

# The Way to Obtain Preachers

by T.M. Allen

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*The sermon emphasizes the critical need for prayer in raising and supporting preachers for the harvest of souls.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:37, Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 5:17, 2 Timothy 2:2, Titus 1:5

**Topics:** "Christian Ministry", "Prayer Power"

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## Description

T.M. Allen preaches on the necessity of raising up laborers for the great harvest, emphasizing the importance of prayer in seeking out and supporting workers for the Lord's work. He challenges the congregation to prioritize prayer over earthly means of support, highlighting the power of prayer in fulfilling divine purposes. Allen discusses the significance of a ministry in every institution, from schools to churches, and the essential roles of evangelists, pastors, and deacons in the Christian community. He delves into the biblical foundation of the Christian ministry, emphasizing the importance of training and equipping individuals for the work of the ministry.

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## Transcript

The necessity of laborers to reap the great harvest, now awaiting the gathering hand of the reaper, is confessedly great. From every portion of our country the cry comes up, "Send us a preacher;" and some States ask for them by tens, and even hundreds. Wherever the truth is presented, many are found willing to embrace it; and error, unable to bear its glad light, departs to congenial darkness.

But how is this army of laborers, so much needed for the work of the Lord, to be raised up, and how supported in their arduous task? Shall the spiritual Israel, like the fleshly, give the tenth of their increase, in order to spread abroad the knowledge of this better dispensation, and for the upbuilding of those who have already been enrolled in the army of the faithful? True, the end proposed could be thus attained; but as a manifest unwillingness is exhibited to the employment of such an earthly instrumentality, for an object so divine, we will leave the matter of giving of the abundance with which the Lord hath blessed us, and propose another method, which will be probably more agreeable, as it leaves the purse entirely untouched. [277]

The Saviour says, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Prayer, then, must be made as above directed; and those who, on account of weakness of faith, or kindred causes, have hitherto prayed but little, will now have a strong additional impulse to the performance of this important, but much neglected duty, for they can thus promote the triumph of truth and save their money. True, it may be urged with a

show of reason, that we might as well give our money as to spend much of our time in prayer, for, with many, "time is money;" yet I doubt not that many will be found much more willing to sacrifice the time, as in that case the Lord will have all the glory of effecting, by a miracle, that which otherwise would have required gross earthly aid.

Besides, those who thus pray will be able, not only greatly to increase in goods, but also to apply to their hearts many comfortable Scriptures; such as, "Lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" "take much thought for to-morrow;" "Seek not those things which are above, but those that are on the earth;" and, better than all, "Thou shalt muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;" and "The labourer is not worthy of his hire." And should any have conscientious scruples concerning the rendering of the above passages, they may have them dissipated by remembering that Satan added the word "not" to the command of the Almighty, which will justify its insertion in some of the texts quoted above. With reference to those in which the word "not" is omitted, it may be urged, that if Satan was permitted to insert that word, you would certainly be justified in its omission.

But there are also many other benefits likely to grow out of the plan proposed; because it follows very logically, that if preachers are to be sent and sustained in answer to prayer simply, we have, in order to secure a fine crop in autumn, only to pray fervently in the spring, and thus dispense with the very tedious and laborious process of cultivation.

Indeed, on this hypothesis, I do not see why we could not dispense with Bethany College, and all our institutions of learning; for if our premises be sound, an education could be given to all the youth among us by a simple prayer to that effect, and thus obviate the necessity of such a large expenditure of time, and especially of money, for that purpose.

But I assure you, that this idea of praying for preachers to be sent out, is by no means original, for I have already met with a number, of the brethren who have reduced it to practice. They are wealthy, but instead of vainly imagining that wealth can be well employed in the service of God, they often pray to the Lord to send out laborers into the harvest; and yet, with strange inconsistency, they do not pray [278] for laborers to plow their fields and gather their crops, and even send their children to school, and pay persons for instructing them. What a wasteful, not to say useless, employment of money!

[TIMOTHY.]

Every institution, from a common school to a university, from a township to a state, from a borough to an empire, has of necessity a ministry: a living, acting, sustaining ministry, or it ceases to be. Nay, indeed, it can not begin to be without a special ministry; and it can not continue to be after the extraordinary ministry that caused it ceases to be, without a conservative ministry. Hence the distinction of ordinary and extraordinary ministers.

