

**THE PULPIT AND THE PEW.  
LYMAN BEECHER LECTURES  
DELIVERED 1913 BEFORE THE  
DIVINITY SCHOOL OF YALE  
UNIVERSITY**

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The pulpit and the pew. Lyman Beecher lectures delivered 1913 before the Divinity School of Yale University by Charles H. Parkhurst

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**CHARLES H. PARKHURST**

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LYMAN BEECHER LECTURES DELIVERED 1913, BEFORE  
THE DIVINITY SCHOOL OF YALE UNIVERSITY

By  
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THE PULPIT AND THE PEW





## I

### THE PREACHER AND HIS QUALIFICATIONS

Every man is the measure of his work and the measure of his word. He cannot do a work that out-measures his own proportions, nor speak an effective word that is more eloquent than his own personality. Upon whatever line of service therefore a man enters, the prime question turns on stature.

If we are to understand by St. Paul's statement in First Corinthians 1:27,—“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty,”—that God's preference is for feeble instruments, the Apostle is himself the refutation of what he asserts. Other things being equal, the rich soil will yield the finer fruit; the larger star will radiate the fuller light; the tougher log will emit the tenser heat. It has to be enkindled, of course, but once aflame the toughness of its fiber will determine the quantity and quality of its blaze.

It seems to have been sometimes thought—following perhaps what was imagined to be the leading of the passage just quoted—that while success in other departments of service depends on wealth of qualification, success in the pulpit is conditional upon

absence of aptitude, and that the weakest and most unpromising of the sons is thereby marked out for ministerial candidature.

Some years ago I was called upon by the widow of a late Presbyterian elder, who was for some years officially connected with one of the most prominent Presbyterian churches in New York City, a motherly old lady, who descanted with affectionate detail upon the membership of her home, and in particular upon her three sons, whom we will call Charles, James and Henry. Charles she described as especially gifted, both in physique and in vigor of intellectual and moral character. Him, she said, she had devoted to the law. Her second son, James, she represented to me as less complete in his general build than Charles, but surpassing either of her other children in initiative and acuteness, and him she had decided to put into business. The case of Henry she briefly disposed of by laconically remarking that she had given him to the Lord, absent-mindedly remarking, however, a little later in the conversation, that he was in no wise a promising child and that she was quite doubtful whether she would succeed in raising him. She was probably familiar with those passages of Old Testament Scripture that insist that only those animals that are unblemished and that are the finest shall be placed upon the altar of the Lord, but without