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# Preacher's

## MAGAZINE

*Say not ye, There are yet four months,  
and then cometh harvest? behold,  
I say unto you, Lift up your eyes,  
and look on the fields;  
for they are white already to harvest.*  
*John 4:35*

September • October  
1952

# *The Preacher's Magazine*

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Volume 27

September, October, 1952

Number 5

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L. A. REED, D.D., *Editor*

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# The Heart of the Church

*If the heart be strong,  
Then life flows freely  
To every distant part,  
And, nourished, it soon  
Shows strength, beauty,  
And a purpose, with a song.*

In the fall of 1923, after we had been elected as a delegate to our first General Assembly, even though young and full of life, yet we approached this quadrennial conclave with apprehension. Not that we felt so about our doctrine, for we concurred totally with our creed, but we had apprehensions as to the personnel of the approaching meeting. This persisted as we traveled east by train from the Pacific Coast and it became somewhat of a hidden fear as we arrived in Kansas City. We wondered to what extent youth would participate and as to whether youth would be strongly represented. But our fears were soon dissolved when we saw a great crowd of fine, clear-thinking, spiritual young men and women mingling with the older men and women, who were the pioneering element of our movement. It really was wonderful to "rub elbows" with those early leaders. They gave us something which all too frequently is missing now. And when we saw the "heart of the church," our spirits rose to meet its challenge, for we discovered that the "heart of the church" was well poised and right. Many times our fears leaped to the surface when the pressure of debate was strong, but that pulsating heart brought nourishment to distraught minds, and always the calm succeeded the storm. We never got to the point where we couldn't break out in song,

and that became a safety valve which many times relieved everyone just at the right moment.

We are now in the midst of the Thirteenth General Assembly and from the platform we obtain many impressions which the speeches do not reveal. Also, most of the decisions are made in the committee rooms, where the debates take place, and the finished legislation is more or less a foregone conclusion. But as of thirty odd years ago, we came to this assembly with some apprehensions. It is true that some remain static in their thinking. They do not yield to change and their opinions become convictions, and everyone suffers because of the tensions they create. Such tensions are persisting this time over items which should have been, and to most of us have been, solved and settled long ago. Hence we watch with interest as the parliamentary triumphs are registered on the secretary's record, and the negatives relax and accept defeat as good sanctified delegates should. And so we still believe that the "heart of the church" is good and right.

On nonessentials some want legislation. But herein lie insurmountable obstacles—where to begin and where to end. Even though some of these items are bothersome, it is much better to leave them to the individual conscience and opinion than to endeavor to force legislation upon the whole. There is one area which must be clarified and that is found in district boards and individual pastors making their own laws hindering saved people from uniting with the

church or keeping our young, qualified men from being ordained. This is being done by too many groups and is detrimental to the growth of our denomination. Compulsion by law is unhealthy. This is especially true if the compulsion is either not legitimate or the law misinterpreted. None of our law is of private interpretation. Our general superintendents can always give us the clear meaning when we desire it. Clarification is always available. Possibly this assembly will do some clarification but, as I sit on the platform in this great auditorium arena, I am convinced there will be very little legislation take place. In polity we have struck a norm. In non-essentials interest lags. The major emphasis seems to be on the forward look. The next quadrennium fascinates the delegation. We will move forward. Praise the Lord! The heart of the church is right.

Ten thousand people served communion in eighteen minutes. A record for this convention city. The thought that ran through your editor's mind is expressed in the verse, "And they were all with one accord in one place." As the general superintendents preached, the response was typically Nazarene and evangelistic. The great auditorium had never before resounded with the shouts of such a great body of Christian saints—people from all over the world, all speaking the same spiritual language. Fraternal delegates from other groups caught the contagion and entered heartily into their greetings as if they were among their own. As one man was heard to remark, "This city has been captured by the Nazis." Yes, that is so and Satan's forces recognize it. No tobacco or liquor is being sold in the

crowded hotels. Happiness, tolerance, and co-operation prevail in restaurants and eating places. Thousands of dollars' worth of religious literature is being purchased and distributed. Thousands gather in lobbies and eating places after the evening service to enjoy the company of friends they meet every four years. Everything is orderly and clean and religious, and Satan doesn't like it. He has discovered that the heart of our church is right.

You good pastors who didn't come or couldn't come, we want to greet you and reassure you that all is well. I guess you are in the minority, for it looks like most of the Nazarene ministry is in Kansas City. Hundreds by the caravans are daily being guided through our Publishing House and Headquarters. People are realizing the inadequacy of the Seminary quarters, and we have heard many say they are glad they paid their apportionment. Then they go out and view the new campus and rejoice with us over our triumphs.

Yes, God is here with us in Kansas City and this General Assembly. Both through the conduct of its personnel and the legislation in its public meetings it is being proved to our satisfaction and to that of our constituency that the heart of the church is right. Praise be to God!

*We are publishing in four parts the Lienard Lectures given at the Nazarene Theological Seminary, which were so rich in content that we thought our preachers would enjoy sharing them. Mrs. Lienard, an elder in the First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri, made these lectures possible.—EDITOR.*

# The Significance of Pentecost

## Part One

### The Historical Significance of Pentecost

By Chas. W. Carter\*

THE DAY OF PENTECOST was, from the Jewish standpoint, a historical landmark occurring fifty days after the Passover, but from the Christian point of view it was and is both a historical landmark occurring fifty days after the atoning death of Christ on the cross and an abiding miracle of the Christian era. This Christian Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, is the most significant event in the history of man subsequent to the cross of Christ; and in fact all that went before in the ministry and work of Christ, including the atonement made on the cross and the resurrection and ascension of Christ, was validated by this Pentecostal effusion. Pentecost was the culmination and fulfillment of the redemptive scheme. It was God's witness to redemption completed in Christ.

#### WHAT IS PENTECOST?

The essence of the *Christian Pentecost* is recorded in the first four verses of the second chapter of the Book of Acts as follows:

*And when the day of Pentecost was now come [was being fulfilled], they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder [or parting among them, or distributing themselves], like as of fire: and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4, A.S.V.).*

However, a proper understanding of the Christian Pentecost demands a historical investigation of the origin and meaning of the *Day of Pentecost* in the Hebrew-Jewish usage of the term, and its relationship to the first Christian Pentecost as recorded in the Book of Acts. Such an investigation is the purpose of this article.

The reader's attention is at once arrested by those introductory words, *And when the day of Pentecost was now come*. What was this Day of Pentecost in the Hebrew-Jewish calendar upon which the unusual spiritual phenomena occurred? What place did it hold in the life and thinking of the Jews? Why did the divine effusion take place on the occasion of this Jewish feast? These and similar questions present themselves to the mind of the serious reader of the second chapter of Acts.

#### CALENDAR OF HEBREW-JEWISH FEASTS

In consideration of the foregoing questions an answer is found in part in the catalogue of Jewish feasts. The order of these feasts as given in *The People's Bible Encyclopedia* (Ed. by Charles Randall Barnes) is interesting and instructive. According to this authority the Jewish feasts fall into four groups; namely, the Septenary Festivals (Cycles of Sabbaths); the Yearly Festivals; the *Post-Exilic Festivals*; and *Certain Doubtful Festivals*. Of the *Yearly Festivals* there were three principal ones as follows: the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread; Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks;

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and the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus the Feast of Pentecost was the second of the three annual Jewish feasts, the Day of Atonement not being properly regarded as a feast day.

#### ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE HEBREW-JEWISH PENTECOST

Three different names were ascribed to Pentecost by the ancient Hebrews; namely, *Feast of Weeks*, apparently due to the fact that it was celebrated seven weeks, or fifty days, following the Passover (see Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:10, 16; II Chron. 8:13; Lev. 23:15, 16); *The Feast of Harvest*, due to the fact that it concluded the harvest of the later grains (Exod. 23:16); and *The Day of First Fruits*, so called because the first loaves which were made from the new grain were offered on the altar at this time (Lev. 23:17).

Whatever may have been the original significance of Pentecost it appears evident that by the time of Christ the Jews associated it with the Passover. From the nineteenth chapter of Exodus they reasoned that the Decalogue was given on the fiftieth day after the Exodus. Thus by this later time the giving of the Law was directly associated with the Feast of Pentecost and the two were celebrated simultaneously (see Deut. 16:12). "The Pentecost was essentially linked to the Passover—that festival which, above all others, expressed the fact of a race chosen and separated from other nations—and was the solemn termination of the consecrated period." (*The People's Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 361). The following observation confirms this view of the identification of the Jewish Pentecost with the giving of the Mosaic Law: "It [Pentecost] marked the completion of the corn harvest, and according to the later Jews it commemorated the giving of

the Law on Sinai" (*A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, J. R. Dummelow, Ed., p. 820, John C. Winston Company).

The precise time for the celebration of the Jewish Pentecost was, according to Lev. 23:11, 15, 16, the fiftieth day from "the morrow after the Sabbath" of the Passover; or, according to Deuteronomy 16:9, it was to be celebrated seven full weeks after the sickle was put to the corn. The exact meaning of the word Sabbath in this connection is much in dispute among scholars. In any event the time intervening between the Passover and Pentecost was a period of fifty days, and thus accounts for the name of the later feast.

While it is not the purpose of this article to elaborate the observances of Pentecost, in general it may be noted that the people were exhorted to "rejoice before Jehovah thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there" (Deut. 16:11, A.S.V.).

Israel also were to recall their bondage in Egypt and were admonished to keep the divine law (Deut. 16:12). It is also significant and instructive to note, as one authority has observed concerning the Jewish Pentecost, that "From Acts (2:9-11) we infer that, perhaps more than to any other great festival, the Jews came from distant countries to Jerusalem" (*People's Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 361).

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HISTORICAL PENTECOST IN RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN PENTECOST

Briefly to summarize the significance of the historical Hebrew-Jewish

Pentecost in relation to the first Christian Pentecost of Acts 2 it may be noted, first, that as the ancient Hebrew feast occurred fifty days after the Passover, so the first Christian Pentecost occurred fifty days after the atonement made by Jesus Christ on the cross. Second, as the ancient Passover signified atonement for and deliverance from sin, and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai fifty days later signified God's provision for the government of His people, so the atoning death of Christ provided God's remedy for sin and the divine effusion occurring fifty days later was God's provision for the writing of His laws on the hearts of His people (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).

Again as the Hebrew-Jewish Feast of Pentecost signified the culmination of the harvest season, fifty days after the putting in of the sickle, so the first Christian Pentecost signified the gracious fruit of the atonement of Christ, a harvest yielding in its initial stages three thousand converts (Acts 2:41). Finally, the broad inclusiveness of the participants in this Hebrew-Jewish festival, namely, the children, men and maid servants, the Levites, the strangers, the fatherless, and the widows, according to Deuteronomy 16:11, is prophetic of the universal scope of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Pentecostal experience (Acts 1:8). The following is a significant observation: "Appropriately, therefore, on this day the gospel harvest began; and the old Law of ordinances was superseded by the new Law of love" (*A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, J. R. Dummelow, Ed., p. 820. John C. Winston Co.).

#### PLACE AND RECIPIENTS OF PENTECOST

The actual location of the Christian disciples at the occurrence of the Pentecostal miracle is neither finally cer-

tain nor important. That the disciples resorted to an upper room for prayer and to await the fulfillment of the promise we learn from Acts 1:13, 14 (A.S.V): "And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding . . . These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer . . ." Some have thought that they were in the upper chamber where they ate the Last Supper with the Master before His crucifixion. Others, including G. Campbell Morgan and Phillip Muro, believe they were in a compartment of the Temple. Be this as it may.

Of far greater significance than the place are the persons who first experienced the Christian Pentecost. This initial Christian Pentecost was not the experience of non-Christian Jewish dwellers at Jerusalem, nor of the masses of non-Christian Jews gathered from the sixteen nations, as mentioned in Acts 2:9-11, for the Jewish festival. Nor was it the experience of proselytes to the Jewish faith from the Gentile world, to say nothing of the Gentile world itself. Indeed the divine effusion was to have its influence on these unconverted peoples, but not until the disciples were inwardly purified and possessed by the Holy Spirit. Rather the *they* of Acts 2:1 who experienced this first Christian Pentecost were those Christian disciples enumerated in Acts 1:13, 14. This list includes such familiar individuals from among Jesus' personal disciples as Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, Mary the Lord's mother, and Jesus' own brothers. Indeed Luke gives the total number of believers as "about a hundred and twenty" (Acts 1:15). In His high priestly prayer, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel According to John, Je-



sus had prayed for these disciples. In that prayer He declares that they belong to God, that He has kept them (except the son of perdition), and that they are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. He prays for their sanctification through the truth, and He declares their mission to the world. This witnessing mission of His disciples is reiterated in the commission of Acts 1:8.

Thus the recipients of the first Christian Pentecost were the saved disciples of Jesus Christ, separated from the world and intended to become the living evangelists of Christ's lordship to all men subsequent to their Pentecostal experience. And thus Pentecost cannot be properly regarded as "the birthday" of the Christian Church, as some have asserted. Christ had brought the Church into existence during the days of His flesh. He had called out and saved these dis-

ciples who now waited for Pentecost. They constituted His Church before Pentecost. Rather, from an institutional and ceremonial standpoint Pentecost may be regarded as the consecration, dedication, or inauguration of the Church of Christ. Thus, it was the body of living believers in Christ who experienced the Pentecost of Acts 2:1-4.

#### SUMMARY

Briefly in summary, we have noted that historically Pentecost was the second of the three great Hebrew-Jewish annual feasts, that it originated as a harvest festival culminating the harvest season, and was variously called the *Feast of Weeks*, *The Feast of Harvest*, and *The Day of First Fruits*. It has been observed that this feast occurred fifty days after the Passover and came to be identified

with the giving of the Law. It has been further observed that it was the most inclusive of all the Hebrew-Jewish feasts, thus signifying the universality of the Christian Pentecost, of which it was the foreshowing. Again, it has become clear that the historical Pentecost of the second chapter of Acts, occurring as it did fifty days after the Atonement made on the cross of Christ, was the culmination of the redemptive scheme. Finally, we have noted that the recipients of this initial Christian Pentecost were not the unconverted peoples of the world, but the genuinely converted disciples of Christ who in the upper room in Jerusalem awaited in faith the fulfillment of Christ's promise, "Ye shall be endued with power from on high." Upon those disciples had fallen, as Peter explained in Acts 2:16-21 (A.S.V.), the fulfillment of Joel's divinely inspired prophecy.

. . . this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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## Part II

# Problems in the Growth of a Sect into a Church (Continued from May-June Issue)

By Rev. Eric E. Jorden\*

IV. We come now to the main point of this paper. We have seen a phenomenal growth in our church. We have come to a place of respectability among denominations. We are face to face with two great issues. Shall we continue to grow both in spirituality and in numbers? Or shall we do as many of other great denominations have done, coming up as sects as we have, becoming a church, only to settle down to a life of ease and splendor in Zion. The facing of these great issues leads us to seek an answer to two major questions: (A) What are the dangers that confront us as a church? And (B) What can we do to avoid them?

A. First, then, what are the dangers that confront us as a denomination?

1. Since this paper is based largely upon Reed's study of the church, I think *it is only fair to give his viewpoint first*. It should be stated that these dangers are not listed one, two, three by Reed. They are listed one, two, three by me after a study of the cumulative evidence offered by Reed. The latter feels we are now coming into the period of accommodation. We are going through the normal social process; we are less the extreme sect-type of 1908. Although we are still a conflict group, there is not the conflict consciousness now noticeable in our ranks.

a. The first danger then is that of *accommodation*. Reed says the tech-

nique known as accommodation to the church-type of denomination is noticeable in several ways.

(1) Membership is greatly stressed. "The question of membership is the big question for the pastor to answer at the District Assembly." I think we are all aware of the truth of this statement. Members are being taken into the church who are *not* Nazarenes at heart simply so we won't show a decrease. We face real danger at this point. As pastors we must insist on those who join our ranks being genuinely converted, and if not already sanctified, being thoroughly in sympathy with the doctrine and definitely seeking the experience. We can insist with Wesley on believers going on unto perfection. The reason for much of the change of attitudes within our church is due to the fact that too few of our members enjoy real heart holiness. Some of these get into the "saddle" in a local congregation and only spiritual havoc can result. Membership for members alone constitutes a real danger point in our church history.

(2) Then, Reed, says, less attention is given to worldliness. This is evidenced by a careful reading of the early periodicals with those of the present time. Articles against tobacco, dress, fashion, and secret societies were in abundance in our earlier history. In 1940 Reed says the *Herald of Holiness* had only an occasional article that could be classified under the heading of worldliness.

Since one of the basic religious

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causes of our rise was the revolt among the holiness people against worldliness in the church, we can well afford to give careful attention to this whole question. I will have more to add to that point later.

(3) A general increase in church finances makes it possible to pay better salaries. Hence there is a temptation to a greater concern to please where economic rewards are at stake. Here again we need to let the searchlights of heaven be trained in upon us as leaders. Let us ask ourselves the question, Am I influenced in my preaching ministry and my pastoral ministry by economic considerations? May God help us to be honest at this point. Truly, the love of money is the root of all evil. And how much more serious when it affects the ministry!

(4) Then, this accommodation is noticeable in the concessions that second and third generation Nazarenes are willing to make over religious doctrine. As second and third generation members we are not so "conflict conscious" over the "secondness" of sanctification as were our forebears. We are apt to be influenced by the spirit of the age to a more "charitable viewpoint" as some would call it—not to insist on the necessity of a second definite work of grace, both scripturally and experientially, as did our fathers. I think we can well afford to take heed at this point. Without being a legalist, I think we need to insist, not only that our laity seek and obtain this precious experience, but also that our leadership definitely be "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Our *Manual* (p. 182) calls for all our teachers in our colleges to have this experience—not just believe in it, but enjoy it. We can be ever so correct in our theology, yet ever so distant in our experience. To insist on the "secondness" of sanctification is bound

to mean conflict—the "old man" doesn't die easy; he always opposes both the preaching and the experiencing of sanctification. But our insistence at this point is our only safeguard to a successful propagation of the truth. Reed is entirely correct in sensing this as one of our dangers in the process of accommodation to a church type.

b. Another danger detected by Reed is, I think, in his study of our form of government. The form of government from 1908 to 1919 was not altogether satisfactory. There was the question whether a general superintendent could stop the election of a district superintendent if the former was not in favor of the latter. Of course, the issue was settled amicably, but the principle of centralization of authority rose again in 1940 when an attempt was made to do away with the present representative General Board and substitute in its place a General Board composed of all the district superintendents. That proposal was killed, largely due to an alarmed laity within the Assembly, according to Reed. "While the 1940 *Manual* still maintains that the Church of the Nazarene has a representative polity, it may also be said that centralized control has greatly increased from 1919 to 1940."

