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LAURISTON J. DU BOIS, *Editor*

Contributing Editors

Hardy C. Powers

Samuel Young

G. B. Williamson

D. I. Vanderpool

Hugh C. Benner

General Superintendents, Church of the Nazarene

What Is a Call to the Ministry?*

By A. M. Hills, LL.D.

TEXT: *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron (Hebrews 5:4).*

A young minister wrote me some months ago asking me what constituted a call to the ministry. I have not intentionally neglected to answer him. But I have concluded to answer the same question, arising in five thousand other young minds, by using the religious press.

I. Let it be distinctly understood that God does give definite personal calls to the ministry. Jeremiah describes this call when only a baby (Jeremiah 1:4-10). In like manner the prophet Ezekiel, in Ezekiel, chapter two, describes his definite call to the work of prophecy.

In Acts 26:16-18, St. Paul gives a very detailed account of Jesus' selection of him as His minister to the heathen world. Jesus told Ananias that Paul was "a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47). In John 21:15-17 we have the last commission God gave to Peter.

Ministers have a distinct office to which they are appointed by the great Head of the Church, and the King of the Kingdom. "Let a man so account

of us, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Corinthians 4:1). "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20). A man would become the laughing-stock of the world who should assume the office of being an ambassador to a foreign court without being appointed by his government. Titus was bidden to make full proof of his ministry as if something had been entrusted to him to use wisely. By the mouth of Jeremiah God said, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15). "And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them" (Jeremiah 23:4).

II. How, then, may one know that he has a call from God? One almost needs inspiration himself to answer such a question wisely. May God guide us in what we write.

1. We suggest, then, that God is still able to make a divine impression upon the minds which is as plain and distinct as was the audible voice heard by Samuel or Saul. That is probably the beginning of the divine call. We know a child, now twelve years of age, studying to be a missionary. She has felt that impression ever since she was three years old, that God wanted her to be a missionary to Alaska. Who shall say that God's Spirit has

*Reprint from *Herald of Holiness*, August 3, 1927. Suggested by H. H. Eggleston, Picture Butte, Alta., Canada.

not spoken to her, as truly as He spoke to the boy Samuel?

2. When such an impression is accompanied by an intense desire to win souls, and sensible efforts put forth to win them, it suggests to any observant Christian mind that it is of the Lord. It was said of Alleine that "he was infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls." When he might have had a fellowship in his university, he preferred a chaplaincy because he could then be directly engaged in fishing for men. Spurgeon, addressing his students, quotes a minister, giving this advice: "Do not enter the ministry if you can help it." He added, "If any student in this room could be content to be a newspaper editor, or a grocer, or a farmer, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a senator, or a king, in the name of heaven and earth let him go his way; he is not the man in whom dwells the Spirit of God in its fullness; for a man so filled with God would utterly weary of any pursuit but that for which his inmost soul pants. But if, on the other hand, you can say that for all the wealth of both the Indies you could not and dare not espouse any other calling so as to be put aside from preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, then, depend upon it, if other things be equally satisfactory, you have the signs of this apostleship."

One really called of God ought to feel, and is likely to feel, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" Jeremiah said, "If I say, I will not make mention of the Lord nor speak any more in His name, then there is in my heart, as it were, a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain" (Jeremiah 20:9). If we undertake the ministry without some such spirit, the oppositions and self-denials and trials and disappointments nat-

ural to the work will break the spirit and ruin the life.

But with such an assurance of being called of God, as every minister should have, then he can laugh at trials and smile at difficulties, and leave seeming failures and defeats with Him whose are the allotments of men, whether of success or failure.

3. With all this he who is called should be "apt to teach" (II Timothy 2:24). God does not certainly call a soldier to battle without giving him some weapons, and ability for the use of them. He can certainly have "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And "he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" (Romans 14:17, 18). There will be at least a modest measure of the necessary gifts for the work of the ministry, which God's other children will be keen enough to discern.

There may not be great success at the beginning. Some of the greatest preachers did not have a promising start. The great Robert Hall broke down altogether three times, and cried, "If this does not humble me, nothing will." Some of the world's most successful orators did not at first give promise of their coming greatness. Demosthenes, the greatest of ancient orators, was hissed off the platform at his first appearance. His voice was weak and harsh, but he determined to be heard, and won at last the crown. Even Cicero at first suffered from a weak voice and a difficulty of utterance.

The famous Jew, Disraeli, stood for parliament five times, and at last won his seat. When he first attempted to speak in the Commons he was laughed from the floor. But he sat down saying amidst shouts of derision, "You will listen to me yet"; and they did, when, as prime minister of England, he arbitrated the destinies

of Europe and crowned Victoria empress of India.

Probably a man should not think it absolutely settled that he is called to preach until he has proved to himself and to others that he can preach. The called man will find himself endowed with a degree of speaking ability which he can cultivate and increase. "If the gift of utterance be not there in a measure at the first," said Spurgeon, "it is not likely that it will ever be developed."

4. God is likely to make it known to other godly souls if one is called to the ministry. Those who live with God will have a spirit of discernment which will not be mistaken. Human judgment, of course, is not infallible. Some one individual, however pious, owing to some personal element, may be mistaken in an individual case, like the godly matron who tried earnestly to discourage Charles Spurgeon from entering the ministry. But the voice of many godly persons of wider experience was heard on the other side and prevailed.

Spurgeon records the fact that the ministerial students in his school seldom, if ever, were wrong in their estimate of a fellow student. Meeting each other in every kind of circumstance, they formed a consensus of opinion which was not lightly to be set aside.

Spurgeon adds: "More than aptness to teach and to speak well is needed. Sound judgment and solid experience must instruct you; gentle manners and loving affections must sway you; firmness and courage must be manifest; and tenderness and sympathy must not be lacking. Gifts administrative in ruling well will be as requisite as gifts instructive in teaching well. You must be fitted to lead, prepared to endure, and able to persevere."

5. Another, and perhaps the final, proof of a man's call, is his fruitfulness in soul winning. It may not appear in the first sermon or the tenth, but it will soon be manifest that God has indeed called him to win men.

Here Spurgeon speaks impressively: "It seems to me that as a man to be set apart to the ministry, his commission is without seals until souls are won by his instrumentality. . . . It is a marvel to me how men continue at ease preaching year after year without conversions. How are they sent of God who bring no men to God? Prophets whose words are powerless, sowers whose seed all withers, fishers who take no fish, soldiers who give no wounds—are these God's men? Surely it were better to be a mud-raker or a chimney-sweep, than to stand in the ministry as an utterly barren tree. The meanest occupation confers some benefit upon mankind, but the wretched man who occupies a pulpit and never glorifies his God by conversions is a blank, a blot, an eyesore, a mischief. He is not worth the salt he eats, much less his bread; and if he writes to newspapers to complain of the smallness of his salary, his conscience, if he has any, might well reply, 'And what you have is undeserved.' Brethren, if the Lord gives you no zeal for souls, keep to the lapstone or the trowel, but avoid the pulpit as you value your heart's peace, and your future salvation."

6. God inhabits His Church, and the Church whose Head is Christ will usually hear from the skies. Some church will open its pulpit to the messenger whom God has called to fill it. A God-called man need not impatiently bombard the door of some desirable church. "He that believeth shall not make haste." He will dili-

gently spend the time preparing himself in mind and heart, and get a message from heaven that the world needs. The providence of God will then open the way for its delivery.

There is no higher, nobler, more important calling than the ministry. It demands full-grown, all-around,

well-equipped men with the elements of success in any calling. The time is past when a man should conclude that he is called to preach because he has failed in everything else. Jesus needs and deserves the very best men to be His ambassadors in the hostile courts of a wicked world.