Moses and Jesus were, superlatively, ministers extraordinary. So were, in a second degree, the prophets and the apostles. Priests and Levites were the ordinary ministers of the Jewish institution. Evangelists, teachers, and deacons, (sometimes called preachers, pastors, and deacons,) are the ordinary ministers of the Christian institution.

While a single Christian family on an island, or on a foreign mission in the midst of a pagan empire, may be a church, and may dispense and enjoy social ordinances as a Christian institution, in all other cases churches are communities, organized and disciplined by a divinely constituted ministry of three

ranks--evangelists, pastors, and deacons.

These are apostolic designations--words which the Holy Spirit taught, indicative of official duties. The term "elder" denotes one of age, and was appropriated to all governors, Jewish and Christian, because experience, or age, was an essential prerequisite. But because of the indefiniteness of the term--indicating, sometimes, a mere ruler, president or governor; at other times a teacher--it yields in appropriateness, on this subject, to the term pastor, as the Apostle Paul evinces when he says, "When Jesus ascended up on high," when he triumphed, or "led captivity captive, he gave gifts" (offices) "to men." "And he gave," or "even he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, some teachers, for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying" (building up) "of the body of Christ: till we come into<sup>1</sup> the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man; to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The original term *poimeen*; here used, has, in my judgment, the pre-eminence, and hence it ought to be read pastor or shepherd. It has in both Testaments, in all the Scriptures, the chief dignity in expressiveness and appositeness, to the station and work assigned the officers here named. They are elders; they are bishops; but much more, they are pastors--they are SHEPHERDS; the greatest and noblest of all. [279]

No one can be a shepherd who is not a bishop; yet a shepherd is more than a bishop. A bishop oversees a flock; but a shepherd, in fact, oversees, feeds, and protects the flock at the hazard of his life. Jesus, the great and the good shepherd--the bishop of our souls--delights in this term, or in the idea which it represents; and hence he so often and so impressively applied it to himself--"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep,"<sup>3</sup> etc., etc. And Paul calls him (Heb. xviii. 20) "the great shepherd of the sheep." And Peter calls him "the shepherd, the overseer or bishop of our souls."<sup>4</sup> "Feed the flock of God which is among you;" and "when the CHIEF SHEPHERD shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away."<sup>5</sup>

But our present topic is not the development of the Christian ministry, but the maintenance of it. By maintenance or support I do not, indeed, mean, as many mean, the mere feeding and clothing of a Christian ministry, but the creation, qualification, and garniture of an evangelical ministry, as well as its sustenance.

The disciples of Christ were, at a very early period, taught by the great Teacher himself, to pray to the "Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers to gather it." But the Lord did not teach his disciples to pray for any thing to be performed by miracle, or without the use of appropriate means. Hence it came to pass that he added the part of a teacher, and formed a class.

If not of the school of the Peripatetics, who taught and studied while walking about, he taught his original school while peregrinating Judea and Galilee, and both in public lectures, in private conferences, and by frequent examinations, developed to them the doctrine or science of his person, character, mission, and kingdom. By precept and example, as well as by descanting upon the doctrines, commandments, and examples of other schools, of other teachers, and of other pupils, he inducted his disciples into the true doctrine, spirit, character, and design of his mission into our world, and of the spiritual and everlasting kingdom and institution which he was about to establish in the world.

The apostles also, after his example, when fully accomplished for their official duties, were to become teachers of others, not only in preaching the gospel and planting churches, but also in providing a ministry

for those churches and for the world. Paul, whose history and labors are most amply detailed, was most assiduous, not only in preaching and teaching Christ, but also in training men, both young and old, for the work of the Christian ministry, and gave instructions to Timothy and Titus to the same effect. From these developments in [280] the Christian Scriptures, so fraught with instruction to all ages, we have learned much, and may still learn much more.

One command of Paul to Timothy implies all that we conceive necessary to this great work. "The things," said he, "which you have learned from me, the same commit thou to faithful or to able men, who shall be competent to teach others also." Thus provision was made for a perpetual ministry in the church.

Titus, too, as well as Timothy, had an injunction from Paul to the same effect--to set in order, in the Island of Crete, the things left undone, and to constitute or ordain elders in every city, as he had been orally directed by Paul himself.

It is a proverb in our Israel, that what is every one's business is no one's business, and therefore, the Lord constituted offices, and these imply officers. If the whole body were an eye, an ear, a mouth, or a tongue, what a useless, unsightly body would it be! This is a subject that needs no argument.

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