2. Clark adds his weight to a possible danger which we face when he writes: "Growth in wealth and bigness undermines the democratic spirit and eliminates simplicity in ecclesiastical polity. There emerges a need for overhead boards, general officers, and money to support a benevolent program. A distinction comes about between connectional leaders and the plain ministry and the people. In some quarters jealousies and distrust result. Many feel uncomfortable in the presence of machinery, for which

they find little warrant in Scripture, and they chafe under the demands made upon them."

We are ready to acknowledge the danger foreseen here. We are constantly being specialed from district and general headquarters. Not that the demands may not be legitimate, but the pressure placed on our people gives rise to feelings of revolt. It would seem, at least on the surface, that an overall acceptance of the 10 per cent program for missions would help us at this point.

3. From a cumulative study of Reed and Clark, it would seem that we might add to these dangers mentioned the following:

a. We face the danger of an overbalancing in our educational program. This in several directions.

(1) As the theological or Bible schools tend to become colleges of liberal arts, there is the danger of our ministerial students substituting "an education" or "a college degree" for the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. This danger becomes less apparent the longer this person remains in the ministry. For one cannot be a true minister without depending upon God. It is entirely possible for a good education to become an asset in the Kingdom; the danger is that we substitute the teachings of man for the "wisdom that cometh from above."

(2) Another direction this trend might take is an overbalance in our thinking toward religious education and away from religious experience. As long as we have old-fashioned revivals such as we have all experienced in our college days, and as long as we have at the helm godly leaders, with their sanctified intellects second to none in the world, we don't need to fear. But let us once start substituting religious education for religious experience in our churches and we shall soon have our rolls filled with

nominal Nazarenes and the glory can't help but depart.

b. We face the danger of misplaced emphasis—veering away from a program of vital evangelism. This likewise can tend in several directions.

(1) First, we face the danger of substituting "program" for "power" or the glory of God in our services of worship. Our earlier history is characterized by a spontaneity of personal expression. Those churches which periodically have "break up" services are more truly Nazarene than those where formality abounds. It is not that we be guilty of fanaticism in our services (and the dear Lord knows we are a million miles from that in many of our churches), but if we are to maintain our enthusiasm we must maintain our freedom.

The lack of freedom in many of our churches is traceable to several causes. First, because the percentage of the "elite" in our churches is increasing and pastors and people allow the "fear of man" to quench the "Spirit of God." Second, because too great a percentage of the average congregation is unsanctified. They may profess, but not too many possess. And where carnality abounds, freedom is extinct. There is only one solution to this problem. We must get the glory down and keep it down, first on our own souls and then on the people of our congregations. Many former members of our churches are now frequenting Pentecostal churches because of a lack of old-fashioned fire burning upon the altars of our hearts and our churches. Our greatest danger as a church is not fanaticism but formalism. One sure sign of the trend toward formalism in any church is the lack of congregational participation in the services.

(2) Second, we face the danger of veering away from a program of vital evangelism by embarking on a pro-

gram of expansion. I am thinking now of the tendency in our church structures and material assets. There was a time when we were so much on fire we gladly rented an old store building across the tracks and went into a protracted meeting. I am not in favor of staying in the category of "across the tracks," but I do say that with our program of evangelism we are not geared for either large churches or fine churches. By "fine," I mean the "cathedral type." In the first place, it is not consistent with our theory of evangelism to spend huge sums of money for big churches, paid choirs, and what have you. Our theory is to give the gospel in the same measure as we have received it. It is this inner passion that constrains us. When we spend huge sums on ourselves as a church we are not being consistent with our teaching of holiness.

In the second place, our program of evangelism is not consistent with large churches, period! I do not know just what the "ideal" membership would be—that would depend, I think, on the caliber of the leadership of that church to some extent. But there is a point in membership beyond which the individual is lost to a place of service, where he has no, and consequently does not feel any, sense of responsibility; a place where he becomes a sponge and not a giver. (I do not here refer to finances. One may be a good giver financially and have no soul passion at all.) Our general superintendents agree at this point—large memberships comparatively speaking are not conducive to our type of propagation. We grow faster when we "swarm" periodically. Many of our larger churches should have swarmed long ago—failing to "swarm," they have killed the old mother bee—the mother bee of "Be aggressive." No church loses by "swarming." It may lose numerically

in that particular spot, but the Church of the Nazarene would be bigger and healthier if our larger churches would swarm. (I'm not so sure but what that might be helpful to the one I pastor!) It is at this point that we as pastors need to reinvestigate the reason for our calling as ministers of the gospel.

(3) Third, we are in danger of veering away from our program of vital evangelism in substituting a "meeting" for a revival. The days were when we had protracted meetings. The main reason why we do not see the results we ought to today is not because God has changed, not simply because of "situations" in the church, but because pastor and people alike are just as lazy as they dare to be and still be Christian. How often do we "fast and pray" for a mighty outpouring of God's Spirit? I think we need to do some serious thinking right along this line. I know the "spirit of the age" is against us, but greater is He that is for you than he that is against you.

Summarizing these dangers, we may say that what we face in our church today is formalism, churchism, educationalism, connectionalism, worldliness, and a spirit of apathy concerning the "secondness" of sanctification.

B. What can we do to avoid these dangers? I have already tried to face them realistically as they were mentioned. But there are a few concrete suggestions I should like to offer by way of conclusion.

1. First, I feel we need a unity of opinion among the leaders of the church on what we call nonessentials. Our *Manual* does not explicitly define the term worldliness. Yet one of the basic causes for our emergence was the revolt against "the world in the church." I recognize and realize that you cannot legislate righteous living. But I do feel that if there were a unity

of opinion among our leaders concerning "nonessentials," our church would be much more spiritual and make much more progress. Let me enlarge a little on the problem as I see it.

a. The divergence of opinion on the nonessentials has resulted in confusion in the minds of the laity, and that quite legitimately. Allow me to illustrate. I have always been taught that the heart of the church is against the use of "make-up." Without ever preaching against it from the pulpit, I have, in instructing members, told them that I could not receive them into the church with that on. But what does the laity think when other pastors take the position that moderation in this particular area is acceptable, stating that it has no relation to Christian experience. This divergence of opinion can't help but confuse the laity. Who is wrong and who is right? Have we changed our attitude as a church toward certain nonessentials, or is it just an expected accompaniment to our emergence as a church. My personal opinion in the matter is that based upon experience. I have noticed that whenever a person comes to the altar and really prays through the nonessentials take care of themselves. They automatically clean up. Now if that is the standard the person feels necessary to get right with God, I feel that is the standard we ought to uphold to them. I do not say we need legislation; all I say is that we need a unity of opinion among our leaders on such things as jewelry, mixed bathing, etc. The time was when we were noted for being plain. And being plain doesn't mean we have to be dowdy.

b. The general laxity of opinion among leaders at this point has resulted in some very evident tendencies in our church. And some of these tendencies are costing us greatly in

our spirit of fellowship and general spiritual life.

2. Second, we need a unity of opinion among our leadership concerning the divorced person and our church. As Reed indicated, many divorced people are now in the church who do not have scriptural grounds for divorce. There is a variety of opinion among pastors at this point. Either we need to stay by the *Manual* or else go to work and have the *Manual* changed. Do the latter and you will have to change the Word of God. Perhaps the change had best be in our attitude as leaders. We can't expect unity among our people if there isn't unity of opinion on this question among our leadership.

3. We need a unity of opinion among our leadership concerning the ethics of holiness. While I can't possibly go into detail, let me mention three areas.

a. We need a unity of opinion among leaders concerning the ethical relations among pastors. A few questions will suffice to sharpen the point.

Is it right for pastors to allow disgruntled members of another church to hold offices in his church? That this has been done and is still being done is common knowledge.

Is it right for one pastor to "steal sheep" from another? We need some definite ethical standards among us right there.

b. We need more unity of opinion concerning a pastor's relation to his people. Is it right for some pastors to neglect their sheep the way some do? It can't help but hurt the flock.

c. We need a unity of opinion concerning the relation of people to people. It seems to me some pastors allow their people to get away with anything short of murder and still allow them to be "members in good stand-

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# Come Before Winter

By Milton J. Peden\*

**I**N THE COMMUNITY in which I lived during the war with Japan a young man was summoned by his draft board. When he appeared it was discovered that he was totally illiterate. Now if it had happened in some places this would not have been remarkable. Here it was. The community was blessed with a good school of high scholastic standing, well equipped, and under capable teachers. For nine months each year it had stood open and ready to serve him. And the young man had lived all his life within a mile of the school. Without excusing the officials for failure to apply the compulsory school law, we are forced to say that his was a supreme example of *wasted opportunity*. The right use of opportunities is so vital a theme that surely it would be well for us to consider it thoroughly.

In the fourth chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy we have a wonderful picture of "Paul the Aged." He is old in years, although we do not know just how old, but he is aged by something more than the passage of time. The bent form, the scarred face and shoulders, the wrinkled brow tell us of his suffering. They tell of the time he was stoned and left for dead, of the times that he was beaten, of the hours he spent in the stocks, and of his days on dusty roads and storm-tossed seas. That air of intense concentration reminds us of his long preoccupation with his work and the "care of all the churches" which came upon him daily.

Yet in spite of his bent form and gray hair, there is still a fire in the eyes as he looks out and a suggestion

of vital energy from within in his movements that tell us that Paul the Aged is still Paul the Apostle, the same man who met Christ on the road to Damascus.

He is writing a letter in his prison that day. The long Italian summer is still with him. The sun is hot overhead and garments are quickly wet with sweat. Yet there is a suggestion of fall in the air. The dew is heavy on the grass in the morning, and sometimes when the sun is flecked with clouds the air seems to grow momentarily chill, as if to tell us that winter is not far away.

So Paul writes on: "Timothy, preach the word constantly, in season and out of season. If you don't teach them now, the time will come when they won't listen to you. Do your best. My ministry is almost over. There remains but little for me here, but a crown of righteousness there. Come to me as quickly as you can. There is no one with me except Luke. Demas deserted me. When you come, bring that coat that I left at Troas. No one was with me when I had my hearing in the court—but the Lord was there!" He writes more slowly now, remembering as he does various friends; and then again a chill comes over the room. The thin-blooded old man shivers in the gloomy cell. "Timothy, do your best to come before winter."

I do not know whether Timothy heeded this message or not. But if he did not come, then it is probable that he never saw Paul again in the flesh. It was his last opportunity.

There is a note of urgency that runs through this whole passage. "Be instant in season, out of season." "For

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the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." "The time of my departure is at hand." "Do thy diligence to come before winter." It is always so when we consider our opportunities. Act quickly lest the opportunity be lost. Dr. Maier quotes in a sermon a Canadian Department of Agriculture bulletin which says that one week's delay in planting wheat after the earliest possible moment means a 30 per cent loss; two weeks, a 40 per cent loss; four weeks, a 50 per cent loss. I know little of Canadian wheat, but I know that every delay in following up our opportunities means loss to us.

For many of these delays no subsequent action can atone. No later rush will recover for us the lost ground. An employee of a factory was asked why it was that he was constantly late, although he lived next door. "Just look at Jim; he lives three miles away, and he is never late." "I know," replied the employee, "but if Jim starts late he hurries, while if I start late I'm already here." No later hurrying can replace time already lost.

Why is it that so many of us miss our opportunities? One reason is that the opportunities seem small. Our Lord told once of the men who received varying sums of money from their Lord to invest and use. One man buried the sum that was entrusted to him. The point we usually overlook is that it was the man with the smallest sum. Yet, the greatest temptation of life is to fail to use and develop our abilities because at the outset they seem small. The world is filled with Moseses who complain of being of slow speech and fail to see how those little gifts can be used in great causes.

It is not by being the greatest, and holding the highest position, that we play our part. It is by doing the best we can in the situation in which we

are placed; not sighing over great gifts which we do not have, but using those faithfully which Providence has given to us:

*If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,*

*Be a shrub in the valley—but be  
The best little shrub by the side of the hill;*

*Be a bush if you can't be a tree.*

*If you can't be a highway, then just  
be a trail;*

*If you can't be a sun, be a star.  
It isn't by size that you win or fail,  
But the best of whatever you are!*

In the second place, some of us lose our opportunities because we are looking backward at those that are gone instead of looking forward to find new chances. We need to follow Paul's example. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

An old Chinese peasant was walking along with a stick across his shoulder with a big jar of hot soup hanging from the stick. In turning a corner the jar of soup hit a wall and broke. The old peasant walked on. A bystander called out, "You broke your jar!" "I know it," he replied, and walked on. "But you never looked back!" "The jar was broken and the soup lost; why look back?"

According to a story a man troubled with failing eyesight, after trying various remedies, went to a chiropractor. The doctor of chiropractic gave him a treatment, and immediately his sight improved. Nevertheless, he returned to the chiropractor about a month later in a great state of alarm.

"What's the matter? Can't you see all right?"



"Yes, my sight is as good as ever, but I have practically lost my memory. I forget everything—where I've been, what I've done, what I went after—just everything!"

The doctor proceeded to examine him and then said: "This is the strangest case I have ever seen. I never saw one quite like it. I can give you a treatment that will restore your memory; but if I do, you are going to lose your sight again. Now, do you want the treatment?"

"No, sir! I would rather see where I'm going than remember where I've been."

Sometimes we miss our opportunities because we concentrate on the trivial and neglect the major issues. When I was in college I heard Dr. G. Ray Jordan speak on "Majoring on Minors." I have forgotten much that he said, but that expressive title has stuck with me, and I have seen many *major on minors*. The old prophet's parable speaks of that: "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

What opportunities do I have in mind? One is our opportunities for spiritual greatness, the chance to be and to do our best. There are in this chapter both a warning and a word of comfort. There is a warning to those who have begun well and who, perhaps, pride themselves upon that beginning. There is a young man mentioned here who is mentioned more than once in Paul's epistles and in every other place with approbation. He heads the list of those who were Paul's younger associates, but now Paul writes, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed."

But there is a world of comfort for those who have stumbled in the way. There is mentioned another who had made a rather poor start. John Mark

had lost his courage once and abandoned his work. Paul had then refused to use him on the next missionary expedition. Mark is not the same, however. He has overcome that lack of stability. He can be counted on. So Paul writes, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

Then we miss the opportunity to work for the salvation and spiritual welfare of others. It is an opportunity that the passage of time and the changing of personalities quickly take away. Consider how quickly children change. Today they are ready to listen to the truth we tell: tomorrow the opportunity is gone.

*I found a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day,  
And as my fingers pressed it still  
It moved and yielded to my will.  
I came again when days had passed.  
The lump of clay was hard at last;  
The form I gave it still it bore,  
But I could change that form no more.*

*I took a piece of living clay  
And gently formed it day by day,  
And molded it with my power and  
art,  
A young child's soft and yielding  
heart.  
I came again when years had gone.  
It was a man I looked upon;  
He still that early impress bore,  
And I could change him never more.*

—T. YATES

We make a mistake, however, if we limit it to children. All are changing. All are passing on. If you would be heard, then speak today. As now is the acceptable time for others, it is for ourselves. Today is the day of salvation. Use the opportunity that belongs to you now. Come before winter.

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# Halfway to Pentecost

By Jack W. Moore\*

**I**N THE CHURCH's calendar, we are this week halfway to Pentecost.

For our consideration this morning the question is raised, Are we in our spiritual pilgrimage in an analogous position? Are we as individuals, or a corporate group, living halfway to Pentecost?

The morning lesson indicates that St. Paul had found at Ephesus a group of twelve disciples of the Baptist who were living far below their spiritual privileges. The passage contains certain difficulties because of its brevity, but it is clear that these men had received the message of John and had been baptized as his followers.

Paul must have soon discerned a lack in their lives of the deep joy and assurance which mark those possessed by Christ's Spirit. He instructed them, in order to perfect what was lacking in their faith; then he baptized them in the name of Jesus, and when he had laid hands on them, they all received the Holy Spirit.

*But before Paul came, they were at the halfway house.* In this respect they were like the scribe who came to Jesus with a friendly acceptance of Jesus' treatment of the greatest commandment. Of him, the best that Jesus could say was, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." To be eager to learn, to be sympathetic in attitude, is not the same as submission to the kingdom of God and His total will for our lives.

Of special seriousness is this matter to us who are rising ministers in His Church. The Master himself did not begin His ministry until after the baptism with the Spirit. Is the servant

above his Lord? Dare we allow pockets of conscious rebellion to live on in our lives? Dare we bypass the Spirit's cleansing, and power for carrying out the commission that is ours?

To remain "not far from," "halfway, to," Pentecost is tragic. But there is another view of this position. To be halfway is good if we are moving in the right direction.

1. *What is the meaning of Pentecost and the coming of the Spirit?*

At Pentecost the group of believers were constituted a living Church, the body for the continuing ministry of the risen Lord. The Spirit's coming gave them power for testifying to the Resurrection before a hostile world; it purified their hearts from inordinate self-love and fear. Their joyous assurance and their spontaneous generosity were hallmarks of the Spirit's presence.

2. *Now, what of the manner of His coming?*

We surely will not argue to the breaking of fellowship over the particular way in which He comes. As a matter of fact, the Acts records a variety of ways. He came to some at baptism. At Pentecost He came suddenly with spectacular concomitants. To Cornelius and his house He came in the midst of Peter's sermon. At Ephesus, as at Samaria, He came with the laying on of hands.

In the ongoing life of the Christian community, *the churches* have tended to regularize the Spirit's advent through the sacraments and ordinances. The sects have emphasized spontaneity and the subjective crisis aspect of His activity within the individual. *John Wesley* believed in both and tried to hold on to both, a task which

\*A chapel talk given at Duke University by Jack W. Moore—a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

has never proved easy. *But when the regular channels* of grace appeared to choke off the full flow of God's grace, Wesley ventured into the fields and cottages with his gospel of personal salvation. The results are well known to all of us. *Whereas* the church had provided grace for all the many crises of life, Wesley focused his attention on the central crises of the conversion of the unbeliever and the sanctification of the believer, both effected by the Holy Spirit. This is not the whole story and there are admitted difficulties involved in the theological formulation of the message and experience of the Wesleyan revival. But it is not unique in this respect. This by the providence of God is my tradition and my conviction.

But however the Spirit may operate in any given tradition, the matter of vital import is that His power and presence shall be effective in the life of the Church and in each one of us.

3. *To this end, our seeking must be definite.*

When we have admitted that His operations do vary, we must not take for granted His presence. To desire the power and cleansing of His presence, and to seek such deliberately, is not to be considered a necessary expression of egoism; it may well be the promptings of the Spirit working in us already.

As Gilbert Rowe used to say, "While the Quakers wait for the Spirit to move them, the most of us move, believing that the Spirit will be in our activity."