FROM the EDITOR

VI. The History of Worship*

WE NOTED LAST MONTH some of the features of the worship of the New Testament Church. While we cannot say with full certainty what the pattern of worship was, we can from the limited data that is available reconstruct the general principles of New Testament worship, with some degree of accuracy.

Moving from this period, we step with seven-league boots across the centuries. To attempt to spot details and specific dates would involve us in minutiae which would defeat our purpose in this study. But it is valuable for us to note the sweep of the patterns of worship and to see some of the trends which characterized the history of worship in the Church, thinking at the moment of that period from the apostolic times to the Reformation.

The first century following the death of Christ saw a remarkable growth and development in the newly born Church, and with this growth

and development changes in its approach to worship became apparent. By the close of the first century A.D. it was quite apparent that the Church's worship had become distinctively its own, and whatever similarities had existed between it and the worship of Judaism were slipping away. More and more converts were being made outside of Judaism, in the gentile and pagan world. More and more the Church found itself in this gentile setting and was called upon to make its worship relevant to those who have had little religious background. Alongside of this, the Church was faced with severe persecution from the outside. This meant that to survive it must provide a cohesive force for its adherents; hence the Church increasingly became a center for fellowship and mutual strength.

With this sense of close fellowship there developed a sacramental idea in connection with the Lord's Supper. By now the observance had lost most of its association with the return of the Lord and almost entirely its social aspect as a common meal. While the Lord's Supper was still a service of sacrifice, praise, and thanksgiving, the

*The writer is indebted to the following books for this brief survey:

Thomas Harris, *Christian Public Worship*
Charles Heimsath, *Genius of Public Worship*
Ilion Jones, *History of Evangelical Worship*

Christians conceived God as hallowing the gift, so that the bread and wine were no longer common. The seeds were planted within these first two centuries for the idea later basic in the Roman concept that these elements were the "medicine of immortality."

THE CHURCH OF THE EMPIRE

It has long been a disputed question whether or not Emperor Constantine did the Church a favor when he made it the state church. But this much is true, when the Church came into favor with the rulers and Christianity was made the "official" religion, many changes took place in the structure of the faith and in the practices of worship. Once the pressure of persecution was lifted, the forces within the Church had free play and the Church was faced with a myriad of heresies. As a result, the worship services felt the sting of theological controversy, and theology became a part of the preaching and teaching of the Church.

Beside this, with the general popularization of Christianity there was injected the pressure of influence from the government. The emperors not only made suggestions as to the government of the Church but were largely responsible for the great influx of "unworthy" members, members who were not at heart Christian. Suddenly the Church found itself with the herculean task of assimilating "converts" who were unprepared and in some cases unwilling to accept the precepts and responsibilities of the Christian faith.

During this period there are several significant changes which appeared in the patterns of worship, changes which were to influence the Church for all time.

This influx of unconverted church members lowered the moral average

of the churches, resulting in an increased sense of sin and imperfection. The political calamities which hit the empire added to this sense of corporate guilt. Because of this, the worship services became permeated by an awareness of sin and began to take on the aspect of "confession" of sin, resulting in a hope for propitiation in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The atmosphere of elaborate places of worship, combined with the pressures of theological controversies, caused the leaders of worship to mumble their speech, and less meaningful services to the individual worshippers resulted.

A second change which arose had to do with the Church's viewpoint with respect to Christ. There grew up an emphasis on Christ's presence on earth here and now as the idea of His soon return faded. With this grew the idea that the saints embodied Christ's virtues and shared His example. Hence there came into existence an emphasis on the importance of the saints in worship, even to their merits and their power to answer prayer. This formalization of religion gave rise to asceticism. Small groups of Christians would gather apart from the Church, read a scripture, sing some songs, and pray. These meetings were held without the Lord's Supper and became a requirement for the clergy. Out of these arose a regular type of public worship service apart from the observance of the Lord's Supper. From these "prayer meetings" developed the "canonical hours" of medieval Christendom and ultimately the "preaching service" of the Reformed church.

The third great influence of this period had to do with the influx of many pagan ideas into the Church, brought in by the great host of non-Christian pagans who were made a part of the Church.

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

We can best get at the worship pattern of this period of the Church by noting briefly the philosophies of worship of the two branches of the Church which had come into being, the East and the West. The East, of course, is represented by the Greek Orthodox church; the West is represented by the Roman Catholic church.

The Eastern church, related as it was geographically and nationally to the Oriental world, and dealing with hordes of illiterate people, picked up and built upon the majestic features of Christian worship. Its emphasis is on praise and worship to God. The Eastern service is a pageant in which the drama of the majesty of God is unfolded and the journey of God from heaven to earth and the journey of man from earth to heaven are accomplished. Symbolism is paramount; the people participate very little and the services are long and drawn out with many and varied responses. The Eastern theology stresses the Incarnation and its focal point is Bethlehem. It is taken largely from St. John with special emphasis on the prologue in chapter one. Their worship is mystical and imaginative, seeking to assist the worshipers to find release from this world through the promise of eternal life.

The Western idea of worship varies somewhat from that of the East. The Romans sought to find ways to make Christianity meet individual needs. But in it all the liturgy of the Mass stood forth as important—not as a congregational act, as in the Early Church, but one which the people ob-

served. Corporate worship ceased to be motivated by the congregation. Western worship in contrast to that of the East is the drama of the Great Sacrifice. The West stresses the atonement with the focal point as Calvary. The theology of the West is Pauline and finds its expression in the Epistles. The worship of the West is precise and practical; the prayers are definite in their petitions; the goal of worship being release from sin.

Hence we see that the worship predominant in Europe on the eve of the Reformation was elaborate and ornamental. The central part of the service was the offering again of the Sacrifice of Christ, in the Mass, for the sins of the people. The fact that the people felt the Mass to be propitiatory led to all sorts of abuses. The gathered worshipers became mere spectators and the meaning of the worship less and less significant to the lives of the individual Christians.

The time was ripe for a break with this sort of worship. The sincere Christian heart, which would not be satisfied with less than reality and a true expression of spiritual worship, cried out against this formality and unreality. A spirit of protest, which had shown in one form or another over the years, began to gather force, which eventually did bring about a break with the religious hierarchy of form and ceremony. This was known in Christian history as the Reformation. It was, among other things, an attempt to make worship relevant to the individual and distinctly Christian in its character.

HELP

The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of your arm.

—*Sunshine*

The Preaching of Paul Scherer

By James McGraw*

"If you ever want to set anybody on fire, you will have to burn a little yourself."

This was the advice given to the students of Yale in 1943 as they listened to the visiting minister deliver the Lyman Beecher Lectures. These lectures were to be considered in the opinions of many of the students, the faculty, and the alumni as one of the outstanding series in the historic succession of lecturers which includes such names as Brooks, Beecher, Horne, Tittle, and Buttrick. This was a man whose pulpit ministry has set hundreds of listeners "on fire," perhaps because they sensed here was a man who "burned a little himself" as he preached the Word. This was a pastor, author, churchman, preacher—Paul E. Scherer.

Scherer's lectures, published by Harper and Brothers in 1944 under the title *For We Have This Treasure*, have become a standard work among students of homiletics who are seeking not only for skills and understandings in the science of preaching, but also for the secret of power in preaching, which is found in what Scherer calls "the stamp of Jesus" upon the preacher's own soul.

Born in the village of Mount Holly Springs, Pennsylvania, in 1892, Paul Ehrman Scherer was to become the fifth generation in a long line of clergymen in America.

Scherer cannot recall the exact date of his conversion, but he recalls the

time of his call to the ministry. It came at the time of his graduation with the master's degree from the college of Charleston, North Carolina. He went immediately then to Mount Airy Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, where he received the bachelor of divinity degree in 1916, and remained as a fellow until the spring of 1918.

