

IDEALS
for
CHRISTIAN
SERVICE

IDEALS *for* CHRISTIAN SERVICE

ROWE



A. T. ROWE, D. D.

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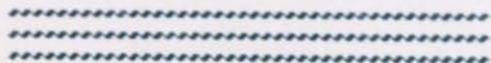
A. T. Rowe, D.D.

Out of fifty years of service to the church as pastor, evangelist, Sunday-school teacher and superintendent, and general manager of a religious publishing house, comes this book directed to those who serve.

Doctor Rowe wishes to share with others some of his experiences encountered and point to roads that some have followed with success in Christian service.

IDEALS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE is a book for every Christian who takes his responsibility seriously.

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Ideals
FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

By
A. T. ROWE

Author of
IDEALS FOR EARNEST YOUTH



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FOREWORD

My inspiration and encouragement for writing *Ideals for Christian Service* came from loving fellowship and contacts that I have had with thousands of Christian ministers and laymen in every state of the Union and in other sections of North America in more than fifty years of ministry, starting in 1893. From my observation I sensed an almost unanimous desire on the part of these thousands to promote a better ministry of service.

The material for the several chapters have been gathered from books, lectures, class groups, ministers, church members; from observation of many church groups and individuals in church services, Sunday schools, young people's societies, camp meetings, ministers' conventions and institutes, leadership training groups, revival campaigns, private homes, from my own experiences as institute instructor and student, as pastor and evangelist, as Sunday-school teacher and

superintendent, and as general manager of a publishing house for Christian literature.

Anyone who has been active in any one business for fifty years should be able to write a book about that business—and do you know that the church carries on one of the largest business enterprises in the world? There are in America today 212 religious denominations, having more than 230,000 churches. The total membership of these churches is 45,000,000 and their current annual budget is \$817,000,000. The value of church properties alone (not including parsonages, hospitals, schools, seminaries, or charitable institutions) is approximately \$4,000,000,000.

My main purpose in this book is not to *tell* the reader how to do a certain job, but rather to *share* with others experiences that have been encountered and to point to roads that some have followed with success in Christian service. I know that success and failure are elusive, flexible, comparative terms. One may have partial success and partial failure. I doubt if any thinking person would have the boldness to say that he has succeeded completely, and I am certain that no one who has honestly tried ever fails completely. Success and failure are up to us. No man is de-

feated until he has consented to defeat. George Matthew Adams has said: "We are all endowed at birth with something that is uniquely ours alone. It may be but with a single talent, but if that talent is used, developed, enlarged, and made outstanding, as much credit is earned as though there had been bequeathed a dozen talents at birth. We are accountable only for what we do with what we have and are."

Anyway, results are not the only factors that enter into an appraisal of our work. How about copying the following saying, posting it in your study or home, and memorizing it for personal or permanent reference?

*And when the one Great Scorer comes to write
against your name,
He'll write not that you won or lost, but how
you played the game.*

But the reasoning of these two quotations does not give us license to "play the game" independently or carelessly. We cannot play the game of life alone, and we dare not play it carelessly, for the life of many another person is vitally affected by the acts of our lives. It is an axiom that "only results are tabulated." Excuses are never re-

corded. The auditor takes the record, and if the record indicates that we played the game independently or carelessly, this fact will witness against us.

Yours for success in Christian service,

A. T. ROWE

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INTRODUCTION

When a new book is introduced, questions relative to the subject matter, the author, and the comparative value of the book immediately arise in the minds of prospective readers. *Ideals for Christian Service* contains materials of interest to every Christian who takes his Christian responsibility seriously and who seeks information and inspiration to help him serve more efficiently. A. T. Rowe, D.D., is widely known and recognized as one who has successfully served in various positions of responsibility over a period of many years. He shares many interesting and important experiences and much helpful material in this new book.