The late dean emeritus of our divinity school, Elbert Russell, prayed definitely for years for a profound spiritual awakening on the Duke campus. For whatever fruits of his prayers are now evident, we can be thankful. We join our prayers with his for a full measure of the Spirit's moving on our campus.

4. The coming of the Spirit is a deeply personal affair and touches the privacy of our inner solitude. We rightly resent dogmatizing at this point and shrink with horror at the sacrilege which identifies the operation of the Spirit with any abnormality of body or spirit. But the abuses must only hasten us to the kind of renunciation and faith which brings the Spirit of Christ more fully into our lives and hence to others.

5. The coming of the Spirit is God's present activity in the world. In the words of Peter to souls thirsty for the Spirit, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Hogan Yancey, a senior at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, preaching last month at the Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church here in Durham, told of his own experience of the grace of God. Born in the rough hill country of Kentucky, he availed himself of such meager privileges of church life as were available to him. In college he took seriously his pursuit of truth and majored in philosophy. He was the kind of boy who, while in the army, would take his week-end leaves to go to the nearest library and bring back a suitcase full of books on philosophy and ethics. But neither his search nor his war experiences brought him the satisfactions of his deepest longings. When he was discharged after the war, he continued his search, though a deep gloom and discouragement began to settle over him. Brooding over his failure, he became dejected and his dejection turned into despair. In short, he found himself committed to a mental institution. There his depression deepened. One day he found himself stretched prone on the floor of his

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# What the Bible Says About Eternal Security

## Part 3

By W. W. Clay

**A**ND WE CAN meet God's conditions. God never was unjust enough to demand a requirement that He did not give the ability to fulfill. Take that familiar passage: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (I John 3:9). This scripture is incorrectly translated, for the word "cannot" in English implies impossibility, something the Greek here does not imply. Literally it reads, "and he has power not to sin." The Greek word here for "has power" is the verb form of the same word used in Acts 1:8: "Ye shall receive power." The Christian who sets his will to do God's will will be given "power not to sin." This is the fulfillment of the old prophecy: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: . . . And I will put my spirit within you, and *cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*" (Ezek. 36:26, 27).

And so while neither Satan nor any other power can take us out of Christ's hand, the fact that we may deliberately take ourselves out of His protecting hand is shown by the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:4-7). The lost sheep had once been in the fold—the word "astray" (Matt. 18:12) indicates this. As long as the sheep was in the fold or with the shepherd, it was safe. It was unsafe only when it left the fold or the circle of his protection, and then it was away from all that was

symbolized by the expression "in his hand."

Christ himself gives the interpretation of this parable. He declares that when this sheep was out of the fold it was not secure—it was in great danger, so much so that the shepherd risked his life to find it. What this danger was, Jesus tells us in the tenth chapter of John, using the strongest metaphorical language to describe its danger. Satan is portrayed as a wolf, the symbol of death to the sheep. Satan is also depicted as a thief who would not only rob Christ of His sheep but would "kill" and "destroy." The only possible meaning of "kill" is to deprive of life; and the only life that Christ's sheep have is eternal life. Christ also uses the word "destroy," indicating that just as a sheep that was destroyed could never get back into the fold, so with Christ's sheep. That word "destroy" agrees with the statement in John 15:6 in declaring that all relationship whether as sheep or as branches can be totally destroyed, never to be possessed again.

But notice that the sheep was not lost from the fold because of the carelessness of the shepherd, who is Christ, nor because Satan had forced his way in and by force taken it out. It left the fold of its own volition. The Saviour, as in the parable of the vine and the branches, introduced in this parable a factor that differed from real life. In real life no sheep was ever lost except through the powerlessness or carelessness of the shep-

herd. But our Shepherd is neither weak nor careless. Just as we as branches of the vine can fail to abide in Him, so as His sheep we have power to stray from His fold.

There are three other misstatements of doctrine that are always associated with the teaching of eternal security that should be considered here. These relate to their teaching about "standing" and "state," to their wrong explanation of the finished work of Christ, and to their teaching that believers are not under obligation to keep the law of God.

By the terms "standing" and "state," they refer to the implications of that imaginary "robe." If a believer sins, they say, his heart is unclean. He may be indulging in the blackest outward sin, or even repudiating Christ. That is his state. But since he has on the robe of Christ's righteousness, they say Christ sees him, not as impure and sinful, but as His own dear child, spotless and pure. That is his standing. There is not a shread of evidence in the Bible to support this. It grew out of the vagaries of the teaching about that fictitious imputed "robe."

The doctrine of the finished work of Christ is one of the most precious and fundamental in the Bible. But eternal security teachers give it a meaning for which there is no warrant in the Bible. They say that when a person believes on Christ for salvation, not only are his past sins forgiven, but all future sins and rebellion and unbelief are automatically forgiven before they are committed, and this without repentance or faith. Oh, yes, they say we should repent, but if we do not we will go to heaven just the same, since these sins were covered by the finished work of Christ. When Thomas A. Edison was near death he made the remark to someone, "It is all beautiful beyond." Although Edison

had paid no attention to religion, a prominent eternal security paper assumed that he was looking into heaven when he said this. Said this writer: "In spite of the agnosticism of his later years, it is entirely possible that Mr. Edison accepted Christ in his early youth." And so this man says that Edison went to heaven in spite of his agnosticism, because in the past he had once believed, even though he died in unbelief and rejection of the Saviour.

The finished work of Christ can relate only to two things. First, that the salvation that Christ came to earth to provide was finished in every detail when He died on the cross. The debt of sin for every person that ever lived was provisionally paid—the full purchase price for his redemption from sin, death, and the judgment. Second, the finished work of Christ means that, since all that was needed for our salvation was done, nothing that we could do of good works could help in our salvation. But if it were to mean that the deliberate sins of believers were automatically forgiven without repentance, then everybody's sins would be unconditionally forgiven, for Christ suffered the full penalty for everyone's sins. As proof of eternal security these teachers are fond of repeating, "All my sins, past, present, and future, were atoned for at the Cross." That is true, not only of the sins of believers, but also of those of the worst sinners. Nowhere in the Bible does it intimate that the finished work of Christ includes the automatic forgiveness of heart rebellion and willful unbelief after having been born again.

Another error emphasized by eternal security teachers is that the law of God is no longer binding on a believer. To try to prove this they quote the words of Paul: "But now we are delivered from the law" (Rom. 7:6),

and, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14, 15). But this refers only to this, that believers were not under any of the provisions of the Mosaic law, that they were not under obligation to obey that law with its sacrifices, offerings, circumcision, and all other observances of its ritual. This was the storm-center in Paul's day, and gave trouble to all the early believers. You remember that the first Christian council was called to consider this very question (Acts 15:1-21). But none of the statements of Paul as to the law nor any other in the Bible have any reference to releasing us from the obligation to do the will of God.

As we have already seen, God foretold that He would give us a salvation that would enable us to keep His commandments. He declares that if we are born of God we have "power not to sin" (I John 3:9). Christ declares: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). And this was spoken not only of those who were Jews, but it is God's universal demand, and applies to all dispensations. It will be in force "in that day" (v. 22) when fitness for heaven is tested. Note the present tense—"is doing"—making it apply not only to the will of God in believing for salvation but to a continual doing of all His known will. That is why the Bible says, "Blessed are they that do [present tense] his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). In the light of these scriptures that tell of God's demand for us to do His will, and of His provision to give us the ability to do that will, what right have we to expect an entrance into heaven, even though we have once believed in Je-

sus, if we go into the presence of God with a heart attitude of willful disobedience to His will?

In fact, God makes this question of whether or not you are doing the will of God the test as to whether you have been born again. He says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil . . . Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . . In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (I John 3:8-10).

Then there is another scripture so contradictory to the theory of eternal security that its teachers are trying hard to explain away its plain significance. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6). Eternal security teachers try to evade the force of this scripture by saying it does not apply to born-again Christians but to unsaved people who have been awakened but who are refusing to accept Christ. Let us look closely at it and see.

While the word "enlightened" might be construed to refer to sinners under conviction, yet remember that this is one of the favorite terms God uses to describe His children, as: "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). But the next phrase is very definite: "And have tasted of the heavenly gift." What this gift is, is told us in Rom. 6:23. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And the word "taste" in the Bible as in nature always implies such a contact with the thing tasted that we actually partake of it, and in partaking

sense the thing tasted. When the Bible says Jesus "tasted death" it means that He really died (Heb. 2:9). Peter, speaking of Christians as "newborn babes," says, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Pet. 2:3). It has that same sense of participation in v. 5 of this chapter in Hebrews: "And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." This implies not just reading the Word of God, or hearing it, but receiving it into our hearts, bringing a divine thrill at the prospect of the coming of the Saviour in the clouds of heaven and a pull toward His glorious coming kingdom.

Then too note the phrase, "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." Both the Schofield Bible and Dr. Pettingill pervert this scripture by saying that the Greek word translated "partaker" means only "going along with." They try to give it this meaning by looking only at its derivation. But neither in Greek nor in English can you determine the meaning of a word from its derivation alone. The English word "understand" in its derivation means literally "to stand under." If that were the true meaning of "understand," then the only ones who would really understand the Bible would be those who stood directly under a Bible! The truth is that the real meaning of a word can be determined only by its use in other literature, and specially by its use in other parts of the New Testament. And this Greek word in all other parts of the Bible signifies an actual partaking. For instance, just six verses before the one we are now studying, this word is translated "useth," "for every one that useth milk" (Heb. 5:13). You do not "use" milk by "going along with" it, or by having it beside you, but by actually partaking of it. So the expression, "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" can re-

fer only to those who have actually received the Holy Spirit into their hearts (Rom. 8:9).

But practically all commentators agree that the scripture we are now studying is not speaking of ordinary backsliding, but to a total apostasy, to a settled rejection of Christ as Saviour, to a repudiation of Him as Master, and to a final decision never again to believe on Him. In other words, it is speaking of the unpardonable sin. And it declares that even though the one who does it may once have been a partaker of the Holy Ghost, he has sinned so far that repentance and restoration to his former state as a child of God are, to use its exact words, "impossible." This, like the parable of the vine and the branches (John 15:6), and the parable of the sheep in danger of destruction by the wolf and the thief (John 10:10-12), tells us that those who once were believers may finally be lost in hell even though they once had the gift of eternal life.

Then in that wonderful prayer of Jesus in the seventeenth chapter of John is the declaration that one was lost whom Jesus once claimed as His own, Judas Iscariot. When he was chosen as one of the twelve he must have been sincere and earnest or Jesus would not have picked him as one of His representatives. And the Bible emphatically states this. In the Psalms we read the prophecy, "Mine own familiar friend hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psa. 41:9). And Jesus himself said that this prophecy was fulfilled in Judas (John 13:18). Jesus could see into every heart, and if Judas had been a traitor and a demon-possessed man when Jesus first chose him, Jesus never could have "trusted" in him. And Jesus does not leave us in doubt as to the standing of Judas when he was first chosen. In His high priestly prayer Jesus said:

"Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12). Note that Jesus here says that all of His special twelve were given him by the Father—and that Judas was included in those that were thus given Him. And of Judas Christ said, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me" (v. 6). Christ said He had lost Judas—how could He have lost Judas if Judas had not once been one of His own?

But some may say, What about the declaration of Jesus concerning Judas, "And one of you is a devil," or, as the Revised Version puts it, "is a demon" (John 6:70)? But this can only mean that Judas had turned away from Christ, and in so doing had forfeited his right to having his name written in heaven, for he was one of those whom Christ told to "rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20), and had become a "son of perdition," or "child of Satan." You remember that Jesus used even a stronger expression to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). Surely Jesus did not mean that Peter was Satan, or even that Peter had allowed Satan to enter his heart, but that Peter was speaking words that Satan had suggested to him. And if Judas was a demon at the time that Jesus chose him, how could it be true which was later spoken of him, "And after the sop, Satan entered into him" (John 13:27). If he really had been a demon he would have been possessed by Satan all the time. So, though Christ included Judas in the group that He declared had been given Him by the Father (John 17:12), and in the group that had their names written in heaven (Luke 10:20), yet because he had the right to choose his own destiny, in spite of all that Jesus could do, Judas was lost. The inspired Word says that after His

death "he went to his own place," and also that he went to that place, not because he was lost from the beginning, but "by transgression" (Acts 1:25). At least one eminent fundamentalist Baptist preacher, Dr. William Ward Ayer, has sensed this truth, and declared that had Judas repented as Peter did, and gone to Christ for forgiveness, Christ would have received him and saved him from a suicide's hell.

What then should be our attitude toward this theory of eternal security, and toward the men who preach it? As was said in the beginning, let us appreciate the many splendid Christian people, both ministers and laymen, who hold to this theory, and thank God for their sincerity and loyalty to the gospel. Then, too, let us be patient with them, remembering that most of them have taken up with this doctrine because they have been taught this, and do not know of the many scriptures that contradict it. Yet after exercising all charity we must stick to the Bible and its plain declarations and not let the sincerity or piety of those who espouse it blind us to its danger. Do not be swept off your feet in their meetings by the fervor of these teachers, but familiarize yourselves with the scriptures that warn against this theory, so you can help others see its falsity and danger.

And let us not be so eager to argue as we are to testify to the glorious victory over sin Christ has given us. We have something better than continual defeat and having to comfort ourselves with the false hope that we cannot be lost or the equally false idea that we have to live a defeated life with Jesus having to cover our sins with a fictitious robe of some kind. Let us witness to the world that God can save us from sin and from sinning, and can cleanse our hearts from "all sin" (1 John 1:7).



A young Calvinist in Australia was tired of continual defeat in his efforts to live a Christian life. The best his teachers could tell him was that he never could live without sinning but that Christ was hiding all his sins under that fictitious "robe" so He would not see them. In the Philippines a sanctified young Nazarene soldier, recovering from injuries received in the recent war, was furloughed and ordered home by plane. By mistake he was placed on the wrong plane, so that when he landed instead of being in America he found himself in Australia, and that many weeks might elapse before he could get home. By chance—no, it was not chance, for God had planned it—this young man, Ted Hollingsworth, met A. A. Berg, the young Calvinist of Australia, went to church with him, and witnessed to the reality and power of holiness; and Berg sought and found the Holy Spirit in sanctifying power and entered the life of victory. He too began witnessing and, though ostracized by his old church acquaintances, kept on. Still other Calvinists, both laymen and ministers who were hungry for a victorious Christian life, began to enter into this experience. And although this was but a few years ago, today there is a fine group of Nazarene churches in Australia pastored by young men who had been accepting Calvinistic teaching, but were tired of the emptiness of eternal security and its attendant theories. So let us keep on witnessing to the power of a Christ who can save to the uttermost of sin as well as the uttermost of time and condition.

In the light of God's warnings, consider the fearful danger in backsliding. Three incentives to faithfulness are given us in these scriptures we have been considering. First, there is the loss of the "great recompence of reward." Next there is flashed before

us the red light of the danger of eternal destruction. And third, if you "deliberately" sin after you have been born again, the divine illumination will vanish, the gift of eternal life will be gone, and the Holy Spirit will take His departure from your heart. And what a fearful prospect for eternity—"a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27).

Then look at the wickedness of this sin. You have scorned the One who not only died on the cross for you, but who came personally to you, forgiving your many sins, working in you the miracle of the new birth, and giving you the greatest gift you can receive, the gift of eternal life. You not only have insulted this Saviour, but you have turned the Holy Spirit out of your heart. As the scripture we have been studying puts it, "hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29).

And look at the foolishness of it. You are trading off eternal values, heaven and all its joys, and the glorious prospect of living with Christ forever, for things that cannot satisfy. The best the world can give is but transient, and fails to satisfy. Years ago a miner in Colorado sold a mining claim for twenty dollars to get money to satisfy his thirst for drink. Yet later from that claim were taken millions in gold. Yet he was not so foolish as the one who sells his claim on eternal life for the cheap, unsatisfying things of the world.

So remember God's warning not to throw away your faith, and not to go out from the glorious privilege of being a child of God down to a Christless deathbed and into a backslider's

hell. For if you die in rebellion against the will of God and in rejection of Christ's right to your heart and life, you can never enter heaven. If there is a place in hell where anguish and remorse and woe are more poignant and intense than any other, the backslider will find that place. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall be he thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29).

And you do not need to backslide. Christ has promised to give you "power not to sin" (I John 3:9). If you will keep your faith in Christ "firm to the end" (Heb. 3:6), He will keep you as a part of His house, His true church. He has promised that He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). He will keep you in the midst of fiery trial (I Pet. 4:12, 13). As long as you stay in the fold, Christ will protect you from the wolf and the thief. No power can take you out of God's hand but your own deliberate will and act of rebellion. To the believing Christian there is no more precious promise than, "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28).

In closing, let me appeal to you not to go into sin after Jesus has saved you. There is no sorrow a minister can know that is deeper than when one of those for whose souls he is responsible lets go of his faith and goes back into the night of sin, on his way to a backslider's hell. And yet my own appeal to you ought not to have so great an influence with you as the call of the Saviour—an appeal from

the One who loves you best and senses your danger more than your pastor possibly could. Listen to His appeal: "Abide in me." And again in the words of the text, "Cast not away therefore your confidence." "Your confidence"—what an inclusive word! It means your faith, but more than your faith—your heart satisfaction and joy, your victory, your assurance, your hope of heaven. If you are now a backslider do not let this false doctrine of eternal security lull you to sleep till you are forever lost, but hasten back to the arms of a compassionate Saviour. For the sake of the "great recompence of reward," for the sake of the Master who loves you and is anxious to keep you from being eternally lost, and for the sake of your own immortal soul, "cast not away therefore your confidence."

### **Problems in the Growth of a Sect into a Church**

*(Continued from page 13)*

ing" and have positions of leadership in the church.

4. Lastly, we need a definite emphasis upon holiness as a "second" work of grace. As stated before, we may have the theory without having the experience. And if you and I don't possess it, how can we ever expect our people to seek it? A survey was sent out to our pastors a few years ago, the full results of which were never disclosed. The facts showed that too great a percentage of our own pastors did not preach the glorious gospel of full salvation more than once a year. If this ever reaches a majority in our church, we shall lose the sense of our mission. For God surely raised us up for one task and that alone—to preach the doctrine of holiness in all its purity and power and to exemplify it in our everyday living.

*(Continued on page 36)*

# "Ye Shall Receive—Ye Shall Be"

*By D. L. Niswander\**

**I**T is perfectly natural that in considering a study of the first four chapters of the Acts my eyes would fall almost naturally upon the eighth verse of the first chapter. There is no question in my mind but that this is the key which unfolds all of the mysteries and supernatural evidences of the Early Church.

