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FOR

Ministers.

HISCOX

STUDY INSTRUCTIONS

For purposes of study, and to make downloading faster, the book has been divided into 33 lessons instead of the nine chapters indicated in the table of contents on the next page. However, the original nine chapters are retained in the text. You will download and open each lesson individually and proceed through it.

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Harvard Divinity School



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PREFACE.

THERE are various works now in use, intended especially to aid pastors in the incidental duties of their profession. These hand-books are convenient, and some of them valuable, as being well adapted to the purpose for which they were designed. But the conviction that one could be prepared which should be more largely serviceable for such purposes, than anything now accessible, has led to the preparation of the following pages. Whether this purpose has been realized, those who use it must decide for themselves.

The Scripture Selections for funeral and other occasions, constitute a leading feature in all such compilations. Clergymen who use an authorized liturgy will not need these; but for all others they will be found entirely sufficient, and it is hoped entirely satisfactory.

The compend of Parliamentary Rules, will be sufficiently full for all occasions in which clergymen are likely to take part. The rules given and statements of principles involved in the proceedings of deliberative bodies, are believed to be accurate and reliable, and in harmony with the best standards.

The forms of Marriage Service, including some long used by distinguished clergymen, have been given as at least suggestive to those who may still prefer to use their own—as very many ministers do. The forms of both marriage and burial service, of the Episcopal Church, have been introduced for the

benefit of those who, from personal preference or by special request, may have occasion to use, in whole or in part, those admirable forms.

The Scripture Proper Names, with their pronunciation and signification, will be a special help to clergymen who may at times have been subjected to peculiar perplexity for want of the information conveniently at hand, which this table furnishes.

The Forms and Blanks will be helpful to young ministers particularly, in the correct arrangement of ecclesiastical matters, which they have frequent occasion to direct.

The tables of Facts and Figures constitute a new feature in works of this kind. They have been compiled with considerable difficulty and with much care, and will be found as near to positive accuracy as the subjects admit of attaining. Such facts and figures, conveniently accessible, will be suggestive of thought and remark, and furnish both argument and illustration, especially welcome to clergymen on many occasions besides those of their regular ministrations.

The work is commended to those for whom it has been prepared, in the hope that it may be a help to them, in the many and varied, and often laborious duties of their sacred calling.

E. T. H.

NEW YORK, Sept. 18, 1877.

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LESSON 1

SUGGESTIONS TO MINISTERS

IN RESPECT TO

WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, ORDINATIONS,

DEDICATIONS, RECOGNITIONS,

AND

OTHER SPECIAL SERVICES.

FUNERALS.

THE visitation of the sick and attendance on funerals constitute a large item in the list of pastoral duties. And if faithfully attended to, they make a very serious demand upon both the time and energy of a Christian minister. Attended to faithfully, they certainly should be; because in this direction lies the path of duty, and because he never gains so ready access to the hearts of the people, whether for counsel or consolation, as in their times of trouble.

The minister is seldom consulted as to the time, place, or conditions of funerals. Usually, the arrangements are all made before he is notified and requested to attend. This is a mistake. He ought to be conferred with in respect to the matter, before the arrangements are fixed.

The following suggestions may be of use :

1. It is desirable that funeral services be held in the church, rather than in a private house, where the attendance is expected to be large, and more particularly if the private house be not commodious. At the church, all can be comfortably seated, and listen without inconvenience to whatever may be said. At a private house this is difficult, if not impossible, with any considerable number present.

2. At private houses, considering the inconvenience of the audience—sitting in uncomfortable positions, standing, some outside and some not hearing the speaker—the service should be brief, seldom exceeding thirty or thirty-five minutes.

3. Very unreasonable and sometimes very absurd demands are made upon the officiating clergyman, as to the position he shall occupy while performing the service. The undertaker, or some friend of the family, informs him that he had better stand in the hall, so as to be heard in all the rooms; though in the hall he may be in a draft of air, liable to take cold, and possibly himself to become the subject for a funeral, besides the annoyance of being disturbed by persons coming in and going out. Or he may be desired to stand in a doorway between two rooms, so as to see neither. Or, worse still, he may be placed half way up the stairs, so as to be heard both above and below stairs, though he may have to talk to the wall, the baluster, or to empty space and an imaginary audience. Now, the minister should select the place to stand which best suits himself, yielding only so far as may be consistent to the wishes of friends.

4. Clergymen who use a prescribed liturgy have the order and matter of service arranged, and will seldom depart from them. Others will arrange the service according to their sense of propriety. It may be supposed, however, that reading portions of Scripture, remarks, and prayer, will constitute the three essential and unvarying elements of the service.

The most natural, and presumably the most common order, is this: Reading selected portions of

Scriptures ; remarks on the occasion, and address to the mourners ; prayer to close, with perhaps the benediction. Some may offer prayer to open and also to close the service. Singing may properly be introduced when convenient, particularly if the service be in church.