He recalls his first sermon, which was preached in his father's church, St. Andrews, in Charleston. The sermon was titled "Abba, Father."

Ordained a minister in the Lutheran church in 1916, he served as an assistant pastor of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Buffalo, New York, for one year. Then followed his marriage to Lilie Fry Benbow, and the beginning of a long and fruitful pastorate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in New York. He served here for twenty-five years, until 1945. Since that time he has been the Brown Professor of Homiletics in Union Seminary in New York.

Among his books published are such well-known works as *When God Hides*, *Facts That Undergird Life*, *The Place Where Thou Standest*, *Event in Eternity*, *The Plight of Freedom*, *Exposition of Job*, and *Interpreter's Bible*. He was one of the editors of the last named volume.

Paul Scherer is one of those rare preachers who preaches equally well to other preachers and to laymen, according to the *Presbyterian*, and his sermons are equally good in print and

*Professor, Nazarene Theological Seminary.

by hearing. Perhaps the secret of this phenomenon can be found in his method of preparation, which involves a huge volume of reading and a careful and meticulous process of organization and writing. The result is usually something a layman can recognize as important and relevant, as well as extremely interesting; and the preacher can see in it a product of sermonization worthy of his deepest respect.

Let it not be understood, however, that there is anything mechanical about his sermons, as is sometimes true when homiletical perfection is the goal. Paul Scherer's goals in preaching are certainly not so superficial as could be defined by mechanical form and literary style. He has, as the *Journal of Theology* has described it, "a flair for pictorial expression" along with an active imagination, and as a writer he uses beautiful English. But his goals in preaching can be summarized in his own words. He writes, in *For We Have This Treasure*: "The function of preaching lies in no one of these three directions; it lies in all of them together: 'to teach and to inspire; to prove and to persuade; to point and compel.'"

There is feeling in Paul Scherer's preaching. He discusses the emotional appeal of good preaching in one of his lectures. "To rely on the emotions is demoralizing; to shun them is stupid and impossible," he declares to the students at Yale. "We are religious with the sum total of our lives, or we are simply not religious!" To support his views concerning this, he quotes Christopher Morely, who writes of a good book what could with equal force be set down of a good sermon: "It ought to come like Eve from somewhere near the third rib; there ought to be some heart beating in it." Scherer adds, "A sermon that

is all forehead doesn't amount to much." It must be said that there is much forehead, but even more heart, in the sermons of Paul Scherer.

Scherer spends, he estimates, approximately twenty hours in preparation for each sermon he preaches. In addition to this, something like ten hours each week are spent in reading and the enrichment of the mind and spirit. He outlined his steps in preparing a sermon in correspondence recently with Vernon Swim, student in Nazarene Theological Seminary, as follows: the use of periscopes (he hopes his sermons proceed from the Word); a careful exegesis; outline; write out completely; edit; prepare for delivery.

Regarding the writing of each sermon as a part of the preparation to preach, Scherer is very emphatic in support of its value and necessity. "I would not give a brass farthing, as a rule," he writes, "for a preacher who does not write out at least one sermon a week for the first ten or fifteen years of his ministry. It is a discipline that no man can afford to forgo. To write only the first half and leave the second half to God, as one young preacher said was his habit, merely exposes you to the compliment that was paid him: 'Sir,' remarked his monitor, 'I congratulate you indeed! Your half is unfailingly better than God's!'"

Nor does Scherer excuse those who claim circumstances do not allow them the time for adequate preparation. "A crude, inept, and uninformed preacher, with but few acquaintances among the great minds of the past and but a poor appetite for the best things of the present, is not just a victim of heredity or the pathetic product of an unfortunate environment; he has had something to do with it himself."

Lest anyone should assume there is some special talent or skill in the preparation of a good sermon, Scherer states: "May I . . . repeat with profound conviction: that the first step toward a good sermon is hard work, the second step is more hard work, and the third still more." Periods of intense study followed by times of relaxation, allowing the idea to grow and develop, followed by more study and concentration; this seems to be the formula that has produced fertility in the brain of this preacher, and he believes it will bring fertility to anyone willing to take the time and effort to do it.

Scherer's ideas on the place and importance of a good introduction in a sermon will bear study. "In any case and in every case," he warns his students, "be sure that the introduction is an introduction, the function of which is not simply to arouse interest but to introduce." As an example of an introduction which aroused interest but did little else, he cites one university preacher who is said to have quoted as his text for a chapel sermon Hazael's words to Elisha: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" He then looked up at his audience and said, "Well, dog or no dog, he did it." Not much else can be said for the sermon, since unfortunately the passage means no such thing, but at least it is said that the students listened that day. Scherer says, "Perhaps it would be better to preach on a text that is really there, even though it be not so interesting."

Paul Scherer believes that sermons should be vivid and alive. "Whatever else you do," he writes, "when you get on your feet, breathe the breath of life into the stuff you have taken in your hands. Do not let it lie there like a lump, dead and inert. Some-

where in one of his prefaces, Robert Louis Stevenson gives as his counsel to every author, 'What he cannot vivify, he should omit.'"

As an example of this quality of vividness in his own style of preaching, take a sentence from one of Paul Scherer's sermons. "Should you want an example of the sorrows of Jesus," he declares, "there you are. He saw the soul of man, created for grandeur, taking out its glory in ridiculous little claims, firing its guns, feeding its hunger with greed and lust and a taste for power, improving itself emptier and emptier, until it brings down around its ears the grim ruin of a broken world."

Scherer's style of delivery, contrary to what some might expect of one who takes such care in writing his sermons in complete manuscript form as a necessary part of his preparation to preach, is extemporaneous. He never reads his sermons from the manuscript. He says of his gestures that they are used moderately, and the same may be said of his use of sermon illustrations. He averages about two illustrations in each sermon he preaches, and his most frequent source for illustrative material is the Bible itself.

His idea of a good conclusion is one which challenges the mind and the will and leaves no doubt as to what the sermon's purpose is. He wrote to a student, "I am convinced that a sermon should leave a congregation with the sense that they have been encountered and addressed by God."

Doctrinal, expository, ethical, pastoral, evangelistic—Paul Scherer believes all types of sermons should be preached. Further, he believes that every good sermon should embody all these qualities if it is to be worthy of any degree of greatness.

When he was invited to lecture at

Austin Presbyterian Seminary in 1947, he was requested to preach rather than present learned and scholarly lectures. The ministers of this area had said, "We want to be fed and inspired that we may return with renewed strength to our work and to our congregations." In reply to this request Dr. Scherer wrote,

"For your comfort, may I say that I cannot lecture! I always preach."

Those who have heard him would wish to add to this that he does indeed always preach. He preaches like a man who "burns a little," and it is no wonder that many have had their hearts set aflame as they have listened.

Jesus Christ, God's Master Key

By Joseph T. Larson*

There are so many unlocked hearts and doors. There are also unlocked mysteries in the world, which need to be opened up. Jesus Christ is God's Master Key. He knows the secrets of the universe and the laws of natural and spiritual life. He has entered into all the secret things of God and His kingdom. There are no mysteries to Him. He is the Solver of all mysteries in earthly and heavenly spheres. How much men have sought after the keys to all the mysteries of life!

As a Key, Christ is the Source of bread of life, water of life, and wisdom of life. He is the One who gives hope for the dying and for the despairing, with joy to the sorrowful. He is the Door of life (John 10:9). He "is the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He is the Key to all unsolved problems of mankind.

Millions of keys have been used by man to open up doors. There are many untouched keys, unused and unknown keys. Too many hearts and lives are locked against God and His

Son, and all the realities of His kingdom. Christ knows all hearts and the possibilities of opening them and using such lives for His eternal glory.