In this kind of dissertation, it is necessary for us to consider first of all the teaching of our Master upon the work of the Holy Spirit and to have an understanding of that teaching which is revealed in the Old Testament as well. There is no pure understanding upon the subject of the Holy Spirit unless we have light upon the place and work which is peculiarly His. Since it is most evident that the Church of Jesus Christ is in almost gross ignorance upon the subject, it is well for us to consider the subject in the light of the most practical investigation. The second consideration is the words of the Saviour as they are thus committed to the disciples, who were momentarily so distressed and humiliated. The final consideration is based upon the practical results which were in evidence in the Early Church, and the realistic attitude in which they engaged in all practical performances.

Let me lay a few basic principles upon which we can lay the foundation. The entire Scriptures is filled with the evidences of a divine working. No pure faith in the absoluteness and perfections of God would minimize or ignore the teaching of the miraculous. The validity of the Christian testimony lies in its spiritual po-

tency. The past decades have endeavored to "drown out" this most basic doctrine of the Christian faith, and it is convincingly true that the Church of Jesus Christ has not profited by it. The entire teaching of Jesus Christ is at least essentially supernatural. It is difficult for me to understand how anyone can derive faith in Jesus Christ excepting as there is great faith in the miraculous demonstrations of Christ. It is the works of Christ that were meant to reveal His deity. Jesus said, "Believe me for my very work's sake." And then in His teaching of the Holy Spirit, He made bold the fact that these works were to be reproduced in the lives of His disciples as He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). The Christian life as Jesus presented it to us is impossible excepting through the operation of the Holy Spirit; and in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John, Jesus spoke at great length in explaining the office work of the Holy Spirit. A very significant fact in this teaching is that the Holy Spirit possesses divine personality. There can be no valid Christian experience excepting as there is strong belief in the Holy Spirit as personality. There can be no sincerity toward God unless we possess the disposition of obedience to God, and only the pattern of God's salvation makes this possible through the divine personality of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can cause us to be original in the theological and Christian sense. No work

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of God dare be humanized or rationalized, and there can be no practical experience excepting as we know the Holy Spirit literally to operate in our respective lives.

It is noteworthy that Jesus did not produce these teachings in a mystical form. All of the teachings on the subject are simply stated and directive. The person of the Holy Spirit is described as the Comforter or Paraclete. This "alongside of another" Personality, Jesus most certainly revealed to be in most intimate and realistic relationship. May I as a fundamental basis here point out the practical methods upon which the Holy Spirit is to operate. In the sixteenth chapter we read, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." The work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the spiritual and eternal factors which no human being by his own powers can understand. In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit is to create an atmosphere of God-consciousness which will so greatly impress the individual as to cause him to sense his individual responsibility before God. In this fact, the social gospel, so-called, is unable to produce like results. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to produce original and individual conviction of God. It is only this conviction which can produce a clear demarcation between the world-view and the God-view. Philip Brooks says: "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a continual protest against every constantly recurring tendency to separate God from the current world." This is a true fact; however, the Holy Spirit reveals the "world" to us so that we are attracted to the "better worldly" view.

For instance, sin cannot be classified and defined clearly on human assumptions. It is God's Holy Spirit who can put His finger upon sin. The same is true of righteousness. Our human calculations and understanding of righteousness are not valid excepting as there is divine conviction of righteousness. The work of the Holy Spirit is thus to be always a positive work which is superseding and above the realm of human ethics.

The late Dr. Samuel Chadwick of England has this to say: "The problems of the church are never solved by talking about them. The problems arise out of failures. We are acting as though the only remedy for decline were method, organization, and compromise."

In the history of the Church, it is evident that there is no logic which produces greater conviction upon individuals than the logic which the Holy Spirit produces. In the great revival upon our Hawaiian Islands in 1837, it is evident that the conviction of the Hawaiians was a godly conviction, and the most phenomenal revival was produced because individuals faced God individually. In reading the accounts of the revival, I am personally convinced that there was nothing frothy or emotional, but that the revival of that day was of God. There is no human explanation to the facts. Hearts were changed and transformed. The convicting process went on without the formal dictates of human rationale.

Jesus gave full instructions to His disciples concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, and called this experience an endowment "with power from on high." It was a clear promise from God the Father, and in their assembly in Jerusalem, although they were quite ignorant of what phenomena would take place, the believers knew that the Helper was to come. In the

last chapter of Matthew, Jesus stated that "all power" was in His command. On the basis of that fact, He gave the Great Commission, which He concluded with the promise that He would ever be with them. The great question that would naturally arise in their minds was whether or not the Holy Spirit could so inhabit them that they could be forever conscious of His presence. The Holy Spirit, in other words, was to make Jesus real to the individual. There can be no Christian experience excepting as this is true. There can be no realism in the Christian sense excepting as we know Jesus Christ intimately. Christianity would be altogether in the realm of mysticism, incredulity, and hypocrisy if this were not true. The problem of the Church is to produce this intimacy. Concerning this matter, Dr. Oswald Chambers has this to say: "The Holy Spirit is not a Substitute for Jesus. The Holy Spirit is all that Jesus was, and all that Jesus is, made real in personal experience now. The Holy Spirit alone makes Jesus real, the Holy Spirit alone expounds His cross, the Holy Spirit alone convicts of sin; the Holy Spirit alone does in us what Jesus did for us."

The divine order at the birthday of the Church was this: that the Holy Spirit was to indwell the Church and operate intrinsically instead of extrinsically as when before Jesus came. This intrinsic operation is always personal.

Fanaticism in Christianity always enters into our churches as we endeavor to produce a Christian-consciousness which still allows individuals to go on the basis of their five senses. It is only the Holy Spirit that can produce a life lived above the failures and weaknesses of man. Only He can give direction and purpose for God. Only He can create an honest and sincere life with God. All other

patterns are superficial and insincere from a theological point of view. We as ministers are committed to the task of making God real in the lives of individuals; and the process dare not be human—it must be spiritual.

The two criteria and standards which had to be met by the coming of the Holy Spirit which would prove the "true religion" in the theological sense are: (1) a standard of highest morality and spirituality; and (2) Christianity had to prove itself valid with resultant compulsion and compassion. In the light of these facts the Holy Spirit had to be the Enabler, so that individuals could produce the standards thereof. The two words significant in this verse are the words "power" and "witness"—the power to produce the life of God, and the compulsion to propagate the gospel of God.

The question before us is, "Did the coming of the Holy Spirit produce this in the lives of the disciples?" It most certainly did. This "dynamus" was not ecstatic, nor did it create hysteria among the disciples. The phenomenon was perfectly natural. The Holy Spirit's coming brought them into perfect ease and into a sweet relationship with Jesus Christ. This divine endowment gave them grace to meet all of their problems and difficulties. He produced a balance in their character. The actions taken by the disciples were sincere and the results beneficial. The unity was splendid and not strained and impersonal. The order was divine. The eternal issues were always basic, and the impact reached all classes of people.

St. Augustine commenting on this verse says: "Therefore the Holy Ghost on this day—Pentecost—descended into the temple of His apostles, which He had prepared for Himself, as a shower of sanctification, appearing no more as a transient Visitor but as a

perpetual Comforter and as an eternal Inhabitant. He came therefore on this day to His disciples, no longer by the grace of visitation and operation but by the very presence of His majesty."

Let us quickly note some of the more outstanding graces of the Early Church.

1. Their sincere unity and fellowship—"and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

2. Their system of regularity which this verse also suggests as well as verse 46, "And they, continuing daily with one accord . . ."

3. We note their divine sense of godly fear, "And fear came upon every soul."

4. We also notice a sincere communal interest economically—they "had all things common." (Certainly it can be said at this point that there can be no validity in Christian experience excepting as our sincerity to Jesus Christ is just as real pertaining to personal sacrifices as the sacrifices we would make for ourselves or for one another.)

5. We notice that the Holy Spirit enduement did produce evangelism, for they reported and witnessed "from house to house."

6. Their sincerity is revealed by these words, "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."

7. Their sanity and honesty are expressed in the words "having favour with all the people."

8. Their humility was in evidence by the words "praising God." And the evidence of all these graces produced a militant, active, and spiritual church that will vie with any church in Christendom today, for "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

It is my personal conviction that any church that bases its doctrines and

teachings upon this standard will succeed in spiritual and numerical strength. The churches that perpetuate on the basis of this teaching sanely have never needed to close their doors, and this teaching produces the highest order of Christian logic and conviction that can be produced. It is this doctrine that lays the foundation so that individuals can understand the simplicity which is in Jesus Christ. It is this teaching which still brings strength and life to the churches of Jesus Christ today. When individuals understand well the teaching of the Holy Spirit they are on the most solid ground spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Christianity does not then need to be theorized, for it is a revealed Christianity. The doctrine of God explained on the basis of the teaching of the Trinity is needed in our day, and it is my honest conviction that a true revival is forthcoming upon these islands among ministers and churches who are likeminded, for there is no sincere approach to God excepting as there is willing obedience to follow the will of God by a full surrender to the Eternal Spirit.

The howling storms of infidelic rationalism have hurled their falsity upon the Christian Church for many a year now. In its trek it has left only a dwarfed and withered church devoid of the Spirit of truth. Dr. Chadwick, in his book *The Way to Pentecost*, has this to say: "The morass of speculation about the Bible takes no account of the Holy Spirit. It regards inspiration as negligible, and insists upon interpreting Revealed Truth by no standards save those of history and literature. Miracles are condemned without trial. Prophecy is dismissed without inquiry. Revelation is ignored without reason."

(Continued on page 40)

# Divine Imperatives in Hebrews

By R. A. Kerby\*

## I. THE BEING OF GOD

The proud and sinful heart of man has always been slow to acknowledge the fact of his great need. Nowhere, and for obvious reasons, has this tardiness been more apparent than in the area of his greatest need, which is the absolute necessity for the voice of authority. The Bible can be presented as a book of classic wisdom, as a promoter of somewhat vague "spiritual values," or as a source book of eloquent speech without stirring much opposition. But once let it be presented in its true character as the utterly authoritative Word of God and immediately the native rebellion of the human heart is profoundly stirred. This is the true reason and, in the final reckoning, the only reason for the widespread unbelief which is casting its sullen shadows over the moral landscape today. Perhaps the greatest test that can come to the Christian today, either layman or public proclaimer of this Word, is that of standing steadfastly by the Divine Revelation through "evil report and good report." The climate of unbelief is so pervasive the enticements of unbelief so persuasive, that many faint in their minds and give up the battle.

The great Epistle to the Hebrews, written expressly to confirm the early disciples in the faith, is marked by three "divine imperatives" which, like towering mountainpeaks, dominate the entire landscape. This trio of propositions group themselves naturally around the three Persons of the Trinity. The inspired writer of this epistle declares that we must have faith in the being and beneficence of God, in the atoning work of the Son

of God, and in the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God. Inspiration declares that "without" this faith it is impossible to please God, receive remission of sin, or to obtain the fitness to see God in peace. It is to the exploration of these "imperatives" that this article is now directed.

One of the most alarming thoughts that can come to the thinking mind today is that open and militant godlessness is now in control of a great portion of this earth. This condition finds its center in Russia but is by no means confined to that unhappy land. The tentacles of open unbelief in a Supreme Being are reaching out through all the earth and bringing untold misery and confusion in every realm of life. The world is finding out the hard way that the displeasure of its Creator and Sovereign is a very sore tribulation indeed. Military budgets are rending large holes in the money bags of the world, and the end is not even in sight. The most delicate and binding family ties are being forever sundered, leaving broken hearts and utterly confused minds throughout the entire fabric of society. Institutions which have withstood the storms of centuries are now toppling all about us while we stand by and are utterly helpless to prevent their fall. Several millenniums ago Job declared, "He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?" A search of the entire range of history will not reveal one case where either an individual or a group resisted God and escaped punishment. By one means or another God always manifests His divine displeasure towards those who harden themselves against Him.

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This disbelief in the Being and beneficence of God is the true origin and inspiration for communism and all other godless philosophies which today have seized the political initiative and are turning the world into an armed camp. Therefore, all schemes of betterment which ignore God, no matter how brilliant the minds which promote them, will sooner or later, and more likely sooner than later, come to utter frustration and impotence. The displeasure of God is the greatest factor in the downfall of all civilizations which have gone the way of all the earth. Though this displeasure often operates behind the scenes and is not apparent to the eye, still it is the force before which every human head must bow. Statesmen may plan, politicians may fawn, and demagogues may rave; but if they do not take God into account all their plannings, fawnings, and ravings soon are hushed and the Eternal God stands forth in judgment as the Great Disposer of events, the Lord of Time and King of Eternity. And thus does human history with its lights and its shadows, its joys and its sorrows, its raptures and its ruptures, declare in tones of solemn and abiding authority this divine imperative, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

## II. THE SON OF GOD

The second imperative in Hebrews advances a step and demands not only belief in the being of God but also demands a true belief in the atoning work of His Son. The sad fact is that there are numerous individuals and even world-celebrated religious leaders who profess belief in God while ignoring or even openly opposing the precious atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Christ is given some small place as the great

teacher, example, or even martyr, while the real import of His death is carefully explained away. It is of more than passing note that there seems to be a short and well-traveled path between the camp of this group and the camp of those who openly deny God and are planning to take over the world in the name of their father, the devil. A study of the devious political affiliations of many of the leading modernists of the day will reveal many of these, "wolves in sheep's clothing," trotting back and forth in this very path.

One of the great curses under which America labors today is the presence of those who use their great religious prominence to heap scorn upon the Christ of God. Without doubt this is one of the great contributing factors to the trouble which we are now in. As this attitude spreads throughout the various channels of church and school and takes hold upon the general public, God's wrath towards us as a nation must of necessity become more and more aroused and intense. It does not matter one whit what may be the culture, learning, or station of the one who disbelieves in the atoning work of Christ. As "without shedding of blood is no remission," that individual is a guilty, hell-deserving sinner. This "divine imperative" will stand no matter what the Cainites of this or any other day may say.

There are great mysteries surrounding the Atonement which the mind of man cannot penetrate. Even the "angels desire to look into" these things, but we are not told that even their searching gaze brings full understanding. But of one thing we may be blessedly and forever assured of, and that is: If God could have provided atonement for a guilty race other than through the Cross, He surely would have spared His Son the unutterable agony and shame of that Cross.



The very fact that a God of infinite wisdom, love, and power "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," proves beyond any peradventure of a doubt that if any other means would have sufficed God would surely have employed those other and less painful means. In the light of this, what base wickedness is displayed by those who in the name of culture and advancement heap ridicule upon the thorn-crowned head of the dying Lamb of God! It should give serious pause to us all to realize that even the dying prayers of Jesus for forgiveness for the Jewish nation did not hold back divine judgment, in the person of the Roman army, from destroying their Temple and city when they persisted in their unbelief and resistance after Jesus' deity had been clearly demonstrated by His resurrection and the shedding forth of the Holy Spirit. Though Jesus prayed, "Forgive them," the Apostle Paul declared by inspiration a few decades later, "Wrath is come upon them."

If we but had eyes to see, we would more fully understand that the rejection of this second divine imperative by a large segment of our nation is the very factor responsible for many of our personal, family, social, financial, and national ills which now sorely threaten to engulf us. If we would but consult the Word of God, rather than our sentiments, we would be made clearly to understand what our attitude towards false teachers should be. While maintaining a personal attitude of love and compassion, we must not give them even the slightest official encouragement or endorsement. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [the deity of Christ], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." The Apostle Paul warns the brethren at Rome

about this same class of teachers: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Many and varied are the methods used by the multitudes in attempting to gain surcease from a reproaching conscience. These methods vary all the way from wallowing in the taverns to consulting "counselors" which are springing up like mushrooms all over the nation. The first of these methods plunges the seeker into deeper darkness still, while the last-mentioned one keeps the hungry soul forever reaching out for the peace which forever eludes it. If the multitudes would but apply to that Christ of whom Isaiah prophesied, they would find in Him that wonderful Counselor, that eternal parenthood, and that abiding peace and increase for which their distracted souls long. How long will it be until the world realizes that "none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good"? How long will it be that what further travail will the human family have to undergo before it confides in and obeys this second divine imperative, that "without shedding of blood is no remission"?

### III. THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The third and final divine imperative under consideration is that of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit of God. Just as a thorough and sincere belief in the being and beneficence of God must and will include belief in the atoning work of His Son, so a true faith in the Son of God must and will embrace a deep reverence for and longing after the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God. We must never forget that the great plan of salvation

is composed of truths and factors which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" of deliverance from all known and therefore willful sin.

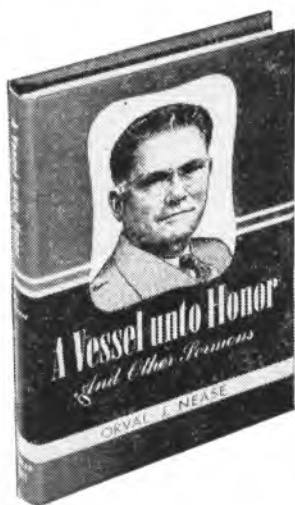
It is small wonder that our day is one of such deep sorrow when we reflect that a great portion of the globe is dominated by open godlessness; that other millions who declare belief in one true and living God deny the true atoning mission of His Son; and, as though this were not dire enough, other millions who declare belief in the being of God and the atoning work of His Son assiduously use the very considerable means at their disposal to negate the peculiar mission of the Comforter, which is primarily a sanctifying one. It is a puzzle beyond the depth of human reason to fathom how and why men can wax so eloquent on these first two imperatives while either passing by in forbidding silence or coming out in open warfare against the authority of the third one. Every effort that scholarship or ecclesiastical position can procure is directed toward the unholy objective of emptying this imperative of its true meaning and authority. In the final inquiry which shall compass land and sea, much if not all of this conflict against inwrought holiness will be seen to be but the carnal reaction to the ministry of the Spirit of Light as He directed the searchlight of Deity into the unclean condition of the unsanctified heart.

A candid examination of this position under consideration will reveal that, while it renders great and glowing tributes to all of the objective features of the gospel, it will "weasel-word" its way around those features which are personal, inwrought, intrinsic, and practical. Modernism, with all of its cunning in denying the atoning work of the Son of God, cannot exceed this group in its efforts to

deny the wholly-sanctifying work of the Spirit of God. The most pointed and luminous scriptures, such as "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," are wrested in such an unholy fashion as to leave the individual confessedly unclean while strenuously declaring that the "cleansing" so clearly and blessedly promised upon certain specified conditions is after all only "judicial," "positional," and such like.

