

The Reformed Pastor Chapter Outlines  
Chapter 3, Section 1

III. Chapter 3 - Application to the Oversight of the Flock

A. Section 1 - The use of humiliation (humility)

1. Opening remarks

- a) It is our daily business to humble our souls before the Lord for our past negligence and implore God's assistance (133)
- b) We must be willing to amend our own hearts as we do those we minister to, when we read what Paul says in Acts 20 to the elders in Ephesus we must:
  - (1) Compare our lives with it
  - (2) Unless we are hardhearted, melt under a sense of our neglect
  - (3) Be laid in the dust before God bewailing our omissions
  - (4) Fly for refuge to the blood of Christ for His pardoning grace
- c) We must deal plainly and faithfully in the confessions of our failures "for how can a wretched sinner, one chargeable with so many and so great transgressions, presume to justify himself before God?" (135)
- d) (a parentheses on gratefulness to God for God's blessing in Baxter's day because he does not believe that "ever England had so able and faithful a ministry since it was a nation" 135)

2. The particular and most heinous sins that beset pastors

- a) The most heinous is PRIDE (137)
  - (1) Pride leads much of what we choose to do and do
  - (2) Pride causes us to "taketh off the edge" of our preaching and pastoring and so we pull punches and speak carefully so as to not offend or lose reputation (138)
  - (3) The summary of pride - "It makes men, both in studying and preaching, to seek themselves, and deny God, when they should seek God's glory, and deny themselves (138).
  - (4) Pride makes us despise any who contradict or correct our faults and only love those who agree with us and promote us and think just like us (141)
    - (a) We are far too tender such that any who dare disagree with us cause us great hurt
    - (b) Thus, we refuse to speak against the errors of others but only to speak smoothly about them
    - (c) We idolize our honor
  - (5) The need is to allow the "very design of the gospel" which is to debase us by God's law and so carry us on to humiliation.
    - (a) "Humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature." (143)
    - (b) Let Christ's humility humble us
    - (c) How can so freely call a drunkard to sobriety or a fornicator to chastity (as if we do this) but refuse to say to our pride, "we cannot be saved unless we become humble" (145)?
      - (i) Pride is a greater sin than either drunkenness or whoredom and humility as necessity as sobriety and chastity.
      - (ii) Beware of doing what is God's work for ourselves and not for God! We must be sure to study humility (146)(

- b) The second most serious sin that besets pastors is that we “do not so seriously, unreservedly, and laboriously lay out ourselves in the work of the Lord” (146)
    - (1) We praise God that there are many who work with all their might, but too many are negligent in their work
    - (2) How to devote ourselves to our work:
      - (a) Devote ourselves to our studies
        - (i) We must delight ourselves in study
        - (ii) We must study men, how to convince and “get within men” (147), how to bring each truth to the quick (to the conscience)
      - (b) Devote ourselves to our pastoring with more vigor and seriousness
        - (i) Few preach or minister with all their might
        - (ii) Few speak about everlasting joys and torments as to make men believe that we are in earnest!
        - (iii) We lack intimate and lively application! (147)
        - (iv) We must expend ourselves to awaken our own hearts before we go into the pulpit (or into the counseling)
        - (v) This isn’t about constant loudness but seriousness because of compassion and love
          - (a) Beware of jesting and smooth talk or gaudy oration
          - (b) Speak to move others, study on how to use your pronunciation and tone to impact their hearts (149)
      - (c) We must devote ourselves to help other congregations find able ministers (150)
3. Next, we see that pastors “have not so devoted ourselves and all we have to the service of God...(due to) our prevailing regard to our worldly interests in opposition to the interest and work of Christ.” Baxter gives 3 reasons for this lack of devotion.
- a) The first is “the temporizing of ministers,” that is, we “always suit (our)selves to the party which is most likely to promote their ends.” (150) “Let the prince, and the stream of men in power, go one way, and you shall have the generality of ministers agree with them to a hair...” (151).
  - b) The second is that, “we too much mind worldly things, and shrink from duties that will injure or hinder our temporal interests. How common is it for ministers to drown themselves in worldly business.”
    - (1) Pastors refuse to discipline, will not offend anyone for fear of reduction in our income.
    - (2) “If it was so deadly a sin in Simon Magnus to offer to buy the gift of God with money, what is it to sell his gift, his cause, and the souls of men for money?” (152)
  - c) The third is that because of our diligence in worldly matters we are barren in good works.
    - (1) We may abuse the command to provide for our own household as a pretense for gathering beyond what is right.
    - (2) Though we must provide well for our household, including the godly education of our children, our charity must not end there.
    - (3) However, we must realize that this is no reason to remain single for too long and so be under temptation of sexual immorality. If one can remain

pure and so single he should do so and give himself to serving others, but those who cannot must marry and care for their wives and children (154).

(4) Those who have larger incomes must be larger in doing good.

- d) Baxter's conclusion to the sin of not being devoted, "I beseech you to take what has been set into consideration; and see whether this be not the great and lamental sin, that they be not fully devoted to God, and give not of themselves, and all that they have, to the carrying on of the blessed work which they have undertaken; and whether flesh-pleasing, and self-seeking, and an interest distinct from that of Christ, do not make us neglect much of our duty, and serve God in the cheapest and most applauded part of his work, and withdraw from that which would subject us to cost and sufferings?" (156)
- 4. Then, ministers, "are sadly guilty of undervaluing the unity and peace of the WHOLE church."
  - a) Many say that they are of the catholic Church, yet "it is rare to meet with men of a catholic spirit." (157)
    - (1) It is rare to meet with a man that hurts and bleeds with the Church's wounds
    - (2) Rather, we rejoice to see other parties fail
  - b) Baxter asks us to attend to the following things:
    - (1) Take care not to place too much importance on controverted opinion which has godly men on both sides
    - (2) Take care not to place too much importance on controversies that are mainly about philosophical uncertainties
    - (3) Take care not to place too much importance on those controversies that are merely verbal
    - (4) Take care not to place too much importance on any point of faith which was disowned by or unknown to the whole Church of Christ
    - (5) Take care not to place too much importance on those points of which any of the more pure or judicious ages were wholly ignorant
    - (6) Take care not to place too much importance on any point which no one age of the Church did ever receive, but all held commonly to the contrary
- 5. Lastly, "we are sadly negligent in performing acknowledged duties, for example, church discipline." (163)
  - a) Very few congregations have any discipline at all, many ministers don't even know all the sheep in their congregations and never bring one to public confession and promise of reformation, nor admonish to repentance.
  - b) If we refuse to make any distinction between the godly and the ungodly within the church by discipline the godly will separate themselves and so suffer harm. (166).
  - c) The reasons for this neglect
    - (1) We content ourselves that preaching is the whole of the ministry
    - (2) We plainly manifest laziness and sloth and so are very reluctant to do the troublesome and painful work that will bring upon us the displeasure of others.
    - (3) We are loveless and so ok with deluding immortal souls by making some think they are Christians that are not
    - (4) We are ok with corrupting Christianity itself in the eyes of the world
    - (5) We fear what the godless think within the church and not that many honest and godly believers will be obliged to withdraw.

(6) We do not fear God and that He will bring His wrath upon ourselves and our congregations

- d) Baxter, if he had his way, would eject as a negligent ministers any who would not rule his people by discipline. (171)
- e) “And now, brother and, what remaineth is, but that we all cry guilty of these four-mentioned sins, and humble our souls for miscarriages before the Lord? (171)