

**THE PREACHER, HIS
LIFE AND WORK. YALE
LECTURES; PP. 1-238**

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The Preacher, His Life and Work. Yale Lectures; pp. 1-238 by J. H. Jowett

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J. H. JOWETT

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THE PREACHER

HIS LIFE AND WORK

YALE LECTURES

BY
John
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1885
PASTOR FIFTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK
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THE CALL TO BE A PREACHER

"Separated unto the Gospel of God"

L E C T U R E . O N E

THE PREACHER:

His Life and Work

THE CALL TO BE A PREACHER

"Separated unto the Gospel of God"

IN the course of these lectures I am to speak on the general theme of "The Preacher: his life and work." There is little or no need of introduction. The only prefatory word I wish to offer is this. I have been in the Christian ministry for over twenty years. I love my calling. I have a glowing delight in its services. I am conscious of no distractions in the shape of any competitors for my strength and allegiance. I have had but one passion, and I have lived for it—the absorbingly arduous yet glorious work of proclaiming the grace and love of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ. I stand before you, therefore, as a fellow-labourer, who has been over a certain part of the field, and my simple purpose is to dip into the pool of my experiences, to record certain practical judgments and discoveries, and to offer counsels and warnings which have been born out of my own successes and defeats.

I assume that I am speaking to men who are looking upon the field from the standpoint of the circumference, who are contemplating the work of the ministry, who are now disciplining their powers, preparing their instruments, and generally arranging their plans for a journey over what is to them a yet untravelled country. I have been over some of the roads, and I want to tell you some of the things which I have found.

I

To-day I am to speak on the Preacher's call and mission. It is of momentous importance how a man enters the ministry.

There is a "door" into this sheepfold, and there is "some other way." A man may enter as a result of merely personal calculation: or he may enter from the constraint of the purely secular counsel of his friends. He may take up the ministry as a profession, as a means of earning a living, as a desirable social distinction, as a business that offers pleasantly favourable chances of cultured leisure, of coveted leaderships, and of attractive publicity. A man may become a minister because, after carefully weighing comparative advantages, he prefers the ministry to law, or to medicine, or to science, or to trade and commerce. The ministry is ranged among many other secular alternatives, and it is chosen because of some outstanding allurements that appeals to personal taste. Now in all such decisions the candidate for the ministry misses the appointed door. His vision is entirely horizontal. His outlook is that of "the man of the world." Similar considerations are prevalent: similar maxims and axioms are assumed: the same scales of

judgment are used. The constraining motive is ambition, and the coveted goal is success. There is nothing vertical in the vision. There is no lifting up of the eyes "unto the hills." There is nothing "from above." There is no awful mysteriousness as of "a wind that bloweth where it listeth." A man has decided his calling, but "God was not in all his thoughts."

Now I hold with profound conviction that before a man selects the Christian ministry as his vocation he must have the assurance that the selection has been imperatively constrained by the eternal God. The call of the Eternal must ring through the rooms of his soul as clearly as the sound of the morning-bell rings through the valleys of Switzerland, calling the peasants to early prayer and praise. The candidate for the ministry must move like a man in secret bonds. "Necessity is laid" upon him. His choice is not a preference among alternatives. Ultimately he has no alternative: all other possibilities become dumb: there is only one clear call sounding forth