The great and unspeakable tragedy in all this is that men of great influence are denying the possibility of the establishment of the holiness of God, as mediated by His Son and ministered by His Spirit, in the souls of men who shall very shortly stand in solemn array before the unveiled face of Infinite Holiness. This scheme of wrested interpretation becomes a veritable will-'o-the-wisp to those who set aside the monitions and call of the Spirit of God to a holy heart and life and recline in carnal security while the judgment of the sin-hating God comes on apace. Heaven, that holy place into which nothing which defileth or maketh unclean shall, upon the oath of God, ever enter, is freely promised to all those who "accept Christ" as their Substitute. This most terribly misnamed eternal security is offered to the millions upon the basis of a scheme which denies the power of the Spirit to apply the precious blood of Christ in such a triumphant manner as to actually, personally, and inherently cleanse "from all sin." In fact, he that humbly and successfully urges his agonizing plea for cleansing and testifies to the same is classed as liar in whom the truth has no place. Would to God that men who are carried away with the echo of their own voices and the heat of their own imaginations would stand still long enough to hear this word of the Lord! "For God hath not called us un-

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to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

The burning, searching, probing question which arises out of this discussion is, "If God be the Author of these three 'divine imperatives' in Hebrews, can any man or group of men expect eternal felicity at God's right hand while resisting any one of the three?" Let every man answer this question before God in the quiet of his prayer closet with the Word of God open before him. We venture to declare that in such a moral situation the Spirit of God will gloriously improve the occasion to write *all three* of these imperatives upon the heart in letters of living light and blazing glory. The Father who created us in holiness, the Son who died to restore us to this glorious estate, will fill the atmosphere with heavenly fragrance and holy power as the Holy Spirit thus instructs and indites.

As we are living in an age which is without doubt witnessing the final and culminative work of Satan in his efforts to damn the race and sink the world in blood, then it must needs follow that if we are successfully to cope with this adversary we must have in personal experience and teaching authority the final and culminative work of the Godhead, which is the sanctifying fullness of the Spirit. Therefore it is plain to be seen that this third imperative was placed in the Word of God because it is, in starkest fact, a "redemptional imperative" and thus can be resisted only at the peril of the soul.

With these three imperatives in view, the true gospel minister, in either pulpit or pew, is called upon not only to witness to the being and beneficence of God and the atoning work of the Son of God, but is also called upon to declare openly and in the face

of the sun the mighty, wholly-sanctifying, empowering work of the Spirit of God. If at any point he wavers and turns back from declaring *all* that the Spirit of God has revealed to Him through the Word, he will bring upon himself awful soul-darkness and confusion. He must ever, not only personally but in his ministry to others, "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." If he is to "serve the present age" and stand in peace at last before his Maker and his God, he must steadfastly declare to all, whether they hear or whether they forbear, this third and final imperative in Hebrews, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

### **Problems in the Growth of a Sect into a Church**

*(Continued from page 25)*

You and I have a great heritage. We look back over a denomination. We dare not fail in this our hour. We need not fail! Stated in the words of our founder, we will not fail when we "keep the glory down" on the altars of our souls and on the altars of our church.

### **Halfway to Pentecost**

*(Continued from page 18)*

cell. All about was the midnight of despair. The light of hope had gone out. No man cared for his soul.

Then, he found himself praying. As he tells it, the unexplicable happened. Out of his darkness there appeared the light, a light not seen on land or sea—"the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He had come. From that hour, his depression lifted. New hope was born. Life had a meaning.

He had not found the truth—the truth as it is in Jesus Christ had found him.

# Prayer and Your Problems

Anon\*

**N**O PRIVILEGE granted to man is of greater meaning than prayer. Those who have entered into the realm of communion with God have found it the source of spiritual life and vitality. It is in prayer that the spirit of man finds anchorage and stability. A failure to explore the potentialities of prayer results in a shrinkage of spiritual life.

The benefits and blessings of prayer may be received without understanding all its mysteries. Many have failed to pray because of intellectual problems that arise in the realm of prayer. These have thought that all questions relating to prayer should be answered before praying is begun. Such persons seldom enter into a meaningful prayer experience. Prayer is more an exercise of the heart than of the mind. It would be unwise for us to refuse the blessings of electricity simply because we do not have a clear understanding of the scientific principles underlying its use. It is just as unreasonable for us to refuse acceptance of the blessings of prayer when certain mysteries concerning it remain unanswered. Reasons of the heart can be ultimately more convincing than the evidences of reason.

It should be said that prayer defies definition. It is as indefinable as life itself. This fact, however, should not discourage us, because the highest realities always rise above the competence of the human mind. Men have unnecessarily obstructed their spiritual vision because of a false concept of the mind's capacity.

While prayer cannot be defined, it can be illustrated. Manifold illustra-

tions amplify and clarify the meaning of prayer. They let in streams of light which show its beauties in clear outline. Prayer is the opening of the heart's door to the influence of God's promptings. It is allowing the Spirit to come in. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). To pray is to allow oneself to be found by God. When one is willing to be found by God, he is less allured by the low persuasions of the flesh. God is always willing to bring blessings to His children. He does not need to be made willing. Prayer is taking hold of God's willingness to help those who are willing to receive help.

In a real sense the best prayer that we can offer to God is our own helplessness. An infant appeals most successfully to its mother because of its need. The helplessness itself is the prayer. A recognition of our inability to help ourselves is the river bottom down which God can send high tides of blessing. Abraham Lincoln said: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for that day." Effective praying is human weakness casting itself upon divine strength.

Spiritual discernment and sensitiveness are impossible without prayer. What the optic nerve is to the eye, prayer is to the Christian life. Our spiritual vision is dimmed because our prayer life is barren. A Christian without prayer is like a human skeleton without flesh and blood and muscle. Prayer provides a spiritual

\*Permission to publish from the Home Bible Study League, Mountain View, California

telescope through which we can look into the depth of spiritual realities. It is through prayer alone that we can enter into the will and purpose of God.

A sixteenth-century mystic has said, "Prayer is not to ask what we wish of God, but what God wishes of us." Too often we pray in a way which would lead men to believe that God was under obligation to obey us. Genuine prayer would ask what God wishes of us. Prayer in the highest sense desires to find the will and guidance of God for human experience. Our capacity for discernment is meager and limited. Tennyson has said: "Prayer is like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels, when the sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide."

Prayer is a sure refuge for a disturbed and troubled spirit. It is this refuge that is so clearly illustrated by the psalmist: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us" (Ps. 62:5-8).

Often we hear the question, "Must I agonize in prayer to receive what I need?" Many have the concept that prayer is a struggle with God to make Him ready to release what we so greatly need. This is truly a parody on God's character. Praying is not a battle to make God willing. Phillips Brooks has truly said: "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness." The willingness of God is clearly shown by the words of Jesus: "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son

shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:10-13).

Too many have exploded themselves toward God in prayer by physical strain and internal compulsion. The moon cannot reflect on a restless sea, nor is it possible for God to reflect His peace upon a strained and restless mind and body. Receptivity is a state of relaxation and trust. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Psa. 23:2). "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psa. 46:10). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

A well-known Christian writer has written: "O how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. . . . All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith."

Jacob had the mistaken idea that God's blessing was available through human struggle. God found it necessary to incapacitate Jacob physically before Jacob could learn that it was not human effort but human surren-

der that brought God's blessings. By surrender Jacob gained what it was impossible for him to gain by conflict and struggles. Jacob was not blessed because of his struggle. He was blessed when he gave up the struggle and gave himself fully in submission to God. Human struggles are the results of an unwillingness to surrender fully to God's grace. The struggle is always with ourselves, never with God, who has long been willing to give us what we need.

Often Christians who have prayed for many years say that they have had no tangible omen of an external nature by which they may have assurance of acceptance with God. These have prayed earnestly and long for outward evidence. Often a sign is not given and the person despairs and weakens in his prayer life. Often such Christians have been faced with decisions. They say: "If only God would give an external answer to show what should be done!" They have prayed for signs, but usually nothing happens. "Gideon received answers," they say. "Why does not God give me a sign by which I may know His will?"

Jesus had much to say concerning those who sought external, outward evidence. His usual message is one of rebuke for those who seek signs. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 16:4). To Thomas, who sought a physical verification, Jesus said: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

God desires to bring conviction from within and not from without. Too many of us want God to do things *for* us instead of *with* us. We desire external answers to prayer instead of inward answers. The continual manifestation of external guidance by the way of signs would weaken the

moral character and not strengthen it. A good parent desires that a child learn to make his own decisions from within. An external stop and go signal would inhibit all moral and spiritual development. Paul says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Christ therefore desires to make individuals inwardly strong by His presence, so that they may move from heart motivation instead of external coercion. Wisdom is to be given from within and not from without. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Gideon's asking for signs was not an evidence of faith but of hesitation to believe. Gideon himself realized his false procedure when he said: "Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground" (Judges 6:39, 40). The giving of signs was a concession to Gideon's lack of faith rather than an evidence of his faith. God often makes such concessions because of our spiritual immaturity, but His desire is that we may develop strength to make intelligent decisions from within through His indwelling.

True prayer is "God, make me" not "God, give me." Too many of us wish God to answer prayers apart from life rather than in life. If God does not give outward signs, it is that He wishes us to develop maturity to make intelligent decisions by a realistic appraisal of facts rather than by an external sign. Often our prayers are selfish. They revolve around our own wants and needs. A basic reason for



unanswered prayers is given by the Apostle James, who says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3).

The best prayers are usually prayers in which self is completely forgotten. This type of praying is known as intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is unselfish prayer. Our egocentricity in prayer is recognized by the prophet Isaiah: "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16). The Lord's Prayer is a model for unselfish praying. Here there is no self-centered praying. "Our Father," "our daily bread," "our debts," "our debtors," show the true way in unselfish prayer.

The basis for intercessory prayer rests in our social dependence. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). An old Latin proverb says, "One man is no man at all." No man is the whole of himself; his friends are a part of him. William Law has truly said: "Intercession is the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best cure and preservative against all unkind tempers, and all angry and haughty passions."

It is true that God often rests our neighbors' good on our prayers. Their good rests on our toil and thoughtfulness. Therefore, should it be thought strange that their good should rest on our prayers? Our self-centeredness is the cause of a lack of intercessory prayer. Intercessions are the result of generous devotion. It is difficult to intercede unless we love.

Great men of prayer have been great intercessors. The Apostle Paul said: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my

brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). Moses prayed: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exod. 32:32). John Knox pleaded: "Give me Scotland, or I die." Martin Luther on one occasion said, "I feel as if I were being prayed for." The greater the spiritual stature of the person, the more unselfish his prayers will be. Jesus is the greatest Intercessor in our behalf. Concerning Peter's coming struggle, Jesus said: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32). "He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Samuel considered it sin not to pray for others. To King Saul he said: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Sam. 12:23).

Prayer is the avenue of approach to God. When we depend upon human organization, we derive the benefits of organization; when we depend upon intellectual discipline and education, we get what these can do; when we depend upon prayer in conjunction with organization and intellectual discipline, we get what God can do.

### **"Ye Shall Receive—Ye Shall Be"**

*(Continued from page 29)*

On the basis of the tremendous dearth of conviction and spiritual certainty, it is well that we again commend ourselves to a sincere seeking after God and His eternal purpose. The theological seminaries and institutions have displayed their ignorance long enough, and our liturgical confessions of our unbelief and sins have provoked the holy, conquering Spirit, and so may I close with the words of J. M. Versteeg, "What we need is to have Pentecost not rationalized but realized."

# The Master Evangelist's Principles—Part 5

By P. Wiseman\*

**T**HE WAY a thing is done is about as important as what is done. The evangelist may consider that he is getting somewhere when the person is receptive, not before. Principles are essential and basic to method; indeed, they are more important than method. The reason is simple, for knowledge is essential to intelligent action.

Principles have to do with fundamental laws with which we must reckon in our effort to evangelize the person. They are fundamental in evangelism, in teaching, and learning; fundamental to the choice and use of methods. *Principles have reference to the psychological basis upon which we work—the foundation; whereas methods have to do with the procedure—the how; aims and purposes have reference to the specific necessity for evangelism—the why of education; materials are the tools with which we work—the what and with what in education.*

In the Gospel records of the Master Evangelist, the following may be clearly seen:

## 1. THE PRINCIPLE OF PRACTICE

Take the incident where the woman was caught in the act of a great sin. Her accusers brought her before the Master, who stooped and wrote on the ground the sin of them all, so reads one manuscript. If this reading is correct—and we would like to believe it is—the inference is that the Master wrote perhaps the outstanding sin of the chairman of that so-called religious group. On realizing what was on the ground, he became convicted and went out; then the sin of

the next with the same result, and so on till the committee had entirely disappeared. Of course, we are not positive that it was just in this way, though frankly it looks like what might have happened. He might have written on the ground, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

The Master was left alone with the woman, whom He was anxious to win. He said to her, "Woman, where are those, thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:1-11).

The Master Evangelist knew the motive of that religious group. He knew it was not out of concern for the social condition about them that they brought her to Him. It was to find an accusation against Him. He silenced them through their own conscience. He practiced the practical.

## 2. THE PRINCIPLE OF AWAKENING THE INDIVIDUAL'S INTEREST

"The teacher has done nothing," says James Stalker, in his *Image of Christ*, "unless he awakens the mind of independent activity. As long as the mind is merely passive, receiving what is poured into it, but doing nothing more, true education has not commenced." "What think ye?" said Christ. True teaching and preaching as well as true learning commences with thinking, whatever may start the thinking process. The Master was creative. Creative action makes alive; it never kills.

There can be no true evangelism without the attention and interest of the person. There may be different

\*President, Missionary Training Institute, Nyack, New York

ways by which attention may be secured, but secured it must be before there can be any advancement.

### 3. THE PRICIPLE OF EVANGELIZING BY ACTION

We hear much about "experiencing what we learn," "learning by experience," "teaching by action," and such like. St. Luke, in his introduction to the Acts of the Apostles, speaks of "all that Jesus began *both to do and to teach*." He called "whom he would . . . that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach."

What an education for evangelism it must have been to be with Him; to see what He did and how He did it; to hear what He said and how He said it; to note the wonderful spirit of His holy life!

With the child, it is usually action, feeling, thought. A child is first a doer, then a thinker. Action is necessary in order to get him to think. A doer, imitation; and to imitate he observes.

### 4. THE PRINCIPLE OF ACCOMMODATION

The Master Evangelist when near the end of His ministry said to His own, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now." St. Paul practiced the same principle. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (I Cor. 3:2).

The evangelist must begin with the person, at least begin where the person is and take him along. In the meeting place of Jacob's Well, with the sinner, the woman of Samaria, the Master commenced with "water." The woman understood "water." From here He led on till the woman received "living water." He commenced where she was intellectually.

### 5. THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

The Master Evangelist preached as one having authority and not as the scribes. There is here involved the fact of knowledge. He had perfect knowledge added to this; there was in Him loyalty to the Old Testament scriptures. "It is written." This was His answer to the devil. He mentioned how the people repented at the preaching of Jonah; how Jonah was in the deep, a type of His own death and burial. He thus placed His sanction on this Old Testament story. In the Master there are seen personality, knowledge, faith, and loyalty to written revelation. This gave Him authority.

In like manner the evangelist must develop that which makes for authority. If he is not an organized personality, if he does not know his subject, if he cannot say, "Thus saith the Lord," he is defeated in the beginning. He is "in the brush" to commence with.

### 6. THE PRINCIPLE OF VALUE

The Master Evangelist knew the value of man, the value of a child. "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" (Luke 9:25.)

He showed a greater interest in persons than in things; indeed, the latter did not occupy His interest. He had such consideration for the despised, the poor; "the common people heard him gladly." Then He gave the children, the little ones, such consideration; "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," said He: "for of such is the kingdom of God." It seems that Paul had similar emphasis on the value of the human person, for he said, "who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*" (Gal. 2:20).

Thus the worker must realize the difference between persons and

things. When once the child is evaluated in this light, there is scarcely any limit to which a worker may not go to win that child for the good life. He sees in that little one the possibility of a great religious character, a great world leader.

## 7. THE PRINCIPLE OF SPIRIT

The Master stands forth as a great Example in disposition, in quality of spirit, under the stress and strain of life. It is said of Him that "he went a little farther," which is true geographically, historically, and redemptively. He came to the manger, came to a life of poverty, to the cross of shame, to death, to the tomb—all for us.

The worker must realize the winning qualities of such a spirit. He must realize our Lord's command, "Go . . . twain," go the extra mile, "love your enemies," offer the other cheek, forbid not to take thy cloke also (Matt. 5:28-48). The Master urged this spirit even in the prayer life, for His first point of emphasis in His great message on prayer was the spirit that should characterize our approach to God (Luke 11:1-3). "A soft answer turneth away wrath." This is true, and it manifests the spirit that wins and will win.

## 8. THE PRINCIPLE OF SIMPLICITY

The men who went to arrest the Master were so impressed by His words that they returned without making an arrest, and said, "Never man spake like this man." He was unique in every respect, and it seems especially true with regard to His simplicity. He uttered profound truth in a very simple way.

The philosopher may well ponder His statements, yet a child could grasp them. Dr. James Burrell says

that Christ spoke to plain people, and addressed himself to their common sense. His aim was obvious; no person in His congregation or class ever had to wonder at what He was aiming. On one occasion at least, a lawyer perceived that the Master spake the parable against him. His congregation, His class, undoubtedly would inwardly say, "That means me," or, "That finds me." He addressed His pupils in their language.

## 9. THE PRINCIPLE OF CHARACTER

The Master placed His emphasis first of all on the experience of a changed heart, the new birth. This Christian experience was fundamental with Him. The first necessity was to make the heart good, for out of the heart are the issues of life. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed" what is in the heart (Mark 7:21-23). Hence His emphasis on the new birth, Christian holiness, then character building. How applicable, how ethical, His teaching! "He that looketh . . . to lust . . . hath committed." He would place the guilt of committal at the door of an unclean heart. St. John makes a similar ethical emphasis and places the guilt of murder at the door of a heart in which hatred dwells: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

The worker must, then, realize that character is essential. All goodness is of God: "None good but one." All goodness must flow from Him. The goal of character should be godliness. This is the principle of the ultimate objective. Christ stands forth and will stand forth as the Ideal. He is the glorious Goal. People are to be like Him.

## Sermon Outlines

### Life's Greatest Question

**TEXT:** *What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?* (See Matt. 27: 15-31.)

#### INTRODUCTION

##### I. What is life's greatest question?

A. It is not, "What shall I do with myself?"

1. What shall I eat and wear?
2. At what shall I work?
3. Whom shall I marry?
4. Where shall I live?
5. How can I be happy?

B. But, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

C. This must be answered in relation to:

1. What I shall do with myself.
2. What Christ will do with me.

#### BODY

##### II. How different ones have reacted.

A. Herod was troubled and so are all the selfish.

B. All Jerusalem was troubled because it was announced that a Saviour was born who should save them from their sins, the last thing in the world they wanted. The Jews angrily rejected Him.

