

Chapter 5

# Conducting Public Worship, An Exercise In Nostalgia

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Every seventh day for the remainder of your working life-minus, of course, the Sundays included in your annual vacation, and those times when the infirmities of the flesh lay you low on the Lord's day-you will be conducting one or more services of public worship. In an average pastoral career, you will perform this duty approximately four thousand times, not counting prayer meetings, community Thanksgiving services and short devotions for the Kiwanis Club and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In the light of these statistics, it requires no strenuous cerebration to conclude that here is a professional task in which a pastor should strive for competence. A pastor deficient in the skills necessary for the conducting of worship is analogous to a ship's captain, who has failed to master navigation or a bank teller who can't count.

Cognizant of this, our seminaries devote no little time in teaching their future shepherds about worship. No doubt you have been put through the hoops of the theology of worship, the theory of hymn selection, the writing of prayers, the resource materials for building worship services, etc. You were taught to fashion the structure of the service after the structure of the sixth chapter of Isaiah. You may even have been instructed in the art of baptizing babies and the intricacies of celebrating the Lord's Supper. These courses fill out the curriculum nicely and appear to be highly-practical as described

in the seminary catalogue; but they will turn out to be of little use to you in your parish ministry.

The weakness of your seminary training, in the art of worship is that it was built on the assumption that public worship is the public worship of God. No one, least of all the author, would deny that this is a very nice assumption and perhaps the way things ought to be. In point of fact, this is not the way things are; and if you are so foolish as to operate in the parish on this assumption, not only will you never be a bishop, you will never get out of the sticks.

What your good Christian people want to worship is not God but themselves; although they do not know this and only a pastor who expects to depart shortly for other fields of endeavor will have the temerity to explain it to them. However, you need to know it, for this is the correct assumption on which all successful public worship is built.

A moment's reflection on the facts will reinforce the point. In this worldly, secular, materialistic age in which the fast buck is king; in which it seems every man is out for himself, in which — to our sorrow — the solid Christian virtues of unselfish service and a willingness to sacrifice and subordinate vaunting personal ambition to the cause of the kingdom are ignored; millions of people still go to church Sunday after Sunday to do the same thing over and over. They sing hymns, pray and listen to a choir and a preacher.

On the face of it, it is difficult to understand. Why do all these people forsake warm beds and a leisurely-perusal of the Sunday paper to go and do what they did last Sunday morning, and the Sunday before that, and the Sunday before that, and will be doing next Sunday morning, and the Sunday after that, and the Sunday after that, etc.?

You may be certain that they do not make this extraordinary effort for the purpose of anything so abstract as to worship God, however commendable such a motive would be. Leaving aside such; contributory but not very important, factors as force of habit and the need to flee from loneliness, the main force which pushes them out the door and brings them to the house of the Lord is the gratifying experience of worshipping themselves. The wise and loving pastor, then, will so perfect himself in the art of public worship that his spiritually hungry congregation will know that their worship needs will be provided for every Lord's Day at 11 A.M. (or thereabout). If you can manage this, your potential for rapid advancement is very high; and there is no theoretical reason why you cannot, unless you have been snared in the net of the liturgical revival which goes in for form and ritual and all that. This revival is a movement of the ecclesiastical eggheads, and many young preachers are dazzled by it; but beware of it. Large congregations which pay high salaries have to keep business humming, and there aren't enough eggheads around to accomplish this.

The process of perfecting yourself in the art of worship leadership is really quite simple. A few easily-comprehended principles, strictly followed, should suffice. First, you must purge yourself of all the worship theory with which the seminary infected you. This is because of the above-mentioned assumption that the

preacher's task is to conduct the public worship of God. This is technically-known as "objective worship," and in most parishes of the standard-brand churches, there is no market for it.