5. Preaching funeral sermons is not expected, except on rare occasions. When on account of the prominence of the deceased, or for other reasons, it may be desirable, the better way is, to have it take the place of a regular service on the Sabbath, and in the church ; if that be not convenient at the time of burial, a brief service can be held at that time, and the sermon be preached at a subsequent time, notice to be given accordingly.

6. The custom, now much prevailing in cities and larger towns, of having the mourners sit up stairs, secluded, and entirely out of sight of the speaker, during a funeral service, is much to be condemned. Where such usage prevails, the speaker may talk about them, and pray for them, but cannot be expected to address those whom he cannot see, and who may not even hear what he does say.

7. It is bad taste and bad policy both, for a minister to harrow up the feelings of relatives by dwelling on the most sorrowful circumstances, in order to make the service affecting and impressive. But the most distressing features, if referred to, should be mentioned tenderly, and for the purpose of giving counsel or consolation.

8. Remarks at such a time are for the living, not for the dead. The virtues of the departed may appro-

STUDY NOTES:

Note 1:

In bro. Hiscox day it may have been the custom, in most cases, to not preach a sermon during the funeral but for the minister to not do so would be a serious dereliction of duty.

During this solemn and soul-searching occasion is the perfect time to preach a relevant sermon. Those attending are faced with the reality of their own mortality. Thus, to bring a sermon to help prepare them for their own step over into eternity and to give them the gospel so as to give them a choice of Heaven or Hell would seem supremely appropriate. However, do not make it a long and onerous sermon and especially not a hurtful one.

Never speak of the deceased in any way to even remotely suggest they have gone to Hell. No matter how wicked they may have lived their lives. But on the other hand you don't want to try to preach them into Heaven either when you suspect they may not ever have been a believer. If you are familiar with their life you may know how evil they may have been; but, their fate has already been sealed and they have faced their maker the instant after shaking off their mortal coil so why grieve the family.

Remember, the funeral is for the benefit of the family not the deceased. He or she is already past succour if they have gone to hell and if they be in Heaven then the joy they are experiencing would most likely leave them pretty much uncaring about the few good things you may say about them. However, those of the living gathered at the funeral are acutely aware of what you are saying. Therefore, do not beat them for the sins of the dead. It is best not to even mention much about the dead one unless you have good reason to believe they were saved. And even at that you should not belabour that point either. Don't make them seem like some sort of unbelievably high saint or, even worse, some sort of demi-god. Keep such comments concerning their Christianity reasonable and short.

The sermon should not be long and should always include the salvation message and a brief invitation should be included. Some ministers have the entire group say a salvation prayer out loud so as to not embarrass anyone present. This has much advantage and should be seriously considered. Alternatively you can just lead those present in a silent prayer for salvation; i.e., one you say out loud in short segments but they do not have to repeat it out loud.

Also, brother Hiscox suggested having the funeral during a regular Sunday service. This is not the best time for several reasons. That is unless the deceased is a member of the congregation. In which case having the funeral during a regular service would be acceptable; but probably not during the Sunday morning hour except on rare occasions. Reasons for not having the funeral during the morning service, other than in the case just mentioned, would include such things as the undesirable, and generally unwelcome, imposition upon the congregation of forcing them to sit through a funeral for someone they don't even know. Also, the Sunday morning service is supposed to be for the worship of God, the edification of the saints and/or presenting Christ to the lost, not the eulogizing or remembrance of someone who is deceased. Also the presence of the grieving family would not allow the preacher his normal freedom to preach the Word for fear of injuring the family and prejudicing them against both the Word of God and the preacher. Either of those would preclude the possibility of the preacher visiting them at a later time to present them with the Gospel of Christ. It is our custom today to invite the lost to our regular Sunday services and should the Lord lead the preacher to preach on hell as the final destination of the lost or to preach on certain sins that are deserving of hell that may have been practice by the deceased, of which the family is most likely aware, it would most likely cause irreparable damage to the grieving family and preclude the possibility of them being saved at a later time. There may be exceptions but having the funeral of a stranger during a regular service, as suggested by brother Hiscox, is not the best practice. As he said, it is best when the funeral can be held at the church, but it is best if it is not during a regularly scheduled service.

Note 2:

Bro. Hiscox also refers to Sunday as the "Sabbath," which was common in his day and is common today. However, this is incorrect usage of the word. The Sabbath is Saturday and is for, and has always been for, the Jew only. Christians meet on Sunday which is the Lord's Day and not the Sabbath. Some refer to Sunday as the Christian Sabbath which differentiates it from the Jewish Sabbath and this is acceptable when they do so with the meaning that it is the Christian day of rest and worship. But to simply call it the Sabbath causes confusion and misunderstanding because many Christians, and non-Christians, today mistakenly believe that the original Sabbath was moved to Sunday which, of course, is simply not true.

privately be mentioned, especially if they have been conspicuous; but not in terms of extravagant laudation. Nor is it wise or prudent to specify and condemn, at such a time, the faults and sins of the dead. The great truths of Christian morality should no doubt be urged. But to offend and grieve afflicted friends, is no way to benefit them.

