopping indiscriminately, right and left. Patience and perseverance, kindness and calmness, painstaking education and deliberate instruction are necessary and invariably pay off.

*A pastor must also admonish.* This is done publicly in the sermon. But we must avoid being unevangelical in this regard also. The preaching of the Law does not belong into the admonition; it is a phase for itself. Admonition is always evangelical and will accomplish its purpose. Admonition must be grounded in doctrine, else it hangs in the air. We have a beautiful example of admonition in Romans. For eleven chapters Paul teaches doctrine, and then he says, chapter 12, verse 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service." If the admonition is not grounded in doctrine, and is nevertheless followed by the hearer, he is putting the authority of man in the place of God's Word.

We should also avoid the mistake of concluding the sermon with a medley of admonitions, but point the entire presentation up in a specific admonition. The admonition should sometimes become even more specific; it should not only admonish unto sanctification, but stress individual phases of sanctification. By employing appropriate examples and illustrations, the admonition will be made plain and practical, attractive and appealing. But whatever we do, let us avoid driving the admonition home, as it were, with our fists! Too much admonition creates this impression: "You've got to do this or that, else you are not a Christian!"

Admonition must be persevering; it requires great patience. It sometimes takes years before it bears fruit. And all the while, the pastor must exercise forbearance, remain calm and unruffled, kindly and considerate. Paul says, Acts 20:31, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Even the barren fig tree was granted one more year! It is so easy to become impatient and impassioned and, as a result, admonition runs into a mess of scolding, denunciations, cajoling, and threats, and all such preaching is of none effect. After all, our Christian religion is a practical religion. Jesus says, John 13:17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Sanctification is the final objective of God's gracious works. Paul says, Ephesians 1:4, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." The same Apostle says, I Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." I Peter 1:15 we read: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." The renewed will of the Christian needs to be nurtured and strengthened and inspired continually. Without true, evangelical admonition the sermon is a dry teaching lesson and falls flat.

*The final use of God's Word in public preaching is that of comforting.* Christians are much in need of comfort; this world is a vale of tears. But we must also exercise care in this regard. We are not to bring human comfort that is quite vain and vacuous and vanishing, like a drop of water on a hot stone. Job complains of this, when he says to his friends: "Miserable comforters are ye all!" There is only one balm that can bring healing to a wounded soul or a broken heart—the Word of God. God's Word is rich in comfort; it has comfort for all classes, circumstances, and conditions of men. Paul says, II Corinthians 1:3–5, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

The comfort we bring must be positive and certain. How could we venture and dare to console and comfort, if we had no divine ground for it! The Word alone can make us certain. Let us use this Word to lift up hearts that mourn, not in a cloying and sentimental manner, but with conviction and certainty and joy. So much of the consolation offered to troubled, grieving souls is impersonal, perfunctory, stereotyped; it creates a sort of stoicism in the hearts of those who mourn instead of soothing and composing them in humble resignation to the will of God and trust in His promises of peace.

### III.

The pastor is to manifest an evangelical spirit in his public and private dealings.

Here, of course, we get down to practical cases, down to earth, as it were. And it is in this regard that we find so much cause for concern, criticism, and censure. I hold that it will not be necessary to go into great detail and to touch on all possible angles of a pastor's public and private dealings in a congregation. For that reason I shall confine myself to a few general observations on the desirable deportment of a pastor in this phase of his ministry.

First of all, a few remarks on the pastor's attitude and deportment in general. *Let us avoid putting on the garments of a false dignity and chilling aloofness.* By this I mean that we should not make our members feel that we are a superior class in the Church, who must be approached with awe and obedience. We have had opportunity to observe pastors in their association with members, acting as if it were condescension on their part even to speak with them. It would make anybody shiver, not from fear, but from cold. Such an attitude and deportment is anything but evangelical. How different our blessed Lord! He freely mingled with all classes of society; He was equally at home with noblemen, and farmers. The Gospel is warm and warming, appealing and attractive. Pastors sometimes affect a coldness that is repugnant and repelling.

So frequently pastors land at extremes in this regard, instead of striking a happy medium. There are those who lean too far in the other direction and become too free and familiar with their members, especially with certain ones among them. No, we can be friendly, human, and natural in our association without in any wise sacrificing the true dignity of our office. The pastor who takes and shows an interest in the affairs of his members will attract their love and confidence and thus find it easier to deal with difficulties and problems that may and do arise. Where one affects an air of superiority and aloofness, people will be reluctant to come with their problems.

Such aloofness is usually accompanied by an arrogant and domineering deportment and practice. The pastor who clothes himself with a false dignity and displays an exaggerated opinion of his own person is quite apt to be dictatorial and domineering. He insists on his own opinions, not because they may be based on the Word of God, but because he is the minister. He has a false conception of the word "overseer" that the apostle applies to the pastor. Remember, we are servants in a twofold sense: servants of Christ and servants of our congregation. Surely, we are to be "overseers," who supervise the congregation; but this word is not spelled b-o-s-s. Let me recall to mind a passage which we cited at the outset: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," II Timothy 2:24-26.