Christ, the Key to the universe. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). Jesus Christ has the wisdom of the Father, knows all the laws of nature, all the aspirations of men's hearts, all the designs of the devil, all the plans of God, all the holy Scriptures, and all the glories of heaven. Nothing can be hidden from Him; He is God's Key to this universe and in Him all things are centered.

Scientists would do well to learn of Him, for He has the wisdom of all ages in himself. Knowing Him means a discovery of these truths as He would have us know them. Christ's supernatural wisdom is above all natural laws and yet does not violate natural law. When we are in touch with Him we are enabled to solve all of our problems.

Christ, the Key to the kingdom of Heaven. Although Christ gave to Peter ". . . the keys of the kingdom

*Evangelist. Denver, Colorado.

of heaven" (Matthew 16:19), yet He was back of these keys himself, for He could not give authority that He did not possess himself. Peter was not the first pope, nor the head of the first Church; Jesus was that Head. Peter on the Day of Pentecost used the keys given to him by the Lord and opened up to the unsaved the fold of the Church for entrance. This was the true Church ("the ecclesia—assembly of called-out ones") of which Christ was the Founder and Head.

For the Jews, Christ was the Messiah, and would have become the key for the Messianic kingdom as their Messiah and Saviour. No unauthorized man could use the keys of gospel testimony; but Peter declared Christ's deity in Matthew 16:16-18, and became a witness concerning the Godhead and Messianic mission of Christ.

Jesus Christ, Key to the Davidic or millennial Kingdom. "... he that hath the key of David ..." (Revelation 3:7). "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house" (Isaiah 22:22-23). Christ is the rightful Heir to David's throne. He shall inherit the throne as a royal king. All Messianic predictions of prophecy center in that hope. "... the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). God's purposes in Israel shall be revealed when Christ uses the keys of David in establishing His millennial reign upon this earth. Israel now lives in temporary blindness, spiritual darkness, and sinful unbelief, so far

as Christ is concerned. Their day of visitation from God will come, when Christ shall appear and restore to them the kingdom.

Christ the Key to answered prayer. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). There is no access to the Father except in the name of Christ. Ask in His name, and He will answer your prayers. Prayer in His name is based upon the blood of Christ, His sure mercy, His faithfulness, His promises, and upon the very faithfulness of God. Come boldly in the name of Christ. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

Dr. S. D. Gordon says: "The Lord Jesus is still praying. He ever lives to pray through us. Thirty years of earthly living; three years of serving, one tremendous act of dying; nineteen hundred years of praying! What an emphasis on prayer!" Prayer is the key which unlocks unlimited reservoirs of power, unlimited promises, untold blessings, holy influences, and the very wisdom of God for His people.

Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* tells of being in Doubting Castle. He is threatened by Giant Despair to commit suicide. He finally found the key to the door, "which went damnably hard," to use his own words. He used the key of promise and was soon outside the walls of Doubting Castle, running on the King's highway. O child of God! Use this key in the name of Christ! Such a prayer findeth an answer most assuredly.

Christ, the Key to revival. Even as prayer is a key to the power of God, so it is to revival. Peter used the keys Christ gave to him and had such a revival at Pentecost that 3,000

souls were saved after one sermon! Such a revival was based upon Christ's death and resurrection, His manifestation of miracles and teachings unsurpassed in history, and upon the culmination of that model sermon by Peter backed by the power of the Holy Spirit. It took three years to get a revival like that. Thousands of hearts have been stirred because Christ, the Word, and His messengers fully manifested the truth of the gospel. Too many revivals fail because of too much machinery and too little oil of the Holy Spirit. Some locked hearts do not respond to Christ; souls refuse to open to Him and accept His salvation. Yet God in answer to prayer can break through such situations. A few men prayed and preached in a large church to smaller groups of six, eight, and ten persons, and after six weeks there were sixty conversions and the church was greatly revived. Jesus Christ has used "key men" such as Elijah, Peter, Paul. He has used such men as Wesley, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, Finney, Moody, and Torrey. It is a blessed fact that He knows the man to use in every situation. As we respond to His movements and let His Spirit lead us, results will come "in due season."

Christ can open hearts, homes, communities, and entire nations to the gospel; He has had over nineteen hundred years' experience in doing this.

Christ, the Key to the Father's heart. Christ knows the Father's heart; He can reveal to the needy soul the love of God, the glory of God, and the salvation that is needed. In all of His ministry, Christ revealed the love of God, healing ministries, casting out devils, forgiving sins, bringing light and life with glory to men's lives. All this was the truest revelation of

the Father's heart to a lost and dying world. "I will give you a new heart," is His promise. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Behold the bursting heart of Christ upon the Cross, breaking for man's sin, and showing only the love and rescuing power of God!

Christ, the Key to salvation and heaven. "For he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Men cannot be saved from sin apart from Christ. From Him come grace, mercy, life, and the new birth, all because of Calvary. Christ is the Way to salvation, to forgiveness, to victory, and to heaven. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). He is the Door to salvation and also to heaven. Heaven is God's happy wish for a happy eternity!

John Evans, Scotch minister, was seated in his study. His wife came and asked, "Do you think we will know each other in heaven?"

"My dear," he replied, "do you think we shall be bigger fools in heaven than we are here?"

Christ is preparing mansions for us in heaven, and us for the mansions. He knows what furnishings we will need. He is able to fit us for heaven. He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

He will present us to the Father in the grand march of all the redeemed! Heaven's portals open, angels move at His command, and choirs will sing when they behold the abundant entrance of the saints of God! God and the Son shall be forever glorified in His people. Only His key to heaven can ever gain us entrance there: it will be the blood of the Cross, the risen and living Christ, "ever living to intercede for us."

The Devotional Life of the Preacher**

By Hearne W. Spruce*

Every preacher of the gospel should give first concern to his own personal, devotional life. Failure to do so is to do a major injustice to one's own soul, and to consciously thwart the only known means for spiritual growth. This failure does grave injustice to the gospel we preach, for in effect it says to those to whom we preach, "Do as I say and not as I do."

Then too, neglect in active devotedness to God will expose the preacher to the temptation of concluding that, because he continually tells others of Christ, Christ is with him. Such supposition is taking Christ for granted; and the seriousness of the whole trend is accentuated and emphasized when one realizes that taking Christ for granted is the first step to becoming professional and even Pharisaical.

Not to give first concern to one's personal, devotional life is a tragedy. It makes the preacher a trifler. It makes his preaching superficial and his whole life shallow. There's something telling and revealing about one's being faithful to his own devotions, and revealing about slackness in those devotions.

I. INCENTIVES TO DEVOTIONS

Now that we have introduced our thought with a negative approach, let's come around and view it from the opposite side; for actually, when we stop to think of it, there are many powerful incentives to faithfulness in

the exercise of our own means of grace.

Hunger for God. We know well that deep down in the heart of every spiritual Christian is a normal desire to experience an increasingly closer walk with God. Although the preacher is saved, filled with the Spirit, and a recipient of the peace and rest that the indwelling Spirit gives, he normally longs and yearns for that which is above and beyond anything yet attained in Christ. This hunger is a powerful incentive to faithfulness in personal devotions.

The Spirit's fullness was never intended to culminate in the self-repose of a satisfied, passive inactivity. Christ's pronouncement of blessedness on those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," coupled with His promise that "they shall be filled," has its counterpart in eating physical food. None of us has ever eaten enough at one sitting to do for a week! Though we eat to the full satisfying, the most of us are ready to eat again in from four to eight hours.

Thirst is an incentive. When Jesus told the woman at Samaria's well that whoever would drink of the water that He should give should never thirst, He did not mean that there would never be subsequent yearning for the water of life, but He meant that with that yearning would be the thirst-quenching fullness constantly available within. This hunger, this thirst, this insistent, impelling yearning for a growing fellowship with Christ that is above and beyond any-

*Pastor, San Antonio, Texas.