9. A clergyman will ascertain in some way, before he begins the service, the peculiar circumstances of the case, so as wisely to guide his remarks. Also concerning the near relatives of the deceased, whom he may be expected to remember in his prayer, if not in his remarks.

10. It will be proper, also, to speak personally to the principal mourners, both before and after the service—especially before, and particularly if they are strangers. A few kind words privately may give the minister more direct access to their confidence.

11. In cities and large towns it is not usually expected that the minister will go to the grave. It would be greatly inconvenient, and serve but little purpose. But where this service is usual, it is difficult for the minister to refuse, without offence, unless there be some excellent reason for so doing. If he does refuse, they will think him wanting in sympathy and consideration for the people in their trials.

12. When he does attend the burial it would appear proper for him to offer a very short prayer at the grave, or very brief remarks with the benediction. Thus his presence would mean more than a mere compliment to the occasion, or to the friends. But a service at the grave should be very short.

13. When the service is in church, it is usually expected—though not of course important—that the minister shall walk up the aisle in front of the coffin. Nor can there be any good reason why he should not, at the same time, repeat appropriate scriptures, after the manner of the Episcopal Service. When the coffin is taken out, he would also walk in front of it, to the hearse.

14. It seems quite unfortunate that funerals are so generally arranged to take place on Sunday. They impose a needless and severe tax on the time and energies of the minister, on the day when he can least afford it. They interrupt the ordinary services of the day, and do not tend to the sacred observance of the Sabbath. And yet special pains are taken to fix them on that day, in order that they may be largely attended, or that friends may save the time, and not be interrupted in their secular pursuits.

15. The minister should take occasion to visit the bereaved relatives in their homes, as soon after and as often as convenient, in order that he may follow up the lessons of Providence by his counsels, for their spiritual profit. They are more likely to listen to advice and receive spiritual comfort while under the shadow of their afflictions.

Homework: You need to start making an outline for a mock funeral that you will perform later.

In the outline you need to include notes to yourself telling you where to walk in relation to the casket as it is brought into the Church (if the casket is not already placed there before the funeral begins) and the name of the deceased and an outline for a brief funeral sermon and other things that will be part of the funeral service.

Today it is quite common that the Funeral Home makes most of the preparations and has the casket already in place and will also take it out to move it to the graveyard. They also explain to the pall-bearers their part in taking the casket out of the hearse and carrying it to the gravesite. However, you will still precede the casket to the grave as they carry it from the hearse to the grave.

You need an outline so you are prepared for the time you may have to handle the entire funeral on your own.

A suggested outline would be:

(This is only a suggestion. Feel free to make your own but make sure you include all of the necessary parts.)

I. Talk to the family and the funeral director before the funeral.

A. Find out the name of the deceased and the proper pronunciation of their name and the names of those in the family.

B. Find out if there is a pre-arranged order to the funeral service.

1. Find out who will read the eulogy.

2. Find out if there will be special music and who will play or sing it and when that will take place.

3. Find out if there will be comments spoken about the deceased from family and/or friends.

II. Precede the casket into the Church. (If bringing it in is to be part of the funeral service.)

III. The reading of the eulogy, the special music, comments about the deceased, and other matters on the schedule.

IV. The funeral sermon.

(Suggested Scriptures for the sermon can be found throughout the textbook and there are many others.)

Include a properly outlined sermon here that is appropriate and includes a brief gospel message.

VI. Precede the casket to the hearse. (If taking it to the hearse is to be part of the regular funeral service.)

VII. Precede the casket as it is taken from the hearse to the grave.

VIII. If there is anyone who is to say a few words at the grave, see that they have the opportunity to do so.

VIII. Read the graveside scriptures.

There are many that could be used here.

Ps 23 (for anyone); I Cor 15:50-55 (For a Christian); II Tim 4:6-8 (for a good, faithful, Christian worker for the Lord)

There are many other Scriptures that could be used at the graveside or as the funeral sermon itself. These are just a few of the more common ones that lend themselves easily to the occasion.

Begin making this outline for the funeral service and an outline for a funeral sermon now. Later you will be required to perform a mock funeral. Without the outline for a funeral service and the performance of a mock funeral you cannot pass this course.

You may want to ask your pastor if he has time to assist you in the order of a funeral service, the writing of the outline, and the performance of a mock funeral. Alternatively you can outline and perform a real funeral if afforded the opportunity.

Start the outline before you take the test for this section. You will be asked in this test if you have started it or not. You don't have to have it finished yet but you do have to start working on it.