C. The common people were happy to eat the loaves and fishes but puzzled and offended when Jesus required them to eat Him as their Bread of Life. These proved to be the way-side and stony ground.

D. Jesus put Pilate on the spot and so are we all put on the spot. We must make a decision. Anything less than a wholehearted decision for Christ amounts to an outright rejection.

E. The thief on the cross accepted Him for time and eternity.

III. Picture the hour when Jesus decides what He will do with men.

A. There is a great white throne. Herod, the Pharisees, Pilate, the soldiers, and all the world are now on trial.

B. At this trial:

1. Herod and all Jerusalem will still be troubled.
2. The trial will not be held at night.
3. There will be no lying witnesses but the books will be opened.
4. There will be no money changing hands.
5. There will be no mocking and jeering, no howling mob.
6. All will be silent as the books are opened.

C. Pilate will be there, still on the spot, but there will be no dillydallying about the decision or calling for a basin of water.

D. The common people will all be there and the mysteries as clear as judgment day that they should have accepted Jesus as the Bread of Heaven.

E. The thief will be there but in the books will be found no record of his sins, but only that he took Christ as his Saviour.

F. You and I will be there. No excuses then, no hiding behind the hypocrites, no putting it off until another time.

##### IV. What then shall I do with Jesus?

A. Repent and accept Him.

B. Believe and follow Him unconditionally.

C. Instead of judging you He will pardon and impart eternal life.

—JOHN CROSS

## What Is Your Prayer Worth?

*Text: Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21).*

### INTRODUCTION

A. Many people pray who are Christians in no other sense.

B. People of all ranks and callings pray: the rich, poor, those in government, soldiers, clergymen, prize fighters, gamblers, liars, and thieves. Few there are who never pray.

C. Some may even seem to receive miraculous answers to prayer, yet they are not in the Kingdom. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name . . . done many wonderful works? etc." (Matt. 7:22, 23).

D. Let us examine the quality of some of the various types of prayer.  
Body

I. The Formal Prayer. Not always, but often, it wants nothing, expects nothing, and receives nothing.

A. May be very ornamental. Is often heard in the fashionable church. The type once described as "the most eloquent prayer ever offered to a Boston congregation."

B. It is the prayer of the absent-minded, uttered by rote either by a pagan priest or holiness professor while the mind may be a hundred miles away.

C. It is the prayer of the hypocrite putting on a nice front while he lives like the devil.

1. Pharisees made long prayers . . . secretly robbed widows.

2. News told of notoriously corrupt political leader who was a faithful church attender for thirty years.

II. The Prayer of Emergency.

A. This is a real prayer of need in-

stinctively calling to God. Almost everyone prays it at some time.

1. The mother, when her child is in danger.

2. The soldier in the foxhole.

3. The prize fighter as he goes into the ring, the gambler as he lays down his wager at the wheel.

B. May have little to do with the Kingdom or piety.

1. The soldier prays for protection while the shells are falling but afterward returns to wine, women, and profanity.

2. This is understandable in that he was not praying to be saved from sin but from shrapnel.

C. This sort of prayer may be condoned in Matt. 7:7. "Ask, and it shall be given you, etc." Here no strings are attached. God may answer the prayer of emergency in order to reveal himself.

D. Some evidently are commercializing on God's willingness to answer this sort of prayer.

1. Psychiana advertises a plan on how to get things from God taught in so many lessons at so many dollars. If you are financially poor, you can use the *God-Law* to bring material wealth. If you are socially obscure, you may use the *God-Law* to bring you into prominence. The same goes for healing of the body and many other things.

2. Another cult is a sort of a prayer club all pulling together to help one another get things from God.

3. There may be some validity in this sort of praying but it is not the best type of praying.

E. Note how far the praying of Jesus goes beyond all this.

1. On the mount of temptation Satan suggested that Jesus use the *God-Law* to change stones to bread or to

(Continued on page 59)

# The Pastor as Counselor

*By Lloyd B. Byron\**

(A paper presented at the Chicago Central District Preachers' Meeting, March 20, 1951)

**T**HE PASTOR as counselor—what a field, what an opportunity, what a responsibility, what a ministry, and no place at all for the novice! The pastor can go into his first pastorate with but a sermon or two and a somewhat sketchy background of theological and ministerial training; and by prayer and diligent study he can make it through without damaging many in the process. The pastor can go into a new pastorate and start in calling the day of his arrival; and, without knowing any of his members personally or anything about the conditions of his people, he can minister effectively from the first day of that pastoral visitation. Such ministries require the preacher's mind and the shepherd's heart certainly, but not the specialized training of an expert. But when the pastor ministers as counselor he enters a realm that necessitates thought and study and preparation and insight and grace and wisdom. The more I study and work in this area, the more fearful I become; for here the pastor enters into relationships that are different from the usual pastoral experiences, and more delicate and more difficult and more dangerous than those of any other phase of his ministry.

Sometimes the pastor can minister as counselor in a home in which he has stopped for a few minutes of pastoral calling, but that does not mean that calling and counseling are the same or even closely akin. There are definite values in pastoral calling; we recognize that, even though much

of the time the conversation may be about the common, ordinary, everyday situations that people face; for some of the time the talk will turn to deep spiritual questions or achievements or ambitions. But most of the time those significant problems that call for consultation are brought forth at a time and place given to counseling. A home is not the best place; but an office that does not speak of comfort or informality or present the competing attractions of the radio, children, telephone, doorbell, or neighbors. The pastor's office speaks of prayer, study, the faith of the church, and the straightforward procedure and objectivity of a professional conference.

The pastor as counselor enters into the serious problems confronting his people, into their inner battles, into their spiritual difficulties, into their domestic or social or business adjustments, into matters sordid, tragic, pitiful, destructive. Consider the area embraced by the problems brought to the pastor: spiritual, vocational, social, educational, domestic, financial, sex, marital, emotional, love. There is counseling premarital and postmarital. There is counseling that is personal and counseling that relates to the whole family. There is counseling that relates to other members of the church and counseling that includes those without any church. Those in sorrow, those in trouble, those in spiritual confusion, those in distress, those in fear—all those need counseling. There will be those who need a preacher, and those who need the preacher and a doc-

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tor. The temptation may present itself to the pastor to do some work with those whose problems are complicated by deep-seated mental and emotional disturbances, but he must resist with resolution the subtle lure to enter a field that calls for professionally skilled counselors. In this area are those who are neurotics and those who are on the border line of a psychological condition. And a few books read or a course or two in pastoral psychology will not qualify us for service as psychiatrists who arrive at their accepted position after years of specialized training. But there is an area where the pastor should be constantly employed, and that is with that great mass of people commonly known as normal, with all disagreeable, disturbing, depressing, discouraging problems and fears and situations that come to normal people in our chaotic, confused, complex age. These normal people in such conditions of stress and strain and frustration and distress and anxiety often need the sympathy and understanding of the pastor as counselor.

The essence of counseling, according to some writers, is communication; the consultant must be able to communicate his situation to the pastor, and the pastor must be able to communicate strength and insight to the consultant. This demands confidence in the pastor, confidence that he will keep in inviolate trust the confessions made to him. The consultant must be able to talk without fear of the consequences, for he must talk; he must unburden; he must let loose; he must empty himself; he must have someone to whom to pour out his heart. And he will do this only if he is sure that the pastor can be trusted; then he will communicate.

But the pastor must communicate

too, and his part there initially is to listen. The importance of listening cannot be overemphasized; this is one of the most valuable of counseling techniques: listening without interrupting, listening without offering advice, listening without making comment, listening until that surcharged heart has emptied itself. The pastor may indicate his attention by a word or by a nod of his head, but he must give his whole attention throughout the interview, or the outflow will cease and the consultant will leave unhelpt, but hindered instead.

This does not mean that the consultant will come to the point of his problem, his difficulty, his fear at once; rather, it is seldom that he will give this important datum right away. He must first make up his mind as to how the pastor will react to his story, whether he is worthy of trust, and whether he is able to help him. Then, by degrees, he will relax until finally he tells his full story. Meanwhile the pastor must guard his every response, he must keep himself under emotional control at all time, so that he does not manifest surprise, shock, anger, revulsion, or any other extreme reaction that would discourage a complete recital.

Naturally the consultant feels easier when his story is told, but that does not mean that his problem has been solved. It is now out in the open, and that is a gain; but what is to be done about it? The pastor will find it a temptation to start in giving his decision, if it is a moral question involved, or giving advice on any other question. That is the easy method, but not always the best. The leading technique for the pastor to learn is one of guidance by indirection, so that the consultant gains insights into his own condition, his own problem, his own attitudes, his



own failures; insights that will help him to realize where he is in the light of what he should do. The pastor thinks along with the consultant; they think through the problem together; then when the solution is realized, the consultant has come to it himself, he has seen it himself, he has arrived at his own conclusions. It is easy enough for the pastor to impose his conclusions, his advice, his suggestions, his diagnosis; but an ounce of insight into one's own difficulties is worth a ton of advice from the counselor.

The pastor as counselor should be as completely objective as possible; the consultant needs that attitude. He himself is involved in the problem, he is enmeshed, he is laboring under it; but the pastor, being external to it, can view it in a more detached manner and talk with him about it from that objective point of approach. Hence the wise counselor will not hurry the consultant so subjectively entangled to the conclusions he has been able to reach so readily objectively, but they will move along together; the one subjectively immersed, the other objectively apart but sympathetic and understanding enough to be a companion to help.

In his terminology the pastor can talk about neurotics and psychotics, introverts and extroverts, and bring nothing but greater confusion to the consultant. Properly he should avoid technical language, for his field is not psychiatry or psychology; his field is not that of psychosomatic healing; his field is religion with moral and spiritual values; his field is the normal man in great trouble. Hence the pastor will not analyze personality; he will not prescribe treatment for those deeply disturbed emotionally or mentally; but he will

prove himself capable in the use of those resources available to him as a pastor, a man of God.

He must know how to use the Bible helpfully and he must know how to instruct his people to mine its spiritual treasures. He cannot take it for granted that they know how to read the Bible just because they are church people. There are so many passages that pulsate with strength, courage, comfort, challenge, correction; the pastor must know them, and he must teach them positively to his people. They must learn to read the Bible for food, for light, for instruction, for hope, for fortification. The pastor must know how to pray, and teach his consultants what prayer can do for them, what they can expect from God and their faith, and how to ask. People need to be taught how to worship, how to draw power from God, how to leave things in God's hands, how to commit, how to rest, how to live by faith. People who are in trouble need the pastor to tell them again about God and His relation to men in everyday life and emergencies, in order that they may bring their conceptions up to the high level of adequate size and content.

There is much that the pastor cannot do, and he should be frank to acknowledge this, and refer people to those who are qualified to give professional counseling. There is much that the pastor should not do, by way of judgment or censoriousness or insistent advice. But there is much that the pastor can do to help people make their way through their problems to right attitudes, right relationships, right adjustments, right outlooks, and right conceptions of God and prayer and worship and love and faith. The pastor can read the Bible, when the psychiatrist does not; the pastor can pray,

when the physician does not; the pastor can show a pattern of love and forgiveness, when the psychologist does not. The pastor possesses the richest of resources in God and the Bible, in personal experience of the grace of God, in an awareness of forgiveness, in inner transformation and cleansing, in spiritual blessings, in realized strength, in enkindled hope, in inspired faith, in quiet confidence.

But all of this requires much of the pastor: much of humility, much of prayer, much of dependence on God, much of the help of the Spirit, much of sincerity, much of divine wisdom, much of human understanding, much of patience, much of compassion, much of God. It may not be in what the pastor says as much as in what he is while the interview is in progress; it may not be in what he says as much as in the spirit of his approach and appeal. He must know God in daily fellowship; he must know the Bible in personal impact; he must know human nature, regenerate and unregenerate; he must know the workings of the normal mind under the stress and strain of emotion and fear and insecurity and frustration and anxiety and resentments; and withal he must be a man of God, genuine, spiritual, sympathetic, and understanding.

The pastor will find his work as counselor to be an exhausting work, a discouraging work some of the time, but a rewarding work most of the time. More and more he will find that his ministry will stand or fall on this. He must be a good preacher of the Word; he must call on his people with a shepherd's heart; but also he must as counselor make the power of the Spirit a living resource to others. This will not be a spectacular ministry; this ministry will not bring loud public ac-

claim; but this humble service of the pastor as counselor is that of which mankind today stands in great need.

## **Come Before Winter**

*(Continued from page 16)*

Come before the winter of life sets in. Even now the springtime is over, the summer almost gone. Come before the year of life closes. According to an old legend, a man made a covenant with Death, in which Death promised that he would not come for the man until he had sent a messenger well in advance to warn him. When suddenly he appeared, the man was caught by surprise and protested that Death had not kept his bargain.

"Why did you not send your messenger?"

"I did send a messenger. I sent several messengers. Look at your hair: it was once black, but now is gray. Your face has become wrinkled; your eye is dim; your hearing is no longer acute. You have lost your teeth, and your form has become stooped. What are these but the messengers of Death?"

Yes, while the evil days come not, let us turn to the God of our salvation. Remember now thy Creator.

Come before the winter of conscience begins. While you are awake to these obligations, act upon them. We can deaden our sensibilities by constant rejection of the truth. While it is called today, harden not your heart. While you have light, walk in the light.

Come before the winter of God's call. The foolish virgins who took no oil in their vessels and attempted to remedy their neglect too late found that the door was shut against them. Today God calls. If you will hear His voice, come now. Come today. Come before winter.

# The Minister's Professional Ethics

By Milo L. Arnold\*

AS I COMPLETE my twenty-fourth consecutive year in the pastorate, I am more convinced than ever that the ministers are the best-treated, most highly rewarded, and most privileged persons in the community—all this in spite of the fact that we often are blundering and stupid. Our work is often inefficient, our ethics lacking in dignity, and our accomplishments below expectations.

I believe that if any professional group in the world needs a well-defined code of ethics, it is the ministers. In many communities, the work of God has been hindered for years by the unethical conduct of the men of the pulpit. Many times good men have been marked down as bad men because of their poorly defined code of ethics. Many times a small fly has given a very precious ointment a most loathsome odor, and a small unethical trait can make a most able man to be entirely rejected in the area where his ministry should be most fruitful. Remember, the minister lives in the most exposed spot in the community. A goldfish lives in privacy as compared to the minister. Our lives must be public.

Brethren, we must always be good. Not only must our intentions be right, but our work must be done with grace and dignity befitting our position. There are more things we can do wrong than is true of anybody else. The merchant is exposed to ethical hazards chiefly while at his business establishment. The doctor is exposed chiefly at the place where he practices medicine, the lawyer in the handling of his case, etc. But the

minister is never free from exposure. The minister's professional ethics are involved in the way he speaks to his wife, the way he spans his babies, the way he drives his car, the way he preaches his sermons, the way he dresses, the time of day he gets out of bed. Our profession is exposed in every place that our life is exposed, for a minister's profession cannot be separated from the minister himself.

It is obvious that we cannot cover, even casually, the field before us in this allotted time, but we will try to blaze an occasional tree along the route we want to go. For convenience, we will divide the subject into three areas: (1) the minister's personal ethics, (2) the minister's parish ethics, and (3) the minister's ethics in the wider parish or denominational relationships.

## I. THE MINISTER'S PERSONAL LIFE ETHICS

A. *Be Industrious.* Never let any member of your church work harder at his job than you work at yours. Your profession needs the dignity of industrious, businesslike men. Don't give it less. Get up in the morning and get to work and keep working. The people have a right to your best; God has a right to your best; and the very soul of you needs the surge of self-respect which comes from hard work, the diligent, well-organized effort.

B. *Be a Man!* Don't go around looking for pity because of the way Sister So-and-so treated you or the way Brother So-and-so failed to appreciate you. Be a man with your head up, your chin out, and your face shaved. You don't need to be pitied; and to go around looking for

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pity is to be childish, disgusting, and unworthy of the calling of God and the confidence of men.

C. *Be magnanimous.* Never stoop to small things. Treat your enemies just as graciously as you do your friends. Respect the folks who differ with you as much as you do the "yes men" of your parish. If somebody takes an underhand cut at you, don't yield to the temptation to reply. If somebody writes you an anonymous letter, don't stoop to mention it from the pulpit. If someone slights you, never let him or anyone else know you noticed it. If someone won't do a job your way, don't be above jumping in and helping to do it his way. It's getting the job done that's important.

D. *Be reserved.* Be friendly, sociable, and warm, but don't be gushy, effervescent, or frothy. Keep your dignity wherever you are. You are still a minister of the gospel even if you are in working clothes. Keep your language lofty, your conduct unimpeachable, and your relationships dignified. Never stoop to laugh at a smutty joke nor to pass a coarse story. Be a friend to all men, but a follower of none. You are to lead the world, not to be led by it. Avoid in particular the flattering woman. Keep her at a distance. Never give her the advantage of any particular personal attentions. Never put your hands on her person, and let your handshakes be short and formal. Some women are so blind they might think you are handsome, and some are so stupid they would think you charming. Don't give them any chance to think that you are attracted to them. Remember, they sometimes need only a silly or unintended bit of attention to send them forth with fluttering hearts to invent stories which they will tell to fatten their ego, even though there is no word

of truth in them. They're dangerous. You don't need to be afraid of them, but you must certainly keep them at a safe distance. Your standard of ethics here must be so safe that it not only prevents exposure to just criticism, but prevents exposure to invented stories which can be a figment of a perverted imagination.

E. *Be sincere.* Be at heart the kind of man you want people to think you are. Never paint yourself over. Be natural, but be right. There is nothing so loathsome as an insincere preacher. If you're not able to be what you want people to think you are, then make yourself over by the help of God. Live with people, work with people, share with people until you actually and sincerely love people. Don't act like you love people you don't. You can sincerely love people if you will.

F. *Be unselfish.* What could be more unethical than selfishness in the heart of a preacher? Think of it, a preacher, a professed follower of the lowly Nazarene, the One who gave himself for the sins of a world, being selfish, looking for personal gain, personal praise, and personal aggrandizement! Let's be dead to self!

## 2. THE MINISTER'S PARISH ETHICS

A. *Don't be a respecter of persons.* Treat all your people alike. Give yourself and your time to people according to their needs, not according to your own enjoyment. It may be that the person you enjoy the least will need you most and the person you enjoy most will need you the least. Let your time be distributed according to need. You have only one life to give, so give it where it will count most.

B. *Never treat anyone's problems lightly.* If anyone has a problem big enough to share with you, it deserves your courteous treatment. It

may look foolish to you, but it is not foolish to him. If an old maid asks you to pray for God to send her a husband, it is a serious matter with her. If teen-age youngsters are having courtship problems, don't dare treat them lightly. Don't ever yield to the temptation to share the "good joke" of their problem laughingly with your friends. If they trusted you, you are honor-bound to be worthy of that trust.