Where there is a market, "subjective worship," will be found. This is the type of worship which has as its goal the creation of certain desired states of feeling in the worshiper. We usually-refer to these states of feeling as "religious feelings" or "spiritual experiences." Such description is adequate for the layman. Indeed it is best that laymen generally don't delve any deeper into the psychology of worship than this; but for the professional clergyman these descriptions are too vague. He needs to know the component parts which, when put together, blend into a smoothly functioning mechanism that will do the job. It's like the average car owner, who is only slightly interested in what makes his car run so long as it runs properly; but the mechanic, who looks after it, must understand exactly what each gadget and gizmo contributes to the function of the vehicle.

## **How To Produce The Right Feeling**

What is the nature of the "religious feelings" we seek to create in our faithful churchgoers? You can read tons of books on the psychology of religious experience; from William James to an eminent modern psychologist-theologian who devotes frequent space, in his syndicated daily newspaper column, to counsel on how to pep up church services. We, clerics, ought to be filled with gratitude that this noted layman and authority on public worship generously-uses his national platform to popularize these sane and sensible views. He understands, even if many clergymen do not, that the kind of worship service which manufactures in the congregation,

the feelings it wants to feel; is one of the most effective methods of filling the house, and keeping the customers coming back Sunday after Sunday. A veteran churchgoer, he is, also, a student of homiletics (sermon preparation). His frequent advice in his column on how to be a live wire in the pulpit should be required-reading for all clergymen. He is, indeed, a man richly endowed with talent.

However much you study the subject, though, you will eventually discover that what we have referred to as “religious feelings” may be composed of many elements; but by far the largest single ingredient is the emotion, which is called “nostalgia.” As a matter of fact, there is no scientific evidence to contradict the contention that religious feelings and the emotion of nostalgia are one and the same thing.

It is a valid working-rule that most people, as they grow older, find life increasingly-complex, their responsibilities weighing-heavier and heavier, the years passing at an ever swifter pace. This produces in them a longing for what they imagine, in retrospect, was a far simpler and happier period of their lives, than in all probability it actually was. Freudian psychologists would consider this phenomenon a mild form of the subconscious desire to return to a prior condition of perfect security and contentment—that is, to return to the womb. As Shelley Berman has said, “Let's face it — we all want to go back.”

No matter — the significant item is that they believe it was happier. This is all you need for your working hypothesis.

So the ordering and execution of a public worship service is, at its best, an exercise in nostalgia. If you can consistently inject into the order of worship those

items which will trigger a nostalgic response in your congregation (and you can); you have a running start and momentum with which to climb the hill of clerical preferment, all the spiritual and material goodies reserved for popular and successful servants of the Lord are coming nearer to your grasp; you will soon be a commissioned officer in the church militant.

If you study the truly-successful evangelists, you will note that they all use music, congregational singing, anthems and solos, to manipulate the audience's feelings and enchant the paying customers. What would Billy Sunday have been without Homer Rodeheaver? The lesson here is that music is the number one weapon in the preacher's arsenal. The devil fears one good, old-fashioned hymn, sung with bite and zowie by an enthusiastic congregation, more than he fears ten thousand sermons denouncing the sinful pastimes of the world and the flesh.

Nothing evokes feelings of nostalgia in faithful Christian churchgoers like a hymn they learned in Sunday School; or frequently sang in the dear little church of their childhood, surrounded by family and friends blasting away with them. It dredges up memories of carefree times: Sunday dinners, church picnics, the early exciting stirrings of sex impulses so mysterious and so wicked, and an avalanche of other reveries, all mixed together into an emotional omelet, which is incredibly tasty to the spirit and providing rich nourishment for the soul. This is what we mean by nostalgia.

## **The Good And The Bad Hymns**

The competent cleric, then, will take pains to familiarize himself with the hymnal which is used by the Sunday congregation. Usually, it will be the official

hymnal of his particular denomination, and these are pretty much the same. Hymn book committees are generally composed of trained musicians, with esoteric tastes, and practical pastors who know what people want and need, so the result is a hymnal with two types of sacred songs — good and bad.