Let us not forget, a pastor is to lead, not to drive, his congregation. In this respect he is to be a true shepherd. But when a pastor assumes the role of a dictator and driver, he steps out of character; and he ceases to be evangelical. Here again we need to call to mind what our Savior said to His disciples: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant," Matthew 20:25-27. The legalistic spirit and attitude is always arrogant and domineering; the evangelical spirit is one of humbleness and meekness, one that realizes that the pastor, too, is only a poor, sinful mortal, just as much in need of God's grace and help as any member of his congregation. If we have that spirit, we shall be governed and guided by love, and manifest kindness, concern, and consideration toward our members in all of our associations and dealings with them.

*Above all, the evangelical spirit must be maintained and manifested when it becomes necessary for the pastor to reprove and admonish any of his members.* And right here is where so many fall down and fail most miserably. To be sure, it is not a pleasant thing when one must reprove sin and admonish the sinning; but it must be done for the soul's sake. And it is not to be delayed or postponed. When one must go to a member to rebuke and admonish him, it should be done without first beating about the bush, but coming right to the point.

The weather, or the crops, politics or current events, make a poor introduction to private reproof; they actually tend to weaken it, because the impression is conveyed that the pastor is reluctant or uncertain.

This does not mean that one is to pounce upon a person and cut him down with vituperation and denunciation. Reproof must always be given without bitterness or emotional fireworks. A kindly manner and a friendly mien will always accomplish more than vehemence and violence. One can be firm and still be friendly. We are to help, not to hurt, to win and not to wither. We are not to knock a person down—he is already down—but to help him up and out. A pastor is not to be a “striker.” As stated earlier, the purpose of reproof is not merely to hit and hurt, but to help and heal. Even the Law must be applied in an evangelical spirit and manner!

Reproof must always be applied impartially; there dare be no respect of persons. The prominent as well as the plain, the rich as well as the ragged, must be treated without distinction. Paul gives it as one of the qualifications of a pastor that he is “just.” Much trouble and harm has resulted from disregard of this principle.

Certainly the pastor will avoid playing detective! It is not proper for him to gumshoe about, seeking out secret sins, that he might exercise his right to reprove. When a pastor stoops to spying, snooping, and sleuthing, to probing, peeking, and prying, he steps out of character and disgraces the dignity of his high office. Least of all will he employ the degrading device of listening to stool pigeons and common gossips. Untold harm has resulted from just such unevangelical practices on the part of some pastors. And the very fact that nasty cases have developed out of such practices makes it necessary and salutary to sound this warning. Here especially we need to pray for a large measure of love and wisdom.

*In no phase of a pastor’s ministry is there more call for the evangelical spirit than in a case of discipline.* Oh, what caution and care must be exercised in this regard! How many sins have been committed against the sinning, what errors against the erring! As one who held the office of District President for twelve years, I know whereof I speak. In some cases, the unevangelical approach, procedure, and conclusion cries to high heaven. The crass legalism of some pastors manifests itself in their misconception of disciplinary action. They regard it as legal action and carry it on like a civil court case. They look so much to the outward form of rigidly following the three steps of Matthew 18, that they lose sight of the true spirit, aim, and purpose of that much misunderstood, much abused, and much misapplied directive of our Lord. If they have taken these steps—one, two, three! They have properly concluded the disciplinary action—they tell themselves. Our Lord did not place a time limit on the three steps of Matthew 18, nor did He in any wise hedge it about with restrictions. This very fact is frequently overlooked, and Matthew 18 becomes a mechanical routine, in which the accused must budge and bend, whether or not he has been persuaded by the Word of God; the club is held over his head: Confess and repent, or else! Let no one regard this as an overdrawn picture. We have seen these things happen!

To be sure, there must be a use of the Law; else it could not be discipline. Nor dare we deprive the Law of its sharpness. It is necessary to apply the Law in order to lead the erring one to knowledge of his sin. But, as I stated earlier, this must be done in an evangelical manner that keeps before it at all times the purpose of discipline, namely, the welfare of the soul.

This requires love. If we are not impelled by love, but by envy, malice, revenge, we have no right to institute disciplinary action. This is apt to be the case when the offense is against the pastor. Too often love is supplanted by spite, which disqualifies a pastor to act in the case. If he does go through with it in that spirit, he has fallen into a grievous sin against God and against the one against whom he is disciplining. Each case needs to be approached with fear and trembling, and with a fervent prayer for a large measure of love.

Where there is genuine love, there will be deep compassion, sincere concern, friendly consideration, and gentle kindness toward the erring one. David says, Psalm 141:5, “Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.” And Paul says, Galatians 6:1, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” To be spiritual here means to have advanced in Christian knowledge and experience; and surely, the pastor should be such! The Galatians passage just cited is designed to keep us humble, “lest thou also be tempted.” Above all, the pastor must be patient. In cases of

discipline, as in all other matters, haste makes waste. It may be a rather protracted time until one is able to say: This person is hopeless.