**Address given at District Preachers' Meeting.

thing yet attained, should be one of the most powerful motivations to faithfulness in personal devotions.

A persistent homesickness can be temporarily alleviated by a visit back home. But that does not guarantee that within a few months' time that yearning, drawing feeling won't return. This strong impelling that would unite the bonds of human affection is similar to that divine-human "drawing" for that which is above and beyond anything yet found in Christ. The reason some of us preachers don't lead our people may be because we have been too content in the shallows.

New levels of godliness. Perhaps a little different angle of approach yet would be to suggest that as preachers we should ever be on the stretch to acquire new levels of Christlikeness—personal godliness. To really know Christ in the sense expressed in the Saviour's prayer: "This is eternal life, that they might know . . . Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3), is to progressively strive toward new and unattained levels of Christlikeness—something far beyond the initial bestowment of grace. We make the search to know Him a kind of explorative endeavor, a lifelong quest, yea, an eternal one!

Christ and the things He gives. In Romans 8:32, Paul makes a tremendous statement: God shall "with him freely give us all things," and it is these "things" with Christ that are not to be discounted as an incentive.

Several months ago we gave our daughter to marry a fine and handsome young man. A few years prior to that I had not even known the lad existed. Then we gave him our daughter. Since then we have done many things for him we never would have thought of doing otherwise. Because of my daughter and son-in-law's connection with our denominational college, our attitude toward the

college is livened and helped for the good. Should they in the future accept an assignment in specific Christian service, our attachment to the pastorate, the mission field, or wherever they serve would be greatly strengthened. In like manner God has taken great interest in us for having given us His Son. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" He loved us before, but how different His love now! In the bequeathing of Christ to us, if the "all things" are not actually received, they are assuredly potentially and provisionally available. Such provision should be a powerful motivation to faithfulness in personal devotions. "All [things] are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

Volitional yielding. It almost goes without saying that the very heart of devotion is the purposeful yielding of our wills to God's. The world is so much with us! The spirit of the age, the contemporary mood, the subtle expediency of our times would infiltrate and powerfully influence our lives. Doubtless every one of us has been tempted, like Demas, to surrender to that mood. Demas succumbed to the "practical." His dream died. The world got him. He was completely engulfed by the secular. Any time any of us shift Christ from the center, or let devotion to Him grow lax and careless, we are threatened with spiritual decline and disaster. We must steer clear of carelessness in attitudes, carelessness in the use of our time, carelessness in the things we do, the places we go, the words we speak, and the thoughts we think. All of us know that it takes purpose and resolve to so center our wills upon God's that we're safeguarded from the secularizing process. And we know that first attention to

this will greatly enhance the spirit of true devotion.

Marginal living, a peril. We can make the challenge to guard against marginal living a real incentive to devotion. We must beware of doing religious duties without having our hearts in them: of praying perfunctorily, of testifying reluctantly, of experiencing a minimum of joy, manifesting a mere semblance of the peace that is designed to pass all understanding, exhibiting alarming symptoms of a leakage of first love. A challenge to guard against this depletion should strongly motivate our devotional living. Secondary matters don't have to clutter up our action pattern until they become primary. We don't have to be like Martha, in that she had no appreciable regard for Mary's superior choice. We can so resolve against marginal living that we'll be strongly motivated to faithfulness in our devotional lives.

Nourishing a living faith. The careful cultivation of a rock-ribbed faith should tend to incite devotion. Nothing tries faith like going through deep valleys and dark shadows. Preachers are peculiarly tried with that "Monday morning feeling" when the anticlimax of a secular week looms ahead. We look around, and look around again, and perfection doesn't seem so perfect. As we keep on looking, the devine seems clouded by the human. Somehow Satan's enticement to give up the struggle for purity, for integrity, for uprightness seems doubly strong. But a quick glance within, and a quicker glance upward, and about that time unconquerable faith comes in handy. It is the same kind of faith that made the spirit and bearing of the towering Saviour stand high above every contemporary of His day. He had a faith that enabled Him to see the unseen, and for this reason He can succor those that are tempted.

Everyone knows it is extremely hard to see God at times. The noise, the strife, the clamor about us shut Him out. The lure of the secular and the profane is ever bidding for our first best. If there is anyone in the whole area who should keep his bearings, and retain his poise and spiritual equilibrium, it must be the prophet of God. He of all others must stand with such sensitivity to God and spiritual things that his very personal life and being are a competent guide to life's true goal posts. We have to have skills as ministers if we are successful: organize, advertise, promote, plan, execute those plans; but first of all we must be men of spiritual devotion. While we give first attention to prayer, meditation, Bible reading, reading, fasting, etc., we must also major on godliness, charity, brotherly kindness, faith, purity, and patience, ever yearning for a closer walk with God, ever valiant in our fight against a sickly, halfhearted Christianity—within!

II. REWARDS AND BENEFITS

It seems that this meditation on the devotional life of the preacher would be incomplete and sadly lacking unless we noticed a few of the rewards and benefits resulting therefrom.

Effective preaching. One of the inevitable fruits is effectiveness in our preaching. Many of us may never be able to qualify as polished and educated preachers, but there is not one of us but who can be well informed. We can know the truth, and we can give it to others in a careful, accurate, and anointed way. We can have God upon us till our ministry will count for the salvation of the lost about us. Any lack of ability need not be an alibi. The smallness of our opportunity need not excuse any of us from doing our best. Effectiveness as gospel preachers is in the reach of pos-

sibility for every one of us as we are faithful in the exercise of our spiritual devotions.

John Wesley advised his preachers: "Reading alone can supply depth to preaching, with meditation and prayer. Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not. What is tedious at first will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life. There is no other way. Do justice to your own soul. Give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer."

Dr. J. B. Chapman related in an editorial how a young preacher came to him with a request for some suggestions about Bible study. He said that he had followed no particular method, and that he would like to know of some special form he could adopt to become familiar with the Bible. Dr. Chapman said that he suggested as a beginning this young preacher read the Bible through in connection with the reading of some Bible commentary. He said the young preacher seemed to think this a pretty large order, that he evidently thought he should be able to get some small book that would tell him all he needed to know. It looked as if he expected that by some quick and easy road he could arrive at such difficult goal. Many of us here today have found out how necessary it is for us to study and read the Bible sufficiently to keep fresh and familiar with its contents.

Unction in worship. Another gratifying reward is the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our worship services. A spirit of unction upon our worship services is that undefinable something that keeps a religious service from being drab and commonplace, and makes it interest-

ing, inspirational, and helpful. Many of us are limited in preaching ability. The sermon we give is of moderate strength. The singing of our congregations is many times very ordinary, and the arrangement of the service has no particular power in itself. However, there can be that unction and spirit in the service that saves it from flatness and makes it relevant. It can take on such a divine attractiveness as gives to all the impression that God is there. All of us know that back of the public reward of such a service is the secret preparation that is so easy to completely overlook.

Rich in satisfying experience. But there is another reward, and that is the reward of a rich and satisfying personal experience in the life of the preacher himself. Many preachers are underpaid financially in comparison to the scale paid in many contemporary professions, but we can have the compensating reward of being right toward God: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22). None of the worldly wealthy is as rich as the poor man, rich in God, and no one is as poor as a preacher impoverished spiritually and financially!

In one of my recent visits to my parents' home my mother confided in me one day as to how my father delights in reading his Bible. I knew as she talked about it that he had read his Bible through literally scores of times from cover to cover; and here in his mid-eighties, hour after hour each week, he was pictured to me as taking great delight in the Word of God. By every rule of worldly appraisal these dear parents are of very moderate circumstances, but at the same time rich: rich in those heavenly values that really count, rich in the reward of faithfulness in personal

devotions, rich in a heritage worth infinitely more than any financial endowment.