You will lighten your labors for the years to come and prevent the inclusion of unsuitable hymns when, as will frequently be the case, you are forced by the exigencies of your multitudinous duties to give the preparation of Sunday's service a lick and a promise. If you will set aside a half-day now to go through your personal copy of the hymnal and mark each hymn contained therein "good" or "bad," it will save time later. It would, however, be wise to do this marking in code. Your hymnal might fall into the hands of some musically-literate member of your congregation whose judgment would differ from yours, and who might take offense at your classifications, if plainly-readable. In any event, code markings of anything denote professionalism and smack of inside information. Then, if you will list all the page numbers of those hymns which you have classified "good" on the flyleaf, all you need do for the remainder of your professional career of putting together worship services is to select the hymns from this list of numbers. When the pressure of time is especially-heavy, you need not even ponder which of these "good" hymns to use. Simply pick three or four numbers, at random, from the list on the flyleaf. You can't possibly go wrong.

And what is the basis or principle by which this division is accomplished? Remember what we are seeking in those songs with high nostalgia-evoking potential. The simplest method of ferreting out these hymns is to classify the contents of the book as to whether a hymn is "objec-

tive" or "subjective." Then discard all hymns marked "objective" and use only those on the subjective list.

And the rule for testing a hymn is this: If it emphasizes the attributes of God — His majesty, power, mercy, goodness, love, etc. — or recounts in some manner the story of Jesus, it is an objective hymn and thus, with possible rare exceptions, unsuitable for a public worship service. If on the other hand, the hymn is preoccupied with the feelings, reactions, desires, hopes and longings of the individual worshiper, it is subjective and guaranteed to have a religious kick in it.

Illustrations are always more helpful than general rules, so let us consider examples of good and bad hymns.

### **Some Strikes Against "A Mighty Fortress."**

One hymn, which is sung with great frequency in many churches, is Luther's "A Mighty Fortress." It is high on the sacred hit parade among seminarians, theologians and the musically-educated. This fact alone is enough to make the parish pastor question its acceptability in his congregation; but, there are other sound and cogent reasons why it is a bad hymn.

Notice the text. It says:

A Mighty Fortress is Our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing;

or this:

Did we in our own strength confide,  
Our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right man on our side,  
The man of God's own choosing:

The hymn has four stanzas, all in this same lugubrious vein, stressing the power and greatness of God; in contrast with the miserable-helplessness of man, left to his own devices. This is an objective hymn. Its weaknesses are as follows:

(1) It gives all the attention and praise to God and none to the worshiper. It talks incessantly about the Almighty and His battle with the powers of darkness — a theological concept remote from the thinking and experience of the good Christian souls under our pastoral care, and too vague for them to grasp or to interest them. It speaks in very-uncomplimentary terms of man, and not many people get any spiritual uplift from being told they are miserable and ineffective creatures.

(2) It lacks any warm, human, comforting, inspiring sentiment. In one stanza, for example, it advises us to “Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life, also.” You could scan a thousand congregations with radar and go through them with a Geiger counter, without detecting even one Christian, who is even faintly-inclined to follow such advice.

(3) “A Mighty Fortress” is not sung in any, but Lutheran Sunday Schools, and was not in the repertoire of the small rural and town churches in which most of your congregation were raised. Therefore, it has no connection with any previous pleasant experience of theirs. Therefore it has a nostalgia-evoking rating of absolute zero.

(4) The music to which it is set (“Ein' Feste Burg,” also, by Martin Luther) is not a good tune. It has no lilt or bounce to it, no blood-quickenning rhythm, no soul-soothing strains which linger in the heart. It is, for your purposes and in spite of the high esteem in which it has been held by musical and theological highbrows for over four hundred years — a bad hymn.

