

he is skilled in the workings of that nature, the greater will be his power in reaching it.

4. *The accumulated experience of other workers in the same general field* is a vast storehouse from which the pastor can draw instruction in reference to all his duties. Indeed, this experience, classified and framed in accordance with the teachings of the Scriptures, is itself a system of pastoral theology. Men of sound and discerning minds, men full of the spirit of Christ, men whose lives have been spent in the most unwearied activity, have filled the office of the gospel ministry. They have given earnest attention to every department of their beloved calling. Whatever plans were likely to give success to their work they have tried. It would probably be very difficult to conceive of any scriptural method of building up the kingdom of Christ on which they have not experimented. Long lives of thought, of wisdom and of toil have been spent in striving to make the ministry more effective. What one man or generation of men has attained to has been made the starting-point from which others have gone on in efforts to improve in doing the Lord's work. Even mistakes and failures in devising and executing methods have proved of great value in adding to the general store of knowledge on the subject. All this experience, whether written or unwritten, has accumulated into an invaluable fund for the ministry. When it is sifted, and tested by the sure precepts of God's inspiring, and classified, it forms a system of rules by which the workman in the ministry may safely be guided. No wise pastor will neglect this help of experience derived from all those who have gone before him. He can no more neglect it than the artist or the mechanic can neglect those rules which

the skill of centuries has wrought out for his assistance.

5. *The laws and customs of the denomination with which he is connected* must give some shape to the minister's study and work. The different modes of worship must influence the peculiar preparation to be made for them. The different forms of church government will open the door into different classes of duties. The very spirit and doctrines of the denomination will necessarily give some direction to the life of its ministers. Different modes of performing the same great work, or even different kinds of services, may result from these denominational peculiarities.

6. *The circumstances of the times* are another element which must be studied in constructing a system of pastoral theology. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep," is a scriptural intimation which must guide us here. The peculiar characteristics of the period in which we live are a deeply-important subject for the minister to investigate. The great principles of the gospel are ever the same; these cannot change or be improved. But there is change in man, and change in the obstacles which are ever rising up in the way of the truth. Each age of the Church has its own work to do and its own important questions to solve. There are times of peculiar errors, such as Arianism, Popery and Ritualism; times of the prevalence of special sins, such as intemperance and Sabbath desecration; and there are times of dominant fashions and customs that are detrimental to godliness. There are states of society which are characterized by great ignorance, and others by special enlightenment. There are periods which are distinguished by particular tendencies of thought and aim, such as skepticism or util-