Perhaps in connection with all this, those of us following through with this meditation will be constrained to do some serious checking up. If we ministers miss it here, we have missed it! We can't expect our laymen to go farther in personal devotedness than

we. If we are languishing in spiritual impoverishment, we surely don't need to. If we flourish in the bounties of divine blessings, there is a reason for that flourishing. The spiritual level of our attainment depends on us. May we in no sense fail, but give first attention to faithfulness in the cultivation of our own personal devotional lives.

Will There Be a Secret Rapture of the Saints?

By Maynard James*

Since I was a boy I have firmly believed in what is called the "rapture of the saints."

This belief teaches that, when the Lord returns in the air at the end of this age, the dead in Christ shall rise from their graves, to be followed immediately by the catching into the clouds of all the living saints. Then both classes will meet the Lord in the air, to be forever with Him.

To deny this plain truth is to rob language of its meaning and make nonsense of Paul's clear statement in I Thessalonians 4:15-17.

The problem arising from this important teaching is not that of doubt as to the reality of the rapture of the saints; it is rather along the following lines:

1. Will this great even be silent and secret? Or will it be with open and thunderous demonstration?

2. Does it come before or after the "Great Tribulation"?

3. Will it inaugurate a thousand years of peace on earth, during which

three classes of people coexist on this planet, viz., the glorified saints, the righteous mortals, and the ungodly people who are held in check by the iron rule of Messiah? Or does it usher in the eternal state, as enjoyed in a "new" or purified earth, in which there is neither death nor sin?

It is impossible in one short article to deal adequately with this threefold problem. We can attempt only a discussion of the first point mentioned, viz., is the rapture of the saints silent and secret or is it open and vocal?

The main advocates of the "secret and silent" catching away of the saints have been our friends the Plymouth Brethren. Their outstanding leader, J. N. Darby, set in motion a line of teaching which, with the aid of the Scofield Bible, became universally popular and accepted in evangelical circles. In fact, at one time it was almost a mark of heresy to deny such theories as a secret, pre-tribulation rapture, to be followed by a seven years' tribulation on earth, during which a personal Antichrist

*Evangelist, Cheshire, England.

would arise and inflict the mark of the beast upon most of the world's inhabitants. Then would come the openly manifested return of Christ, along with those saints He had translated seven years previously, to destroy Antichrist and the false prophet and their godless followers, and then to set up His millennial kingdom on this earth.

Such teaching was often supported by the use of the three Greek words: *parousia*, *apokalupsis*, and *epiphaneia*.

The first word, *parousia*, was applied to the secret coming of Christ in the air for His saints, before the tribulation commenced. It was commonly called the rapture. The other two Greek words, *apokalupsis* and *epiphaneia*, were applied to the visible coming of the Lord to earth with His glorified saints at the close of the tribulation. This was popularly known as the "revelation."

Now what does the Bible actually say about all this? First and foremost is the clear teaching of the Lord to His own apostles, right on the eve of Calvary.

He stated: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be." "If they shall say unto you, 'Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not' (Matthew 24:26-27).

Again He declared: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

The flood did not come secretly and unperceived upon the antediluvians, nor was their destruction postponed until sometime subsequent to the Flood. Just as the Deluge affected both the righteous and the wicked (destroying all the latter), so, said Jesus, would be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of man. The saints would be delivered and the ungodly swept away in judgment.

In Luke 17:29 and 30 we have further words of our Lord on the matter of His second coming. He said: "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

It is of utmost importance to realize that, in the three scriptures we have mentioned, Christ was not addressing the Jewish nation or the unbelieving gentiles. He was speaking expressly to His own disciples. In fact, the whole of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 was given privately to four apostles, in response to their question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the age?" Thus the Saviour did not speak to them as Jews, but rather as foundation members of His Church.

The Apostle Paul also made it clear that the rapture of the saints would not be silent and secret. Our Plymouth Brethren friends agree that the well-known passages I Thessalonians 4:15-16 and I Corinthians 15:51-52 refer to the rapture of the true Church at the second coming of Christ.

They read as follows: ". . . we which are alive and remain unto the coming [*parousia*] of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the

trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:15-17). "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

If any sensible person can make a secret and silent rapture out of these important scriptures, then language has lost its significance. Paul distinctly states that at the rapture of the saints the last trumpet shall sound.

How well does the apostle agree with Christ when He said of the *parousia*: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31).

It is evident, from a careful and unbiased reading of the New Testament, that the three Greek words *parousia*, *apokalupsis*, and *epiphaneia* are kindred terms used to describe the one great future event—the second coming of Christ. The following scriptures prove this vital truth: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (*epiphaneia tees parousias autou*) (II Thessalonians 2:8).

Here both words are applied to one cataclysmic action, the word *epiphaneia* being rendered "brightness," and the word *parousia* translated as "coming." This vital passage teaches, first, that *epiphaneia* and the *parousia*

are simultaneous; and secondly, that the career of the "man of sin" ends (and not begins) at the *parousia*.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). Here the appearing of the Lord, as the hope of His Church, is designated the *epiphaneia*.

"But thou, O man of God . . . keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Timothy 6:11, 14). It is plain that in this passage the apostle refers to the rapture of the saints as the *epiphaneia*.

I Corinthians 15:23 states that at the coming (*parousia*) of Christ the saints will be resurrected.

But in II Thessalonians 1:7-10 we are told that the glorification of the saints (which takes place at the resurrection) occurs when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed [*apokalupsis*] from heaven with His mighty angels. Hence it is clear that the *parousia* and the *apokalupsis* are simultaneous.

It has been borne in upon me in recent months that the coming of our blessed Lord in the air to translate His saints is a climactic event, the magnitude and portentousness of which some of us have not hitherto realized. If we did, it would put an urgency and power into our preaching and witness which would startle and convict the godless, and arouse and challenge the saints.

Peter sums it up when he exhorts all Christians to look for and hasten the coming (*parousia*) of the day of God. He describes that coming—for which we are to eagerly look—as being like the arrival of "a thief in the night"—not something silent, but unexpected by the Christ-rejecting masses. In that day "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with

fervent heat." It is such an event that Christians are urged by Peter to anticipate.

In consequence, they are to "be diligent," that they might be found of the Lord, at His coming, "in peace,

without spot, and blameless" (II Peter 3:14).

Our hope, "according to his promise," is for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13).

Reality in Worship

By Kenneth P. Smith*

Worship is communication. God is the Communicator. We are the communicants.

Communication is an interesting process. One essential factor without which communication is not achieved is the "feedback" from the communicant to the communicator. This is that response that is lacking when the uninitiated sits down before a microphone in a broadcasting studio. The whole program seems flat to him because he cannot see his audience and thereby sense their reaction. Worship is a process of communication—with One who is unseen but who nevertheless makes His presence known. We are not talking meaninglessly into a "microphone" when we lift our hearts to God. The promise is, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." If worship seems unrewarding and empty, there must be a reason.

This leads us to another important ingredient in communication, which is the use of "significant symbols." Whether a word, a gesture, or a grunt—it is that which has the same meaning to the two or more persons

involved. Sometimes those who complain of the hollow ring of their prayers or the vanity of their devotional exercises may lack that vital preparation of character which is a "significant symbol" in catching the ear of God. If a finite, sinful man is to enjoy the reality of communication with a Heavenly Father, he must approach Him on terms that God has stipulated and through provisions which He graciously proffers. The wonder is that there is a way at all to fellowship with God. Had it not been for Jesus, man might have cried or shouted or cut himself, all to no avail. Jesus is the One who has provided a common ground on which God and man can communicate.