## The Assurances Of “Blessed Assurance”

Now, let us look at an example of a good hymn. For our illustration, we have selected Fanny J. Crosby's great and famous gospel song, “Blessed Assurance.”<sup>1</sup> Note the elements of strength in this hymn.

(1) It focuses on the internal, spiritual experiences of the individual worshiper. Here are parts of the text:

“Blessed assurance” (this means my blessed assurance) “Jesus is mine”; “Perfect submission” (my perfect submission); “perfect delight” (I am perfectly delighted); “Visions of rapture” (this means I am filled with spiritual thrills) “now burst on my sight. . .”; “I, in my saviour, am happy and blest”; “Filled with His goodness” (I am filled with His goodness) “lost in His love” (I am completely abandoned in this love experience). Then the song has what so many hymns lack — a refrain to be sung after each stanza. “This is my story, this is my song, Praising my saviour all the day long.”

(2) The music to which it is set (“Assurance”) is a splendid, sentimental tune, easily-remembered even by a backward member of the Jukes family, after one hearing. It has a syrupy quality about it; with the added advantage that it lends itself to loud and raucous congregational singing — a combination which is difficult to come by in a hymn and hard to beat for the purposes of public worship. Belted out by a churchful of enthusiastic Christians, with everyone unleashing a few extra decibels on the refrain, it will lift even the most stolid clod in the congregation out of his grubby, materialistic, unimaginative, uninspiring, everyday concerns and transport him to Elysian fields of spiritual bliss.

(3) Everyone in your faithful flock except the very young sang this good old song of salvation every week in Sunday School; and, not infrequently, sang it again an hour later in the church service. It opens a floodgate, releasing a lakeful of dammed up memories, which pour over the worshiper in a blessed cascade of nostalgia.

So, through this one little song, he has had a good, true, warm, authentic, inspiring religious experience; an experience the like of which he cannot obtain much of anywhere but in the church. You can readily-perceive that, as a device for building congregational loyalty, consistently high church attendance and a willingness to shell out generous amounts of hard cash for the Lord's work, (and for the Lord's diligent and faithful servant who is the pastoral incumbent, and who has been wise enough and competent enough to provide him with this priceless experience), it has few equals. This is a subjective hymn. This is a GOOD hymn.

It has been said that, had Miss Crosby through some misguided impulse had gotten married, she would never have written this and other inspiring hymns. How grateful we are that she sublimated her normal human inclinations, which were then able to burst through into matchless, religious poetry. Her case illustrates, beyond doubt, the validity of the celibate life for certain religious vocations.

### The Greatest Hymn Ever Written

Perhaps the greatest hymn ever written, judged not by the limited and unrealistic standards of professional church musicians, but by the tests of usefulness, popularity and effectiveness in our battle to promote and encourage the Christian life at the level of the parish ministry, is C.

Austin Miles' masterpiece "In the Garden."

Since it is almost a perfect model of what you are looking for in the hymns you select for public worship, we quote the entire text.

Stanza 1 —

*I* come to the garden alone,  
While the dew is still on the roses,  
And the Voice *I* hear  
Falling on *my* ear  
The Son of God discloses.

Refrain —

And He walks with *me*,  
And He talks with *me*,  
And He tells *me I* am His own;  
And the joy *we* share  
As *we* tarry there,  
None other has ever known.

Stanza 2 —

He speaks, and the sound of His Voice  
Is so sweet the birds Hush their singing,  
And the melody  
That He gives to *me*  
Within *my* heart is ringing.

Refrain —

Stanza 3 —

*I'd* stay in the garden with Him,  
Though the night around *me* be falling,  
But He bids *me* go;  
Through the voice of woe  
His voice to *me* is calling.

Refrain —

You will notice that the personal pronouns are italicized. When the hymn is sung through with refrain after each stanza, the personal pronoun is used twenty-seven times. This is a measure of the surpassing-skill of the writer and tells us that he was a man not only of extraordi-

nary spiritual sensitivity and insight, but knowledgeable in the tastes and religious needs of the kind of good Christian people you will be serving.