Yes, if we examine carefully the Matthew 18 directive, we will not fail to note that every word the Savior utters there is shot through with love for the erring brother, and filled with concern for his eternal welfare. Where this is borne in mind, the approach, procedure, and conclusion of disciplinary action will be thoroughly evangelical and completely God-pleasing. What a responsibility rests upon the pastor!

*Another phase of the pastor's ministry that requires an evangelical spirit and understanding is his association with the youth of his congregation.* The period of youth is an important time in human life. This is true particularly of the post-confirmation years. There are so many dangers and pitfalls that threaten the young people, especially in this evil age. If youth needs the guidance of age in temporal matters, how much more does it need such guidance in spiritual things! Adolescence is a time of change and development. Youth has special needs, such as entertainment, fellowship, and recreation. And in these things it should have careful and conscientious guidance.

The pastor, as the spiritual leader of his flock, must be aware of and alert to the special care required by his young people. He can wield a powerful influence in this regard. In fact, it becomes an important phase of his ministry. The youth of a congregation is its future membership. How important, then that youth be reared as God-fearing members! This requires close personal contact. The pastor should show his interest in the young people and at all times be their friend and confidant.

No better way to maintain this contact and supervision and exercise the proper guidance has been devised than that of a young people's organization that enables them to enjoy Christian fellowship. If the proper balance is maintained between spiritual and recreational activities, a young people's organization can be a God-pleasing agency. Here again the pastor will seek to guide and direct without appearing to demand and dictate and drive. Youth is exuberant and usually boisterous. It must get rid of its steam. I can think of no better way of stating the pastor's attitude toward his young people than to call to mind a remark made by our beloved Professor John Schaller while lecturing in *Pastorale* in my Seminary days; he said: "When you associate with young people, put your hand over your eyes and peer between the fingers." I do not deem it necessary to elaborate on this sage advice. Pastoral dignity does not require a vinegar face. To mingle with a group of young people affords a wonderful tonic, which I most heartily recommend. We want our young people to love and respect us, but never to fear and avoid us. Surely, this is an important part of a pastor's evangelical practice.

*Another important phase of the pastor's activity, which requires a great measure of evangelical spirit, is his contact with prospective members.* It will not be necessary for me to speak about the various ways in which such contacts are made; but it is of great consequence to consider the manner in which such prospects are approached. The aim, of course, is always to win them for the truth. But so often the approach is made in a manner that antagonizes and repels them. Prospective members fall into two general categories: such as are members of heterodox churches and such as are unchurched. When approaching these people, one must use the utmost care. They must feel at once that we are concerned about their soul's welfare, and not merely that we seek additions to our membership. It will be necessary that we have and show a deep interest in their spiritual wellbeing, and that we are eager to have the opportunity of leading them into the truth that makes men free.

So often a negative approach is made, and fails of its purpose. Let us assume that a pastor is calling on a person who has been connected with a sectarian church. It certainly would be unwise, to but it mildly, to plunge into a harangue on the errors of that particular church. That will antagonize and erect a barrier that will be hard to remove. Still worse would be the making of derogatory remarks about the church or denomination to which the prospect belongs. Our primary aim in contacting that kind of prospect is to secure an opportunity of presenting the fundamental truths of the Scriptures to him. If that is done in a spirit of genuine concern and honest sincerity, one has accomplished his mission.

There are a variety of factors that may enter in when an approach is made to the unchurched. Such people may at one time have had connection with a church and drifted away. Or they may never have had any religious background. Here, too, one must exercise evangelical tact. The approach to the previously churched applies here also, in a large measure. There is, for example, always the possibility that such a person, while



having no church affiliation, is a member of some lodge. Chances are that this fact will become apparent in the course of conversation. It would be utter folly to launch upon a tirade against the evils of lodgery. It must be remembered that one is dealing with a person who has, at best, an extremely meager knowledge of Scriptural truth. It ought to suffice to gain the prospect's consent to receive instruction. Then when the proper foundation has been laid, the difficulties can more easily be disposed of. Consideration, tact, and patience will rarely remain unrewarded. We are to present the truths of God's Word in a quiet, dispassionate manner, and let the Holy Ghost do His work. Remember, the Lord was not in the whirlwind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, small voice. The evangelical approach to prospective members is in the words of Moses to Hobab: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

I am well aware of the fact that I have said little that is new. I realize my own shortcomings in my presentation of so expansive a theme. The sole purpose of my humble efforts has been to remind all of us of the unmerited mercy and priceless privilege the Lord has bestowed upon us to serve Him and His royal priesthood. Let us in all earnestness examine our ministries, and strive with the assistance of the Holy Spirit to maintain and manifest a truly evangelical spirit in every aspect. Thus we shall make full proof of our ministry and God will be glorified.