Could we not improve our worship, individually or collectively, if we would keep clearly in mind that we have not worshiped until we are aware of that response from the Communicator? God is near, ready and anxious to reveal himself. We must free ourselves from the bondage of incipient formalism and of indifferent familiarity and of all other attractions and distractions. It is our privilege to enjoy the enriching experience of "heart-felt" worship.

*Pastor, Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Gleanings from the Greek New Testament

By Ralph Earle*

ROMANS 9:1-3

The first eight chapters of this Epistle consist of doctrinal explanation; chapters 12—16, of practical exhortation. In between are chapters 9—11, which form a sort of parenthesis dealing with God's plan and purpose for Israel. Here are some of the strongest statements on God's sovereign will to be found in the New Testament.

NO FALSEHOOD

Paul was about to make a startling statement, so he fortified it with the assertion, "I lie not." The verb is *pseudomai*. Since the prefix *pseudo*, in both Greek and English, means "false" we might render the clause: "I do not speak falsely."

IN CHRIST

The significance of this phrase as used in the first verse is beautifully expressed by Denney. He writes: "En Christo means that he speaks in fellowship with Christ, so that falsehood is impossible."¹ Could you lie if you were fully conscious that Christ was standing by your side? Well, He is! A recognition of the constant presence of Jesus would help us in our daily living.

THE JOINT WITNESS

To further strengthen his assertion of truthfulness Paul adds: "my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." The verb *symmar-*

tureo occurs here for the third and last time in this Epistle. In 2:15 we find almost the same expression as here. In 8:16 it is the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our human spirits. Do our consciences bear witness with us or against us? Paul asserted that his inner conscience concurred with his outer testimony.

THE TRIPLE TESTIMONY

The apostle not only claimed the confirmation of his conscience, which he alone could hear, but also the witness of the Spirit. James Morison writes that the concurrent testimony with his declaration and with conscience was "the echo of the voice of God's Holy Spirit."²

SPIRIT OR GHOST?

The expression "Holy Ghost" occurs over eighty times in the New Testament in the King James Version. "Holy Spirit" is found four times (Luke 11:13; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; I Thessalonians 4:8). Both are translations of exactly the same Greek expression, *hagion pneuma*.

The English Revised Version (1881) shows an even greater inconsistency. Vincent sums up the situation thus:

"Throughout Matthew, Mark, and Luke they use *Ghost*, with *Spirit* in margin, as also throughout Acts and Romans. In John, *Spirit* throughout, except in xx. 22, for no apparent reason. In I Corinthians, both; in II Corinthians, *Ghost* throughout; in

*Professor, Nazarene Theological Seminary.
¹EGT, II, 656.

²Quoted by Vincent, *Word Studies*, III, 99.

Ephesians, *Spirit*. In I Thessalonians, both. In Timothy, Titus, 1st and 2nd Peter, *Ghost*, in Jude, *Spirit*."

The American Revised Version sensibly has "Holy Spirit" always. To show the unwisdom of using "Holy Ghost" one need only ask one question: Would you speak of "the ghost of God"? Today the word ghost is used for the Spirit of a *dead* person. It should not be applied to the Spirit of the living God.

PAUL'S PAIN

In the second verse the apostle declares that he has "heaviness" and "sorrow" in his heart. The Greek words are *lype* and *odyne*. The first is the most common word for "sorrow" in the New Testament, being translated that way eleven out of its sixteen occurrences. The second word occurs only here and in I Timothy 6:10. Both words are used for pain of body or mind. Perhaps the first carries slightly more the idea of "grief," and the second of "distress." Moffatt translates them "pain" and "anguish." Weymouth has "grief" and "anguish," as does Williams. Verkuyl (Berkeley) seems best with "intense grief and unceasing distress." ("Unceasing is the literal meaning of *adialeiptos*.) Sanday and Headlam comment: "*Lype* . . . appears to mean grief as a state of mind; it is rational or emotional: *odyne* on the other hand never quite loses its physical associations; it implies the anguish or smart of the heart . . . which is the result of *lype*."³

AN IMPOSSIBLE WISH

In the third verse Paul writes: "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." A better translation is: "I could have

wished." The form *euchomen* is the imperfect of *euchomai*, "pray." Alford says: "The imperfect is not historical, alluding to his days of Pharisaism, as Pelagius and others, but *quasi-optative*, . . . '*I was wishing, had it been possible*. . . . The sense of the imperfect in such expressions is the proper and strict one . . . : the act is unfinished, an obstacle intervening."⁴ Sanday and Headlam would translate it: "the wish was in my mind" or "the prayer was in my heart." A. T. Robertson calls it the idiomatic imperfect, "I was on the point of wishing."⁵ In his *Grammar* he labels it the potential imperfect and comments on this passage: "Paul almost expresses a moral wrong. He holds himself back from the abyss by the tense."⁶ Vincent writes: ". . . the imperfect here has a tentative force, implying the wish *begun*, but stopped at the outset by some antecedent consideration which renders it impossible."⁷

Godet agrees with this interpretation. He says: "The imperfect indicative *euchomen*, literally, *I was wishing*, has in Greek the force of throwing this wish into the past, and into a past which remains always unfinished, so that this expression takes away from the wish all possibility of realization."⁸

Denney shows the basis of the apostle's statement when he writes: "Paul could wish this if it were a wish that could be realized for the good of Israel."⁹

I MYSELF

The Greek is emphatic—*autos ego*. Sanday and Headlam write: "The emphasis and position of these words

³*Greek Testament*, II, 402.

⁴*Word Pictures*, IV, 380.

⁵*Grammar*, p. 886.

⁶*Word Studies*, III, 99.

⁷*Romans*, p. 339.

⁸EGT, II, 657.

⁹*Romans* (ICC), p. 227.

emphasizes the willingness for personal sacrifice; and they have still more force when we remember that St. Paul has just declared that nothing in heaven or earth can separate him from the love of Christ."¹⁰

ANATHEMA

That is the Greek word for "accursed," found half a dozen times in the New Testament but only here in Romans. The term has a long and interesting history. It was first used for a votive offering set up (*anathemi*) in the Temple. In the Septuagint it ordinarily means "devoted to destruction."

Commenting on this passage, Cremer writes: "Some have supposed that *anathema* . . . simply denotes an act of church discipline, just as the Hebrew *herem* sometimes signifies the second stage of excommunication from the synagogue. . . . But the words *apo tou Christou* show that the reference is not to mere excommunication from the church, but to estrangement from Christ and His salvation . . . the word denotes not punishment intended as discipline, but *a being given over, or devotion to divine condemnation*."¹¹

Sanday and Headlam agree with this conclusion. They say: "The attempt to explain the word to mean

'excommunication' from the society—a later use of the Hebrew in Rabbinical writers and the Greek in ecclesiastical—arose from a desire to take away the apparent profanity of the wish."¹²

Paul's prayer reminds us of that of Moses: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:32). Bengel well says: "It is not easy to estimate the measure of love, in a Moses and a Paul. For the narrow boundary of our reasoning powers does not comprehend it; as the little child is unable to comprehend the courage of warlike heroes."¹³

Alford points out the fact that this does not mean that Paul loved his nation more than his Lord. Rather, "It is the expression of an affectionate and self-denying heart, willing to surrender all things, even, if it might be so, eternal glory itself, if thereby he could obtain for his beloved people those blessings of the Gospel which he now enjoyed, but from which they were excluded."¹⁴

Dorner has best caught the significance of Paul's prayer. He calls it "a spark from the fire of Christ's substitutionary love."¹⁵

¹⁰Romans, p. 228.

¹¹Concordance, p. 547.

¹²Romans, p. 228.

¹³Gnomon, III, 120.