For one thing, he never lets their attention stray from themselves, which is the subject, he knows, in which they are most-vitally interested. In the second place, he throws the switch activating the nostalgia mechanism in the first five words, "I come to the Garden. . . . . ." Everybody has had a garden, or has been in a garden. "Garden" is a word associated with beauty, pleasure, peace, retreat from the world, man's original innocence before it was spoiled by sin,<sup>2</sup> etc. Then the hymn writer nails down this idyllic memory picture with the line: "While the dew is still on the roses. . . ' A lovely rose dampened by pure atmospheric moisture (who thinks of atomic fallout or belching chimneys befouling God's good clean air at a time like this?) is a symbol-to the average man scratching out a living five days a week at a job he despises, surrounded and saturated with the ugly, the dirty, the unlovely things of life-of created perfection, of complete separation from this sordid, wicked world, of bliss beyond any happiness his earth-bound human imaginings are capable of encompassing. Indubitably, these few words alone are enough to do the job we want done. Limitations of space do not permit us to analyze it further, but use the hymn often, about every other Sunday or so.

It will strike you as you pore over your hymnal, that the preferred subjective-type numbers, in most cases, have texts which are little short of gibberish. What does it mean, for example, when that grand old favorite of the years, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," has us sing,

Till, from Mt. Pisgah's lofty height,  
I view my home, and take my flight:

This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise  
To seize the everlasting prize,  
And shout, while passing through the  
air,  
Farewell, Farewell, sweet hour of  
prayer?

If you didn't know this is part of a hymn which has comforted countless Christian souls, you might take it for a message in a code, which defies all efforts to break it. Nor can you escape the conclusion, as you segregate the good hymns from the bad ones, that very few modern, prosperous, comfortable and contented Christians can sing these precious old religious ballads and mean a word of what they are saying.

Picture, if you will, the successful, hard-nosed executives in your congregation arriving at the church in their Cadillacs and Lincolns, dressed in Society Brand suits with their wives in mink stoles, joining in,

Others may choose this vain world if  
they will,  
I will follow Jesus;  
All else forsaking, will cleave to him  
still,  
I will follow Him

or imagine the president of the local bank chanting,

Take my silver and my gold,  
Not a mite would I withhold. . .

or a wealthy bachelor, with a stable of comely lady friends and a taste for exotic foods and rare wines, solemnly intoning,

Earthly pleasures vainly call me . . .  
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me . . .

or the average collection of Christian saints who know full well that the church

is split into denominational segments, too numerous to count, pooling their enthusiastic voices in,

We are not divided, all one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

Whenever someone takes a poll to determine the most popular hymn of all, it invariably turns out to be "The Old Rugged Cross." On the whole, it has probably generated more religious sentiment, more holy horsepower in more people, than any other sacred music. Yet, it has four stanzas, plus refrain, which affirm that above all else, I love that old rugged cross, nothing else has nearly so much attraction for me, so I'll cherish it as my dearest possession. A statement which practically nobody in your flock can make and be even in the general vicinity of the truth; but Sunday after Sunday they make it. And when asked to name their favorite hymn, reply without hesitation "The Old Rugged Cross."

Here is a mystery. How can relatively sane, intelligent people happily sing what amounts to nonsense, or claim, through song, to believe what they obviously do not believe, or promise via hymnody to do what they haven't the faintest inclination to do; and would be stunned if, after the amen, were told to go and do what they just finished saying they were going to do: ("Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold" for example). As you ponder this paradox, your confidence in the author's counsel may be weakened.

We urge you, however, to respect our long experience in these matters. The explanation of the phenomenon is obvious. It is that people hardly ever pay any attention to the words when they sing hymns. It is as if they know, in advance, that the words don't mean anything, any-

way. If they like the tune, if it is associated with pleasant experiences, if the music falls agreeably on their ears, they make no demands on the text of rationality or poetic quality or anything else.