C. *Be careful how you go about getting a raise of salary.* Never stoop to hint for it. Never go about with a hard-luck story. Never let your personal financial needs become too much a public matter. If another church offers you a call at a larger salary, be careful how you accept it. It might be the right move, and it might not, but the salary is not the determining factor. Don't try to put your church over a barrel to raise your salary by telling them of the bids of another church. Don't go around telling your people how much more such-and-such a church pays. Try even to keep your wife from doing such a thing. If you want a raise, just set about to be worth more. Give such personal, sincere attention to the needs of your people that they will just naturally have to pay more attention to your needs. Watch about allowing your salary to rise above the ability of the people you serve. It is possible for a pastor to become handicapped in his ministry to his people by a separation from them in income or living standards. The pastor who expects to live above the people will soon find that he is living somewhere else. Be cautious about gifts, discounts, and other side-line incomes. They are all right in many cases, but don't allow the people to give you their tithes on the side. Don't give special attention to the persons who might

be able to give the most gifts, nor try to get on the good side of some rich person who might die and remember you in his will. It is easy for us to pay a terrific price in community good will for some very small gifts. Sometimes people will give you gifts, and you should accept them with appreciation; but never get to the place where you expect them, nor where you become unhappy if they fail to give again. Usually the pastors who get the most gifts from their people have comparatively short pastorates and stay in comparatively small parishes. This is not always true, but it is true often enough to make us cautious. Never ask a discount because you are a preacher. To do so is beneath your dignity as a Christian minister. If people choose to give you a discount, accept it thankfully, but let it be at their suggestion.

D. *Respect your church board.* The pastor has no other group of people whose admonition and counsel can mean so much as that of the board. Don't think them a group of selfish people who are trying to tie your hands, but as a group of friends who are trying to keep you from burning your fingers. They are, in the main, people of good sense and wholesome experiences. They have been elected to represent the people. It is likely that they know the community better than you know it. They may know what is good for you better than even you know. The longer I live, the more I thank God for church boards. They've been a life-saver for me many times. I count them as wonderful Christian friends who are praying for me and trying to help me find the right way to do things at the right time. They pray for me, they are patient with me, they love me, and I owe them no less in return.

E. *Community enterprises.* More and more the community outside the church is calling for a place in the minister's life. There are campaigns, drives, crusades, scandals, and a thousand other things that come to seek out our attention. The people will often want us to make a statement, formally or informally. Sometimes they will want us to take sides in some campaign which actually is not ours. To take part is likely to be dangerous. It can give us an unexpected amount of publicity, but it is often undesired publicity. We may get to be known as crusaders, as crackpots, fighters, or something else rather than preachers of the gospel. We have a duty to the community, it is true, and we dare not be afraid to accept it, but we need to think the matter through well enough to know that we are not being used to pull someone's chestnuts out of the fire. People will want to get the church mailing list or membership list for circularizing the members for selling them insurance, books, or Bibles. There is no justification for the pastor allowing the membership list of the church to be shared with anybody. It is sacred property, and must be used only as such.

F. *Honorariums.* Weddings, funerals, special addresses, and unusual services rendered will often be occasions when people will do something nice for the minister. In one sense, they are all a part of the minister's parish duties, and he is already being paid a salary to support him so that he may engage in these duties. There are times when a minister will refuse honorariums for any or all these services, and there are times when it is entirely fine for him to accept them. Unfortunate indeed is the minister who cannot say, "No," to a ten-dollar bill. The people may be willing to give it, but

there are many reasons for him to refuse it. His refusal to accept it might be the thing that would break down a prejudice in some person's mind. It might be the thing that would give him an open door of service to people whom he would otherwise never have access to. If they pay you for the service, they may feel the matter completely closed, and no further interest in you remains. If they are unable to pay you, they might feel a continued interest, and you might have a continuing opportunity. On the other hand, there are people who will feel genuinely hurt if you do not accept their beneficence, and would never feel free to call upon you again if you turned it down. Watch for this attitude, too. There is no rule to follow. Just do your best; and then, when it is past, you will often look back and wish you had done differently. Just be sure that money does not become too important to you. In case you do some service for some person, couple, or family, and they do not give you anything or give you something very small, don't let yourself notice the matter too much. They may be ignorant, and never dream but they are doing all they are supposed to do. They may be financially embarrassed, and doing their very best. They may have left the matter to someone else, and the money was lost in transit to you. By all means, never tell a soul about it. Many a man has lost precious influence by telling how little some bridegroom paid him for a wedding. Watch that dollar; it is a dangerous bandit if you let it get between you and folks.

G. *Special occasions.* The minister will often be called for special occasions in the lives of his people. Funerals, weddings, baptisms, and sundry other events will lay their claims upon him. They are impor-

tant. Take time for them. If a couple asks you to marry them, it is important. Take time for them. Visit with them. Counsel with them, and know them as fully as you can. If they are individuals you can conscientiously marry, go ahead reverently. If you cannot do it with a good conscience, tell them so and refuse to become involved in it. Never insult them, but never risk your ministry on a questionable wedding. Never have any part in a publicity stunt wedding, or in any wedding where you have questions about the legality of the marriage.

As for funerals, I have never refused to conduct a funeral for anyone, but I try to guard carefully what I say about the deceased. I refuse to say he has gone to heaven unless I think the people who know him can believe that it is true. It is not enough that I think he made it. He must have so lived that the people who are at the service can have faith in his salvation, too. Often our ministers are asked to conduct a funeral where various lodges or other secret orders have a part. Personally, I guard the matter so that I never appear to be having a part in their ritual. Either I have my part of the funeral service and sit down before they start, or they have theirs and sit down and I start. I don't want that people should ever think that I am connected with their heathenish rituals. Military funerals are a different matter, and the minister can safely co-operate with them.

### 3. THE MINISTER'S ETHICS IN THE LARGER PARISH

A. *The neighbor minister.* God has dealt kindly with us that we do not have to be all alone in the work we are doing. He has placed many fine Christian ministers about us, and we should enjoy them. They are not our competitors but our contemporaries.

They are human and, like us, make mistakes, but they deserve our confidence, and we should share with them in the fullest possible manner. No minister can run down another minister to inflate his own ego. No minister can afford to make the public think less of preachers. No minister can afford the withering experience of allowing his own soul to become jealous of another. If the other minister is succeeding more than you, congratulate him. Praise him, try to find out how he does it, and learn a lesson. Don't accuse him of a compromise just because he is succeeding more than you.

B. *The district superintendent.* God has provided men among us whom we honor with the responsibilities of superintendency. They are good men, and God has blessed them. We believe in them. Yet sometimes I fear we don't know how to help them help us as we ought. I am sure that no man has ever appreciated his district superintendents more than I. I have never yet cast a vote against one, and see no reason in the foreseeable future to do so. They have always been men who challenged me, inspired me, and led me closer to God. Their counsel has been good, and their fellowship delightful. If I were a district superintendent, I believe I would want to be treated like a Christian brother. I would not want men to fawn over me, flatter me, fuss over me, or be afraid of me. I believe they are men who feel that way, too. I don't think they want to be gushed over. I don't think they like to have half the time for their sermon taken up with flowery and flattering introductions. I don't think they want to be treated as someone whose favor has to be courted. I think they want to be treated with respect and dignity, but as men and Christian gentlemen.

They don't want us to feel that they hold an ax over our heads which they will let fall if we disagree with them, and they don't want us to feel that they are going to think that we are not for them unless we shower them with soft, sweet, nice-smelling words. They are men, men of God, and men who want to get things done. Let's just get out and help them do it. Let's accept their advice, and share our problems with them. They can't spend much time with each man, for they have others to see. They can't brag on us all the time, for they have some necessary faultfinding to do. They can't cover up our weaknesses all the time; they have to be honest, and we don't want to make liars of them just to keep us in good humor.

C. *District officers.* Along with the parish duties, we are so organized that we must elect certain men to offices of responsibility over the work of God. The reason we elect a few to a board or committee is that we couldn't all work efficiently at it at once. Some men are better known, better looking, or better advertised than others, and they get elected. This is not a reflection upon the persons who are not elected. It just means that they can have the much easier job of co-operating with the people who lose the sleep, have the headaches, and buy the aspirins. If a minister is not elected to an office, it is no reflection upon him. It may be a distinct advantage for him. It is very possible that it detracts from his pastorate, and remember, no man succeeds by the outside things he does or the offices he holds. If he succeeds, it is because he does a good job in his pastorate. There is no office to which you can be elected which is so important as the one to

which you have been called by a local church whose pastor you are.

D. *Benevolences.* One of the most tender spots on many people is the spot where the purse rests. This soreness can also be spread like a contagion to the church we pastor. Some pastors have been unable to see the connection between the district and the general finances, and the success of the local church. They are both one, and the kingdom of God is so large it includes the whole program. We have been called to build the kingdom of God, not to build the church. It is unethical for a pastor to ask the members to come out from the church in a body and form a new organization built around him, and it is equally unethical for him to try to pull them financially into a small sphere surrounding his own influences, and take lightly the district and general finances.

E. *Regarding successors and predecessors.* Remember, they're not for you to choose. One of the most unethical things a minister can do is to try to set the stage so that his favorite friend can become his successor. It is never safe for an outgoing pastor to even hint to the local people the name of a man he thinks would be a good pastor. If he has suggestions, let him make them to the district superintendent. Never let him make them to the people. To do so will cause the church needless injury, the friend embarrassment, and the district superintendent sleepless nights. If you know a good man, the district superintendent will be happy for your suggestion; but there is no superintendent in the world who can come into a church and undo the damage done by an unwise suggestion made by an outgoing pastor.

(Continued on page 59)



# Generally Speaking

## For Your Bulletin

### QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNICANTS AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. Do I love Jesus Christ supremely, and am I thankful for His love for me?

2. Have I put away all sin and accepted Him as my personal Saviour?

3. Am I trusting His atoning work for my redemption?

4. Am I seeking earnestly to perfect holiness of heart and life in the fear of God?

5. As I come to God's table, is my heart filled with thankfulness to God?

6. Am I at peace with my fellow man?

7. Do I love my neighbor as myself?

8. Do I love the Christian brotherhood and treat each of them as a fellow member of the body of Christ?

9. Am I expecting Jesus to return, and am I living daily in preparation for His coming?

10. As I take these elements do I give myself fully to the will of God for my life?

11. Do I here and now, trust Jesus for spiritual nourishment and strength?

12. Do I recognize in these sacred symbols a pledge of divine grace to me, and do I receive them as such?

—PREPARED BY R. E. PRICE

## A Good Sermon—or Was It?

A woman after the sermon thanked the minister for his discourse. "I found it helpful," she said.

The minister replied, "I hope it will not prove so helpful as the last sermon you heard me preach."

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked.

"Because," the minister said, "that sermon lasted you three months."

—Exchange

## Quiet Confidence

*I wish thee now, 'midst all the world's  
dark sorrow,*

*The quiet sense of being truly blest.  
We cannot tell what waits us on the  
morrow,*

*But we can have in Him deep, quiet  
rest.*

*His hand, unseen, still ruleth o'er the  
nations;*

*His will is sovereign—even as His  
power.*

*Today o'er earth deep groans and lam-  
entations—*

*But He is ruling e'en in this dark  
hour.*

*Not sin, nor wrong, nor base, unholy  
passion*

*Shall win the day, since He is on  
the Throne;*

*Not so shall He His holy purpose  
fashion*

*Though oft it seems that evil reigns  
alone.*

*In Him we rest: our Fortress, strong,  
abiding;*

*In Him is peace, and freedom from  
alarm;*

*And quiet strength, and inward deep  
confiding;*

*For He can keep from every kind of  
harm.*

—J. DANSON SMITH

## The Main Thing

Some things are more important than others. Let us put first things first.

1. The main thing is heart purity.

2. The main thing is not water, but fire.

3. The main thing that proves your liberality is not how much you give but how much you have left.

4. The main thing is not "Are you able to give a needed reproof?" but "Can you take one well?"

5. The main thing is not how well you can argue your point, but how you can cease in order to preserve peace.

6. The main thing is not how rich you appear in public, but: "Do others have a hard time collecting what you owe?"

7. The main thing is not to suppress your temper, but have the consciousness that every unholy thing is removed.

8. The main thing is not how well a person behaves in company, but how kind he is to his family at home.

—E. E. SHELHAMER

### **An Aid to Faith**

*Three men were walking on a wall:*

*Feeling, Faith, and Fact,  
When Feeling had an awful fall,  
And Faith was taken aback.*

*So close was Faith to Feeling,  
That Faith then fell down too,  
But Fact remained, and brought Faith  
back,  
And Faith brought Feeling too.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

### **Three Things to Remember**

Before speaking of a person who is absent, subject yourself to these three tests. If you can get over all three hurdles you are safe.

1. Is it true?

2. Is it kind?

3. Is it necessary?

We often can get past the first two, but get bogged down contending with the third.

### **Quotes**

It is very fashionable nowadays for this age to give vent to long-

suppressed resentment and rebellion by ridiculing the religious lives of its elders. One would think, to read some of this muckraking, that all deacons and preachers were Pharisees. It would seem that any generation that has made as big a mess of things as has this one would be too red in the face to sling mud at its forebears. Back of some of it may be a nostalgia and a suspicion that perhaps our elders really had something which our pride will not let us stoop to find. Then, of course, we have heard everything, read everything, experienced everything—except those secrets which are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes. Even a knowledge of the good may keep us from knowing the best. Knowing too much, we do not know enough. —From *Hearts Afire!* by Vance Haver (Revell).

Dwight L. Moody was asked up to London to meet a group of clergy there. Some four hundred had gathered. In his quiet, quick, keen-witted fashion, Moody answered questions for about an hour. Then someone asked the question always asked, "What's your creed, Mr. Moody?" Quick came back the answer, "My creed's in print."

Oh, in print! Nobody knew of Mr. Moody having written anything. And the question came at once, "Where?" "What's the title of the book?" And four hundred hands reached for four hundred pencils to write down the unknown title. Very quietly Mr. Moody said, "Isaiah fifty-three, five." —From *A Treasury of S. D. Gordon* (Revell).

Jean Ingelow once said, "I have lived to thank God that not all my prayers have been answered." This statement seems an utter misunderstanding of prayer. There is no such thing as an unanswered prayer. Each will be able to recall times in his

childhood when he went to his earthly father asking for things which were not best for him—things which might have proven disastrous if they had been given. In his wisdom, in his concern for the well-being of his own—even in his limited vision of life ahead—the earthly father knew the thing asked for would not be good, and though it was hard to do, though it hurt him as much as it hurt his child, he gently but firmly said, “No.” The same is true of the Heavenly Father. He wants what is best for His own. Sometimes He, too, must say, “No,” to some cherished hope, but even then, in His matchless grace, He shows the better way—From *For Love, for Life*, by Nell Warren Outlaw (Revell).

The cults of comfort are in error, and they have no worthy answer to trouble when they tell us to dodge it by metaphysical gymnastics, or to *think* it away. The Omar Khayyams are useless, too; they have no answer but to suggest that we damn “this sorry scheme of things”; they want a world that is all pleasure and no pain. These light, easy answers are based on the false assumption that the goal of life is happiness, peace of mind, and comfort. It isn’t.

Holiness, not happiness, is the goal of life. So, when God molds a man, He puts weights on him, gives him burdens to lift, crosses to carry, hardships to endure, tribulations over which to triumph. All is a profound mystery, to be sure. A little boy wanted to know why vitamins are always put in spinach and never in ice cream, where they should be. Don’t ask me why, but for some strange reason our sweetest songs come out of our saddest thoughts; the Negro spirituals are the sad songs of a sad race, and they are the loveliest music in America! Arnold Toynbee, the historian, traced it through history in

his monumental study. In a chapter entitled “The Stimulus of Blows,” he shows how hardy civilization has come to birth in response to challenge: “The greater the challenge, the greater the stimulus.” Without weights, even civilization cannot keep going. A little boy was leading his sister up a mountain path. “Why,” she complained, “it’s not a path at all. It’s all rocky and bumpy.” “Sure,” he said, “the bumps are what you climb on.”—From *Ride the Wild Horses*, by J. Wallace Hamilton (Revell).

Ministers are not called to be dictators, but shepherds. As shepherds they should lovingly lead the flock, not drive it. A driven flock will be a divided flock before long.—From *Called of God*, by Gilbert L. Guffin (Revell).

He [Dr. G. Campbell Morgan] was keenly alive to daily contacts and incidents that might be grist to his homiletic mill. In one of the most famous cherry orchards of southwestern British Columbia, Dr. Morgan stood amazed at the abundance and size of the fruit. “Well!” he said to the grower, “anyone can see that cherries are easily grown here.”

“Dr. Morgan,” said the fruit grower, “we are fighting for the life of those cherries 365 days in the year.” The reply was turned to telling account in a later message on Christian watchfulness.—From *A Man of the Word* (Life of G. Campbell Morgan), by Jill Morgan (Revell).

### The Preacher's Wife

*You may think it quite an easy task,  
And just a pleasant life;  
But it really takes a lot of grace  
To be a preacher's wife.  
She's supposed to be a paragon,  
Without a fault in view,  
A saint when in the parsonage,  
As well as in the pew.*

*Her home must be a small hotel,  
 For folks that chance to roam,  
 And yet have peace and harmony—  
 The perfect preacher's home!  
 Whenever groups are called to meet,  
 Her presence must be there—  
 And yet the members all agree  
 She should live a life of prayer.*

*Though hearing people's burdens,  
 Their griefs both night and day,  
 She's supposed to spread but sunshine  
 To those along the way.  
 She must lend a sympathetic ear  
 To every tale of woe,  
 And then forget about it,  
 Lest it to others go.*

*Her children must be models rare  
 Of quietness and poise,  
 And still stay on the level  
 With other girls and boys.  
 You may think it quite an easy task,  
 And just a pleasant life,  
 But really it takes a lot of grace  
 To be a preacher's wife.*

### Sermon Outlines

*(Continued from page 45)*

make himself prominent by casting himself from the high pinnacle.

2. In the Garden Jesus prayed the prayer of emergency as drops of blood stood out. "Let this cup pass from me." But above the emergency He insisted on God's will.

III. The Bargain Prayer.

A. Jacob made such a prayer (Gen. 28:20-22).

B. Jephthah prayed thus (Judges 11:30, 31).

C. This sort of praying is an improvement over the above because it recognizes God's claim, but it has its weaknesses.

1. The one praying sometimes forgets to keep his bargain.

2. We have little right to bargain

with God because we have so little with which to bargain.

a. Jacob should have tithed anyway.

b. A mother should be a Christian whether her child is saved or not.