I am happy to be permitted to write this introductory statement. In early youth I was inspired to enter Christian service through the influence of Dr. and Mrs. Rowe. Some years later Dr. Rowe wrote *Ideals for Earnest Youth*, which inspired me to give my life to the church. As the years have passed there have been many profitable con-

tacts, and for the past few years we have worked together in a most intimate way. Together we have driven thousands of miles and have attended hundreds of religious services. We have shared many pleasurable experiences; and we have shared some disappointments. The author of this book has never shown an inclination to shirk. If we had a flat, his coat was the first to come off for the job of repair. When we worked on a literature display, he was the first to begin unpacking and bringing in the cartons. He has always carried his part of the load, and whenever possible he has made it easier for me. This trait—a willingness to assist others while bearing his own load—is recognized by all who know him and has endeared him to his many friends. It must be this same urge which impels him now, at the age of seventy, to share his lifelong findings in the field of Christian service with others who strive to serve more efficiently.

Jesus once said to his intimate friends: "Who-soever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Through-

out the years true men and women of God, following in the footsteps of Jesus, have ministered to the needs of mankind with varying degrees of success. While the term "minister" applies to a limited professional group, the author extends his use of it to include the ministering, or serving, of pastors, evangelists, teachers, Christian education leaders, persons active in young people's and children's services, and all of the thousands of people who are working tirelessly in the kingdom of God. Thus *Ideals for Christian Service* is directed to those who serve, regardless of the capacity in which they serve.

For more than fifty years A. T. Rowe has been numbered among those who serve. He has been firm in his Christian belief and untiring in his demonstration of practical Christianity. What he did or where he served has not been so important as *how well* he served. He has measured Christian experience in terms of purposeful service. In his present capacity as general manager of the religious publishing house where he has now served for thirteen years, he has visited hundreds of congregations, conventions, and camp meetings. Into these groups he has brought understanding and sympathy for the problems under

consideration, and always he has tried to help those with whom he worked. From these contacts, and from the reading of many books, he has gathered materials which are an important element in this new book on Christian service.

Much of Dr. Rowe's effort in recent years has been spent in teaching various courses in leadership training classes and ministerial institutes. The great need discovered in these sessions has largely influenced the writing of this new book. A desire to help younger ministers and religious workers seems uppermost in the author's mind and is reflected throughout the book.

The ideal, the *perfect pattern*, of Christian service is not easily attained. Only those who serve can be fully aware of the need of a positive pattern from which they can build a plan for a life of successful service. The positive appeal and directness of approach followed in this book will make it an inspiration to those who would be numbered among the servants of mankind.

STEELE C. SMITH

Ideals for Christian Service

OUR IDEAL

AN IDEAL is a standard, or pattern, of perfection set up as a guide, or goal. By such a pattern one can measure his activities and work to see whether or not he is making progress. A carpenter uses a blueprint as a guide to the finished building; a printer constantly refers to the proofs of his job to make sure it is accurate and up to the standard in quality; a Christian uses his Bible as a standard of the kind of life he is expected to live.

Throughout this book we shall be using the term "ideal" to mean the "perfect pattern" for Christian service. Even with such a pattern we may not reach perfection, but the pattern will certainly help us to come nearer to perfection than we could without it or with a poor or imperfect pattern.

What is the purpose of our Christian service,

anyway? Is it not to help people to discover God? to make God real to men? and this in spite of the chaotic condition of everything around us? Methods of accomplishing our purpose may vary, but underlying them all is this one idea—we must help people to discover God. We may preach, have interviews, impart religious instruction, conduct inspirational worship, and give ourselves to many other activities, but we must keep constantly before us this one great aim of helping people to discover God by making him real to them.

Every service we render should have a purpose, and by "service" we mean more than just the conducting of a public church service. The standard slogan of one large radio advertiser is: "Everything that——does has victory as its purpose." Our success in Christian service will be immeasurably greater if we will just get definite purpose into every form of that service. This idea of purpose can be broken down into more detail. For example, each sermon should have a purpose; and each visitation, each act of charity, each planned contact should be characterized by lofty Christian purpose.