Though the late H. L. Mencken claimed no one ever went broke underestimating the taste of the American public, there is a level of taste and quality (quite low, to be sure) below which you should not descend, when you classify a hymn as good. The author advises against the use of such numbers as "Life Is Like a Mountain Railroad," "That Old-Time Religion" and "There Ain't No Flies on Jesus," no matter how soul-stirring they may be. Also, as you make your way upward in the grade of churches you pastor, you should remember to throw in one bad (objective) hymn each Sunday as a sop to the minority of culture vultures in the congregation. This protects you against any possible accusation that you are a man of low tastes and insensitive ear.

## **Soft Music And The Prayer Tone**

Next, you will be well advised to exert careful control over the non-congregational musical portions of the service—anthems, organ voluntaries, etc.

Insist that your choirmaster use only those anthems with catchy or sentimental tunes on the order of "My God and I" (which is one of the half-dozen greatest choir numbers ever composed and is the anthem equivalent of "In The Garden"). Always remember that you have to keep a sharp eye on choirmasters or they will be trotting out Bach chorales or dissonant modern stuff; types of music totally-unsuitable for the purposes of public worship. Pacify them by letting them use this



kind of music in an occasional choir recital.

Organ music should avoid the strong and the loud. For preludes such numbers as “Claire de Lune” and “Ave Maria” induce a near-hypnotic state in worshippers, which is what we are striving to attain. People under hypnosis, as you know, are easy to manipulate. Therefore, always have the organist play very softly during the pastoral prayer, and during other parts of the service, when congregational attention is not required.

There is little else to say about conducting public worship after instruction on the choice and use of music, for if music is used correctly it doesn't matter much what else you do.

One always reads from the Holy Scriptures, of course, and most congregations would sense that something was missing if you omitted it, though they might not immediately realize what. But, the Bible is an obscure and hidden book for modern Christians, so it is best not to overdo its use. One way to make the reading of the Scriptures meaningful is to memorize a passage each week and recite it with the lectern Bible closed (to emphasize the fact that you are reciting). This will electrify the congregation and promote laudatory talk in the parish. It calls for only a small effort on your part, but your people will think it great. As long as we have to read Scripture in the service, one might as well get some mileage out of it.

For public prayer, remember never to lapse into a normal conversational voice. Listen carefully to the pastoral praying of successful veterans of the cross. Without exception, they have developed a “prayer tone,” which has a rich, resonant “religious” quality about it. When they say solemnly, “Let us pray,” you can almost

hear the shifting of their vocal gears as they prepare to speak to the Almighty. You won't be able to come by this “prayer tone,” at once. It takes years of practice, and many a clergyman claims that, as he comes to retirement, he is just hitting his stride in the use of his voice for public prayer. Work hard on it, for few large churches will tolerate a pastor who gives an undistinguished performance in the pastoral prayer.

When baptizing babies, always dip a rose in the font and shake it gently over the infant's fuzzy little cranium. Then present the rose to the mother (do this with a bit of a flourish). Soon this baptismal rite will become an exceedingly popular item in your service, and people will look forward, with anticipation, to those Sundays when it is to be observed.

## **Managing The Successful Wedding Ceremony**

You will want to perfect yourself, too, in the conducting of wedding ceremonies. If you can get for yourself a reputation for putting on a dandy wedding, it will raise you in the esteem of the community and add considerably to your income. Every community has a significant proportion of its population, made up of people, who never go near a church except in times of dire need, such as, when they want to get married. Since it makes no difference whatever to them what church they use, they gravitate to the one whose pastor is known to put on the best nuptial show. There is no reason why this should not be you.

A formal wedding, like Gaul, is divided into three parts. First comes the initial arrangements, including a counseling session with the supposedly-happy couple. Next, is the rehearsal, and finally, the ceremony itself.

