

# **THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

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The Ministry of the Word by William M. Taylor

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**WILLIAM M. TAYLOR**

**THE MINISTRY  
OF THE WORD**



## PREFACE.

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THIS book is not a Treatise on Homiletics. Neither is it a ministerial autobiography. But it is an attempt to give to my younger brethren in the pulpit, and to those who are preparing for the ministry, some practical hints which I should have been thankful to have received twenty years ago, and which have been suggested to me as much by the blunders as by the successes of my public life.

To my seniors they may seem to be of little importance; but I was not writing for them. My aim has been to set before my readers a few first principles emphasized by experience; and if my book shall be to any young minister like the hand of an elder brother held back to help him forward, I shall rejoice even more than he.

The course was prepared especially for the theological students of Yale College, as the "Lyman Beecher Lectures" for 1876; but selections from it were delivered also to the members of Union, Princeton, and Oberlin Theological Seminaries.

To these young brethren with whom I have been brought so pleasantly into fellowship, to the members of the Faculties

of the Seminaries which I have named, and to all interested in the education of "the Sons of the Prophets," I dedicate this volume, with the prayer that He "whose I am, and whom I serve," may make it largely useful to those who are preparing to give themselves to "the ministry of the Word."

*New York, April 1896.*



LECTURE I.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN  
MINISTRY.





# THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

## LECTURE I.

### THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

“**W**HAT can the man do that cometh after the King?” My two distinguished predecessors in this Lectureship, unmindful of the generous order of Boaz to his reapers, to “let fall some of the handfals of purpose” for the poor Gentile gleaner, have so thoroughly swept the field, that nothing is left for me save here and there an ear. This would be hard for anyone; how much more for one who has to confess that he is, as yet, a learner in the department in which they are masters! For two and twenty years I have been striving to reach my ideal of the Christian preacher, and it seems to me as if I were to-day as far from it as ever. Always as I have appeared to advance towards it, it has fled before me, and still it hovers above and beyond me, beckoning me on to some attainment yet unrealized. Never did it seem to me so difficult to preach as it does to-day. The magnitude of the work grows upon me the longer I engage in it; and with every new

attempt I make, there comes the painful consciousness that I have not yet attained. Twenty years ago, I thought I could preach a little, and flattered myself that I knew something about Homiletics. Now I feel that I am but a beginner, and the thought of addressing you upon such a subject fills me with dismay. Still we may get on well together, if only you will consent to regard me as a fellow-student, or at least as an elder brother, striving with you after the same end, and speaking to you out of the fullness of his heart, that he may warn you to avoid the mistakes which he has made, and stimulate you to aim after that efficiency on which his own heart is set.

The nature of this Lectureship requires that he who holds it, for the time, should deal with the subject, as illustrated by his own experience. It may be well, therefore, in the outset, that I should mention one or two cautions which need to be kept in mind by you, while we are proceeding with our addresses.

In the first place, it must be fully understood by you, that no one can begin precisely at that point at which another has arrived only after long years of persevering effort. The son of the merchant entering upon the possession of his father's fortune, may commence housekeeping on the same scale as his parents. But, even then, it has been generally seen that he is deficient in those qualities of character which were most distinctive in his father, and which in him were formed by the struggle through which he wrestled up