Have you heard sermons and addresses that

seemed to you void of purpose and others whose purpose seemed to be vindication, retaliation, and sometimes self-exploitation? These have no place in genuine Christian service and do not even approach the ideal. A few years ago I had the experience of going into the Supreme Court room in Washington, D.C., just a few minutes before the opening of the Court. The "nine old men," with Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, all dressed in their black robes, entered and were seated in their accustomed places. After a few minutes' pause an attorney arose and began presenting a case before the Court. There were quite a number of people in the courtroom, but everything was perfectly quiet—no one was allowed even to whisper. I listened intently because I have always been interested in legal procedure, though not being a lawyer myself. As this man spoke I could not see what he was driving at and I began to think to myself, "Well, I am just too dumb to know what this is all about." Then suddenly Chief Justice Hughes interrupted the attorney with the question, "Mr. Blank, just what is it that you are trying to prove?" That made it very apparent to me that even the Chief

Justice of the Supreme Court did not know what the man was talking about.

This experience led me to cross-examine myself as a minister from the service standpoint. Was my ministry ministering—serving? Whom? How? Was my service planned with sufficient thought, prayer, and care? What was the objective of my efforts? Did I make myself clear? Did I lift up Christ or myself? Or did I lift at all? Did I depress? Just what had I tried to accomplish, if anything? Was my effort wholly or partly negligible? Did it strengthen or weaken the hearers or the ones I had meant to serve—was it a service or a disservice? Did that call that I made on Blank help or hinder?

I wish we would think always of our ministry as ministering—a continuing process. A pastor should be pastoring; a teacher should be teaching, not merely talking; and when we teach, people learn. A church worker who ministers—whether he be a preacher, teacher, treasurer, usher, or anything else official or unofficial in the church—ministers continuously. Even while he sleeps his influence continues with those who are awake. Then let us minister as wisely, and as efficiently as we know how.

OUR CHURCH PROGRAM

I WOULD suggest that after you have read this chapter you go over your own church program carefully and critically from end to end with a view to improving it wherever possible.

Our church program is a problem of people and things. On one hand we have organization, materials, equipment, methods, objectives, and measurements of results. On the other we have people. The major problem, of course, is people. Psychologists say that working with people takes more energy than working with things. For instance, you can set a machine where you want it. You can start it and stop it at will. But you cannot do that with people. People are changeable, temperamental, subject to moods, affected by what they eat or fail to eat, by the amount of sleep they get, by their association; in fact, we are affected by all that touches us.

The church program is dealing with people, personalities from babyhood up. We must keep constantly in mind that every *person* is impor-

THE PASTOR AND HIS FLOCK

THE Apostle Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock" (Acts 20:28). Very much is comprehended in these few words.

The pastor must first be certain that he himself is a Christian, that he is qualified and willing to minister, or serve; then he must find opportunities to serve. He must study how best to serve the particular individuals and groups in his community. There is no possibility that the minister will give too much time to the study of these particular things. It takes a real man or woman to be a good minister, pastor, or servant of the Lord in any capacity.

The flock referred to here directly is the congregation, or membership of the local church. At the same time, the pastor is to minister to all who attend any of the services of his church or come under its influence, whether they be Christian or non-Christian. The Christian people must not fail to minister to the community in which

they live and in which the congregation is located. The minister and congregation that serve only their own particular members are not doing their full duty to the world in which they live.

In the immediate flock, the congregation, there will be many problems for the minister. All Christians are good, but from the standpoint of service to the church and proper examples to the community there are good Christians, better Christians, best Christians. There is, of course, no such thing as a bad Christian, but we have known people professing Christianity to live apparently very close to the border line. Maybe they lived to all of their understanding and maybe they felt that they were good Christians, but many others considered them as not being very good Christians.

The Scriptures refer to human beings as "sheep," "goats," and "wolves." There will be all of these, and many different grades of them, in every community; and since the pastor is in the center of the community he touches all of these and they touch him. He is not necessarily to be a judge or a jury, but he must try to render adequate service to each individual and group. Maybe he can convert some of the "goats" into