There is a trend today among younger clergymen to spend several lengthy sessions with a prospective bride and groom, counseling them on everything under the sun. This takes an enormous amount of time and is not at all necessary. About all you need do in the initial session is to establish the hour of the wedding and the rehearsal, and be certain arrangements are made for the music. The average wedding fee, you will discover, hardly warrants wasting excessive amounts of time on this section of your pastoral duty.

The rehearsal is apt to be a trial. First, everybody is usually late. Experienced pastors know it is impossible to start a rehearsal at the appointed hour and so never hurry to be on time, themselves. Then, the bride's mother frequently shows up with a copy of Emily Post under her arm and a managerial expression on her face. She will make all sorts of outlandish and impractical suggestions, directions and demands. You will have to suffer her as best you can and manage to sidetrack her more-ridiculous ideas of how the wedding should be conducted.

Also, grooms have a habit of anesthetizing themselves against the trauma of their loss of freedom with several large belts, from the bottle, prior to the rehearsal and will comprehend only dimly, if at all, any directions you give him. Another potential area of trouble is the music, particularly the solos. Brides have a tendency to be adamant about their choice of music, and it will often call for all your persuasiveness to dissuade them from their tasteless and ill considered selections. In general, encourage a bride to stick to the time-tested secular pieces such as "O Promise Me" and "I Love You Truly." Spiritual-type girls often want some sacred music sung at their weddings, but discourage this if you can. People expect to hear the familiar tunes

they associate with weddings when they go to a wedding, and if they don't, they feel that the ceremony hasn't been quite up to snuff, and will think that you aren't capable of putting on a first-rate production.

Then, too, the thoughtless selection of sacred music for a wedding can contribute to a connubial catastrophe. Two pertinent examples of inexperienced clergymen, muffing the ball through their failure to scrutinize carefully the bride's selections of solos, should suffice to emphasize the importance of this pastoral responsibility. In one case, the bride, a young lady of amazonian proportions was marrying a meek lad, so diminutive in stature as to make the contrast between them a subject of community comment. Unfortunately, the bride insisted on the use of her two favorite hymns which were "For the Love of God" and "I'd Rather Have Jesus." In the other instance, the ceremony ended with the congregation singing "We Shall See Them Coming, Numberless as the Sands of the Sea." How much better it would have been had these girls chosen something tasteful and appropriate such as "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi" or "Will You Love Me in September as You Did in May?"

One so-called sacred number you can recommend without fear is Malot's setting of "The Lord's Prayer," which is really more in the realm of popular music than of sacred music. It is well to use it as a part of the ceremony itself. As the bride and groom kneel together with the soloist pouring forth the sweet strains of this music, you create a sentimental picture which will bring tears of joy to the eyes of the assembled guests. This enhances your reputation as a marrying parson and should generate a lot of new business.

There is nothing to the ceremony itself if you have had a proper rehearsal. Just

don't forget to show up; and get to the church early enough to calm and comfort the groom. Don't worry about the bride. She has been pointing for this moment since she was a little girl and she doesn't intend to blow it now. Nervous brides are a rarity. They generally have about them the look of a warrior who has vanquished every foe and is about to receive the laurel wreath.

A final word on conducting worship. Remember that it matters little what you do as you lead; but, it matters a great deal how you do it. Avoid displays of excessive vitality or enthusiasm in voice or manner; except in the sermon, where it is permissible to pound the pulpit now and then for emphasis and to awaken slumbering wor-

shippers. We shouldn't be pompous, but on the other hand, we shouldn't be far from it. A solemn demeanor and a "holy tone" will send your faithful people on their way to their roast beef and funny papers with a truly religious feeling and a genuine sense of having been to church.

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1. We could have selected any Fanny J. Crosby hymn. She was one of the truly inspired sacred hymnodists of her age.

2. A lot of sinning probably goes on in gardens, beginning with Adam and Eve down to the present. But people, somehow, just don't associate the two ideas.