D. Again we turn to the praying of Jesus.

1. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But He leaves any suggestion for alternative schemes up to God as He prays, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." He could have called twelve legions of angels to His assistance, but He did not see God's will in it.

2. The best bargain that anyone can make is to find the perfect will of God and stay within it.

IV. The Kingdom Prayer is the perfect prayer. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

A. Note that this petition has precedence over all others, the prayer for bread, forgiveness, victory over temptations and evil.

B. This kind of praying will:

1. Get you into heaven.

2. Keep you from sin.

3. Prevent you from praying against God's will.

4. Result in strength of character, poise, and self-realization.

—JOHN CROSS

### The Minister's Professional Ethics

*(Continued from page 55)*

Of course, the people will ask for your suggestions, and they'll be sincere, but let them go to the district superintendent for suggestions and nominations.

Neither can you choose your predecessor. When you first come to the church you will see a thousand things he did wrong, and you could easily talk about them, both in the com-

*(Continued on page 66)*

# The Pastor and His Preaching Ministry

*By Merrill G. Bassett\**

ONE REVIVAL that is sorely needed throughout all Christendom is a revival of good preaching. Some years ago an Episcopalian rector in New York, whether in jest or in earnestness we cannot say, proposed that there be a three-year moratorium on all preaching. Immediately vast numbers of people who read this sensational pronouncement were highly scandalized. But one is nevertheless made to wonder if a not inconsiderable number of preachers have not, at least to all intents and purposes, been following such a procedure for many years. The dearth of high-level preaching in our day is genuinely alarming and appalling.

There can be no possible substitute for good preaching on the part of the minister. Whatever else the people of our parishes may expect of us as ambassadors for the Lord Jesus Christ, they at least expect us to be able to preach. Times without number our general and district leaders have called to our attention that when any Nazarene church is considering the call of a new pastor, high upon the list of questions asked of the district superintendent relative to any prospective candidate is this, "Can he preach?"

Such an emphasis is well placed. The preacher may be a good mixer, but if he cannot preach, his social graces will avail him but little in the carrying out of his God-ordained calling. He may be a veritable genius in organizational and administrative matters, and yet his people will feel constantly dissatisfied and cheated if he cannot preach with at least a reasonable degree of competence. His

interest in and concern for the people of his parish may be deep and abiding—so much so that he may continuously busy himself in calling in their homes and thus seek to minister to their spiritual welfare; and still the work of the church will not prosper under his care as it ought unless he be an acceptable preacher. And so one might cover the entire scope of duties and responsibilities devolving upon a true minister of the gospel. Excellence in any one, or in all of them, other than in preaching, will never compensate for lack and failure in this important field. Yes, the people have a right to expect of the man who professes to be called of God to preach the gospel that he shall have at least a measure of ability in harmony with such an exalted calling.

Indeed, to assume otherwise is to attribute folly to Almighty God. It is to charge God with requiring a man to do that which he is utterly unable to do, and that for which he possesses no gifts or fitness.

The entire field of service of the pastor is inextricably related to the work of preaching. Early in His public ministry, Jesus returned to His home town of Nazareth. There, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. In keeping with the prevailing custom of the day, as a visiting Rabbi He was invited to speak. The parchment scroll, containing the prophecy of Isaiah, was delivered unto Him from which to read. Opening the scroll to the sixty-first division of that prophecy, He began to read that scripture portion which portrays for us the call and credentials of the Christian min-

\*Paper read before Colorado District Preachers' Convention

ister. Six different phases (or facets) of the work of the minister of the gospel are there given, and, of these six, at least four have to do with preaching. These four themes, then, are to claim the earnest attention of every God-called minister. First, he is to preach the gospel of good tidings to the poor; second, he is to preach deliverance to the captives; third, he is to preach the recovering of sight to the blind; and fourth, he is to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Again, St. Paul lays the same crowning emphasis upon preaching when he declares in his First Epistle to the Corinthians that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." You will please to note that he does not say foolish preaching. The preaching to which he here refers is "foolishness" only in the sense alluded to in the eighteenth verse where he affirms that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." That is to say that in the eyes of men and women of this world to preach Jesus Christ and the power and passion of His cross is sheer and arrant folly. But you and I have tested and proved for ourselves the power and magnetic attraction of that middle cross.

If then preaching be of such vast importance, it should take precedence over just about everything else in the realm of the pastor's responsibilities. No minister, worthy of the name, should ever be content or satisfied to be anything short of the very best preacher that God, with the preacher's own hearty and unreserved co-operation, can make of him.

First of all, if the preacher is to preach, he must prepare to preach. A call to preach is always and forever a call to prepare to preach. And

the preparation that every successful preacher will make will be of two kinds. There will be general preparation and there will also be specific preparation.

General preparation will be made by the preacher throughout all of the years of his ministry. He will accept with the utmost seriousness the solemn injunction of Paul in writing to young Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Foremost among the minister's books of study, aiding him in acquiring this general preparation for preaching, will be the Bible. In a unique sense he will make it the man of his counsel. It will always remain the Book of Books to him. He will not alone study it when he senses the near approach of the crisis moment when he, as Christ's ambassador, must stand before a dying congregation to declare aright the full counsel of God. But regularly, carefully, diligently, and prayerfully he will study God's precious Word. He will not primarily approach the Bible with the homilist's microscope and magnifying glass, or the theologian's spectroscope and test tubes, to weigh and to analyze and to search for new texts and themes for sermons. Rather, he will lovingly and devotedly study the Bible, continuously breathing this fervent prayer: "O God, speak to me out of Thy Word. Give me, I pray Thee, Thy personal message to my own heart."

As the minister thus studies God's Word, not only will there be a resultant deepening and intensifying of his own spiritual life, but, like the floodtide of a mighty river, down through the years of his ministry there will come to him a rich abundance of preaching material. More and more, as time goes by, he will

be able to preach out of the overflow. (How infinitely better this is than to preach out of the barrel!) Only those who thus practice such devotional use of the Bible qualify to become, as Jesus said, "like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." Alas it is that many to whom we have listened have only been successful in bringing out of their mental meanderings and spiritual vacuity things stale and moldy with age. In vain we have listened for an occasional new gem of truth and beauty. May God help us, one and all, to be students of the Book.

The man who aspires to success in his preaching ministry (and certainly this is a laudable aspiration) will realize the importance of reading and study in order to eminence in this field. He will be a reader of books. If he has no taste for reading, let him cultivate such a taste. Not only ought he to read devotional books, but he ought, as well, to read books of sermons, books of science, books of history, biographical books, books which treat of psychology, psychiatry, and human relations. It will vastly aid the preacher to have a full heart if he will fill his mind with all of the information and inspiration that will help him to be a better preacher.

The question arises: How much shall the preacher read? Perhaps no fixed and inalienable rules can be laid down by way of answer, but let him read at least several hours every week. Some years ago Dr. J. B. Chapman made the statement that the preacher who did not read, on the average, at least one book every week was inviting mental suicide. Most of us, perhaps, would feel that the good doctor was a bit extreme and too exacting in his requirements. But, in any event, let us all seek as near an

approximation to this standard as is possible in our circumstances of life.

Many will possibly say: "I don't have very much time to read and study." I venture the observation that in ninety cases out of one hundred this is the excuse of laziness. As a matter of fact, beloved, we do just about what we want to do most. If a man but realizes the primary importance of reading and study to his ministry, he can and will find time and opportunity for this activity.

Is it not a fact that too often we have more or less gloried in our ignorance? In such cases we are reminded of the little colloquy between a conceited young preacher and his bishop. The preacher had just indulged in a tirade against college and other higher institutions of learning. He concluded by saying he was thankful he had never been corrupted by contact with such institutions. Whereupon the bishop asked him if he meant to say he was thankful for his ignorance.

"Well, yes," said the young man, "you may put it that way if you like."

"My observation is," said the bishop, "you have much to be thankful for."

G. Ray Jordan, in his inspiring book *You Can Preach*, tells of a letter John Wesley one day received from a brother, who declared: "The Lord has directed me to write you and tell you that while you know Greek and Hebrew, He can do without your book larnin'." To this Mr. Wesley appropriately replied: "Your letter received, and I may say in reply that your letter was superfluous, as I already knew that the Lord could do without my larnin'. I wish to say that while the Lord does not direct me to tell you, yet I wish to say to you on my own responsibility that

the Lord does not need your ignorance either."

Let us never be guilty of offering alibis and excuses either to God or to the people in an effort to palliate our sloth and laziness. Down through the years of our ministry, provided we are desperately determined to be efficient ambassadors of this glorious gospel which has been entrusted to us, God will help us to become more and more thoroughly furnished and prepared to discharge properly the sacred responsibilities devolving upon us as able ministers of the Word.

Not only is general preparation essential to the pastor in his preaching ministry, but specific preparation as well.

Each Tuesday morning as the busy pastor enters his study (and he should regularly and religiously enter it every morning from Tuesday through Saturday unless the direst emergency prevents it), he should begin his *specific* preparation for the next Lord's day. Ordinarily he knows full well he shall twice on that day face eternity-bound congregations composed of immortal individuals destined either for heaven or for hell. He knows that the individuals comprising those audiences will represent a wide variety of needs.

Here will sit that father with stooped shoulders and bent back, and beside him that mother with toil-worn hands and hair tinged with silver. Reverses have come into their lives the past week. The children have seemed ungrateful and unappreciative of all that Mother and Dad have tried to do for them. Satan has been camping hard on their trail for the past days, and they are tempted to utter discouragement.

Yonder sits that young lady of high school age. The lure of the world is strong upon her. She has lived all of the years of her life in a

Christian home but, now that she is in high school, her classmates and friends are doing things and going places that her parents have taught her are wrong. She has wanted to continue to take her stand for God and the right, but already she has marked the ill-concealed smirk and the slight lifting of the eyebrows that denote that in the minds of her schoolmates she is considered to be a little bit queer and fanatical on religion. She has the normal desire of every young person to be popular and to have a wide circle of friends. She is beginning to wonder if, after all, it really pays to live for Christ. Wouldn't it be just as good to relax her standards a bit and forget about being quite so religious, at least until she has grown older? What can the preacher say as to the worth-whileness of Christ's service for youth?

In the rear of the church, perhaps, will sit a teen-age young man. For several years now he has had certain ambitions as to what he wants to do in the world and what he would like to make out of his life. But then, you know there is the war in Korea and his local draft board has already called up a number of the young fellows of about his age from his community. Indeed, just this very week he has received his notification to report for his physical examination. Now all of his dream castles are falling about him and he feels lonely, baffled, and frustrated. Life hardly seems worth living. Does the gospel have any answer when life comes tumbling in?

And so we might go on and on as to the probable needs that will be represented in the pastor's congregations upon the following Sunday. For the needs that we have supposed are practical and earthly, not dreamy or fanciful. What answer shall the man



of God give to these and other desperate and anxious questions of his people?

The preacher who, in the light of such urgent need upon the part of his parishioners, can be careless or trifling in facing up to his responsibility to meet those problems and answer those questions, in the eyes of Almighty God, is a criminal. To depend upon the mere inspiration of the moment as he confronts his people on the Sabbath day and stands up to preach is nothing short of travesty on our high and holy calling.

Brethren, in this glorious evangel which has been entrusted to us, we have the answers to all of the vexatious and demanding problems of life. Dare any of us, as we value our own souls and the souls of our people, shirk or hold back in the slightest iota with regard to either our general or specific preparation to preach properly the gospel of Jesus Christ under the power and anointing of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

As part of his specific preparation to preach, the earnest pastor will want, early in the week, to decide upon texts and topics for the following Sunday. He will make this a matter of earnest prayer. After these have been revealed to him in answer to prayer, mostly in the light of his congregation's needs, he will then desire to study diligently and carefully in the direction of thought suggested by the texts. It will be well for him to cultivate a receptivity of mind and heart to any truth God may have to reveal to him in harmony with the chosen text and theme before consulting commentaries and other source books too much, lest he be but a parrot for repeating what other men have written. After his mind and heart have remained quietly in the presence of God, soaking in

the truth of God as it is revealed to him, then let him consult commentaries, a concordance, a New or Old Testament history, and any and all other helps available that may shed additional light upon the proposed sermon. It is of the utmost importance that he make sure that his text is not taken out of its setting or misinterpreted. Any matters of geography or history that may be referred to in the sermon should be carefully investigated, that the preacher may be accurate in his preaching. The preacher must ever bear in mind the admonition of Paul to Timothy, previously referred to in this paper, that he should study to be a workman "*rightly* dividing the word of truth."

Much more could be said than has been said concerning both the general and specific preparation necessary to the proper proclamation of the gospel of the blessed God entrusted to our hands. But enough has been said, we trust, to give a general outline of the preacher's preparation to preach.

We would not leave the consideration of the preacher's preparation to preach, however, without urging upon every preacher the importance of making his very best preparation for every occasion. Dr. J. B. Chapman, in his seminary lectures entitled "The Preaching Ministry," tells of Dr. Jowett that on a given occasion he was invited to come to a certain church to deliver an address. This the famous preacher was reluctant to do because of the pressure of his pastoral duties. But the committee finally said: "Please come. We need you. You need not talk long. If we can announce that you will be there, and you will favor us with a ten-minute talk, we shall be satisfied." Jowett yielded and promised to go, but later that

committee was highly embarrassed to find that this busy pastor found it necessary to use two full days in preparing that ten-minute address. This story but illustrates how seriously one busy man took his work.

Purposely we have refrained from saying much about the preacher's prayer life. Our reason for this seeming neglect has been that we have felt that the main emphasis in this matter would more properly fall within the compass of a consideration of the pastor's devotional life. However, we wish to state in no uncertain terms that the pastor will always be a glaring failure as a preacher, as well as in everything else he does, unless he lives continuously in the spirit and atmosphere of prevailing, importunate, and Spirit-energized prayer. No man can serve aright as the oracle of God to his fellow men unless he comes straight from the throne room of Divine Omnipotence with the dews of heaven fresh upon his spirit.

A few words may not be amiss concerning the content of the pastor's preaching. Caution would seem not to be out of order lest the pastor, in his preaching, become a hobbyist. All of us have certain themes upon which we especially love to preach; but due care should always be exercised that the preacher's feet travel the entire field of essential Christian doctrine rather than to follow constantly the well-worn path of his favorite themes with monotonous regularity. Our fathers used to pray from time to time this very worthy prayer: "Lord, help the preacher to give to all, both saint and sinner, their portion in due season."

The pastor should preach again and again, with a recurring and wholesome emphasis, upon every important theme and doctrine of our holy, revealed religion. He should

preach on sin, repentance, salvation, atonement, God, faith, prayer, comfort, love, the Holy Spirit, regeneration, entire sanctification, judgment, heaven, and hell. He should seek to cover so thoroughly the entire compass of the great truths of the Bible during the tenure of every pastorate that no man or woman who had attended regularly the preaching services of his church during the course of his ministry there could fail to have a clear understanding of the teachings of God's holy Word.

Every pastor's preaching is characterized by some dominant spirit. It is possible for the preacher unwittingly to do irreparable harm in his preaching if he possesses a harsh, driving, dogmatic, uncharitable spirit. To preach the truth of God in the spirit of an all-consuming love and tenderness for those to whom he preaches should be the highest ambition of every preacher. The people will accept fearless and rugged truth if only they can be persuaded that the man who proclaims that truth sincerely loves them and that he is genuinely interested in their eternal welfare. In the work of the ministry the spirit which motivates the message is of equal importance with the content of that message. May God help us to guard well our spirits and ever make sure that our courage and fearlessness in prophetic utterance are tempered with a generous measure of tenderness and solicitude for the souls of our people.

Phillips Brooks, in his *Lectures on Preaching*, tells the following story. "I am not convinced by what you say. I am not sure that I cannot answer every one of your arguments," said a man with whom a preacher had been pleading, "but one thing which I confess I cannot understand. It puzzles me and makes me feel a power in what you say. It is why

you should care enough for me to take all this trouble, and to labor with me as if you cared for my soul." This is the power which every one of our hearers must feel.

What should be the dominant drive that impels or motivates us in all of our preaching? To what end and purpose are all of our sermons? What are the goals and ends that we desire to achieve through all of this expenditure of effort and energy? These questions can be answered no better than to suggest that every pastor in each message he delivers should constantly be "preaching for a verdict." We do not mean to suggest that every sermon will be productive of earnest seekers and happy finders at an altar of prayer. But every time the minister stands up to preach he should have the goal before him, not only of proclaiming truth, but of reaching through to the hearts of his auditors and moving the wills of his hearers to definite action for Christ and His gospel.

It is not enough that men's minds should be informed or that their emotions should be aroused. There must be a definite decision at which they arrive in those things that are vital to their eternal salvation and to their growth and development in Christian character. God has not called us and appointed us as His ministers that we should blaze across the firmament of the world's consciousness like brilliant meteors. That men should know us as gifted orators and as men of fluent and pleasing speech is not to be our overweening ambition. He has called us and commissioned us to snatch immortal souls as brands from the eternal burning, to watch for the souls of men and women as those who must one day give account to the Judge of the quick and dead.

On the great day of final consummation we shall stand before His holy presence to lay our trophies at His nail-scarred feet. If on that day we shall be given to realize that heaven was made eternally richer and hell eternally poorer because freely and unstintedly we gave to the great Shepherd the best ministry that it lay within our poor power to give, that, in itself, will be all the reward for which any man could ask. There is no joy on earth or in heaven comparable to the joy of the soul winner. Please God it shall be given to all of us to hear those blessed words of commendation from the Lord and Master of us all concerning our ministry: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

### **The Minister's Professional Ethics**

*(Continued from page 59)*

munity and at neighboring parsonages. But wait a few years, and you'll make some mistakes to add to them, and with the added chapter that you write, the story will be more complete. The chances are that when you're gone there'll be some things to talk about, too; but who wants to talk about them, anyway?

Oh, well! There's no end to the field of the minister's ethics. There is no book with all the answers in it. Just keep close to God, study good manners, and practice them. Be unselfish and Christlike, in every circumstance, and do your best. With the patience of the people, the counsel of the superintendents, and the kindness of the neighbors, we'll make it to heaven and by the grace of God take some others with us, even though we may not always have done the things just according to the rules of a book.

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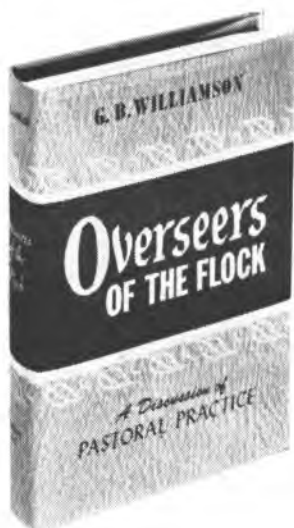
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