¹⁴Op. cit., II, 404.

¹⁵Quoted by Denney (EGT, II, 657).

VACATION

Vacations are great levelers. The person who takes one returns home just as broke as the person who stayed home because he couldn't afford to go away.—*National Safety News*.

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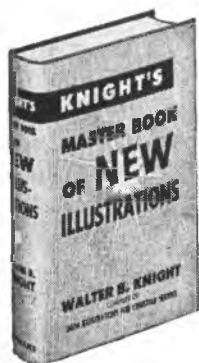
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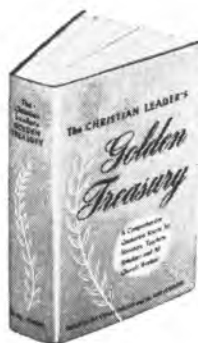
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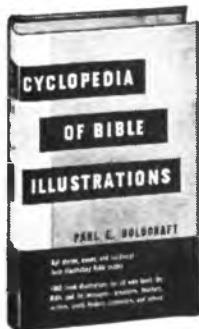
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"QUEEN of the PARSONAGE"

*May she who in the parsonage dwells be radiant, poised, serene;
And every moment of each day be every inch a queen!*

Supplied by Ruth Vaughn*

Portrait of a Queen

She didn't marry a Nazarene! She didn't marry a minister! She didn't plan to live in a parsonage! But she did all three!

Due to a Nazarene minister's ceaseless intercessory prayers for the man for whom he worked, Bill and Myrtle Lee Jetton found Christ. Bill Jetton was an excellent salesman, but he felt God's hand leading him into the Nazarene ministry. About this call, he pondered, prayed, and discussed with his lovely, young wife. They both knew the financial decrease it would mean; they realized that the acceptance of this call would mean the end of a lot of dreams for worldly goods and social ease. But they also knew that accepting the call would prove the beginning of a lot of more important dreams and that the financial decrease would be well worthwhile when they found the tears of a convert on their altar.

Mrs. Bill Jetton is an ideal of adaptability. She changed her life in every phase and capacity and set out to become a good Nazarene, a good minister's wife, and live her life in a Nazarene parsonage. She helped her husband with his preacher's course; she typed all of his sermon notes. She won the hearts of all of the people whom they had been sent to serve; she gave of herself unstintingly

in every department and phase of the Sunday school and church work. She spent hours typing stencils and mimeographing lists of absentees and prospective members; she took pictures of all the babies in the nursery, framed them, and put them in the vestibule. She entered into the work of the district church and served as district missionary secretary; she took over the craft department of the district boys' and girls' camp and made it a delight for all.

But with all of her busy church schedule into which she has thrown herself energetically, Mrs. Jetton has trained four young lives and molded them into strong Christian personalities. Her oldest child, who is now in Bethany Nazarene College, is engaged to a ministerial student. She wrote of Mrs. Jetton:

"My mother has a fire burning in her heart that won't let her rest. She has worked hard to keep right relationships between her and all of the people of our church. She believes that the preacher's family should set an example before the world and the congregation—and she has molded us in such a manner that we could exemplify Christ, for we have seen Him manifest every day in the life of our mother."

Truly Mrs. Bill Jetton, minister's wife of Grace Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, is a member of royalty. This is a portrait of a queen!

*Pastor's wife, Amarillo, Texas.

ROYAL COOKBOOK

These warm days call for meals that require no cooking. A cool, economical, and delicious meal is stuffed tomatoes with crackers. Easy and simple—but soooo good! Here is how:

Take a medium-sized tomato, slice into six wedges with the cut about three-fourths down the side of the tomato. Fill with a mixture composed of tuna fish, mayonnaise, and shredded onion. Place the stuffed tomato on a lettuce leaf and serve with crackers. Excellent for after-church snacks as well as noontime lunches. (This is an individual serving.)

OVER TEACUPS

“There is a lady who comes to our church who professes to accept Christ over and over again—but her life never changes. After an altar service she will cry and promise me that she is truly going to be a Christian—but by the next day it all seems to be forgotten and she is continuing in her sin. Should I continue to work with her—or just let her go? What should be my attitude toward her?”

One of the greatest attributes of love is patience. The more I understand of God, the more I marvel at His patience with us. In your dealings with this lady you must show forth to her the love and patience of God. Though she continue on this same way time without number, you must always be ready to help her, for you can never know just what time the Holy Spirit will so grip her that she will truly make a change for life. Winning a soul is not easy—but it is surely rewarding, for you can know that seed sown in His name shall not return unto Him void.

BOOKSHELF WITH LACE

For a graduation gift for the youth of your church or your family, give

Charles M. Sheldon's *In His Steps*. This book flings out the challenge, “What would Jesus do?” Any life who accepts this question as its deciding and guiding influence will find a more vivid consecration. May be purchased at the Nazarene Publishing House.

THE KING'S HOUSE

Here are some simple, economical, useful gadgets which can fill a need in the parsonage and can also be used in vacation Bible school. Paperweights may be made by filling pretty-shaped perfume and cologne bottles with tinted sand. The sand may be tinted with vegetable dyes or ink. The tops may be sealed with cellophane tape and aluminum foil. A glove or handkerchief box may be made from a cigar box. Paint the box and hinge on the lid. Cover the top with glitter or arrange glitter in a design.

HEART TALK

I sat in the church service and looked about the congregation of listening, attentive people. And my heart surged and filled for them as I mused:

These are my people—mine because I live in a parsonage. They are thoughtless many times, selfish and shallow often—but they are my people!

Because I live in a parsonage, they come to me with their bleeding, broken hearts seeking guidance and strength and I can lead them to the Giver of divine guidance, divine strength, and divine love.

My people are human. No one knows better their humanity than I, who live in the parsonage. I see their faults, their weaknesses, their petty prejudices but it is then I know how much they need to know more about God. And it is then I realize the

awesomeness of my responsibility, for I must show forth to my people the love of God, His great Spirit, His limitless compassion. For I was not sent here to this parish to be treated right, to be understood, to be appreciated, to be helped, to be loved. But instead I was sent here to treat right, to understand, to appreciate, to help, to love.

These are my people! They are my

responsibility. Oh, may I forget self and stay so close to the Master that I can become like Him, that I can forget my feelings and desires as I give of myself to my people and lead them closer to Him! For when they come to me for help and I can lead them to God, then I know why I live in a parsonage. I know why I am here. I know that I must be true to my task to lead my people to heaven.

EVANGELISM

Life's Three Greatest Questions

By Ross W. Hayslip*

(An Evangelistic Message)

TEXT: Hebrews 1:1-2

We are living in an age of inquiry. The world of men is searching for answers to many questions. Philosophy is asking, "What is the ultimate good?" Science is asking, "What are the facts?" Education is asking, "What is true knowledge?" Everywhere that we turn we find the quest for certainty in all realms of life. These things are all insignificant in the light of the questions that I wish to bring, those that have to do not only with this life but also with the life to come.

I. WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?

In Matthew 27:22 we find this question falling from the lips of a Roman governor. Confronted by the claims of the Son of God, this wicked man asked this question not so much of the multitude as of his own heart. Every sinner who hears the gospel is

immediately faced with this same problem. His answer to it will determine where he shall spend eternity. There are at least three different ways in which this question may be answered.

One way in which the response may be given is that of passive observance. Robert G. Ingersoll, who spent his career in opposition to the Bible and the Church, looked at the life of Jesus and said, "If Christ were living today, I should delight to give Him homage." Nietzsche studied the life of Christ and said: "The only thing that is Christian in the Christian mode of existence, a life such as He led who died on the cross."

H. G. Wells whose agnosticism is well known has said on several occasions, "Jesus Christ is the greatest man in history." Thomas Jefferson, who was a professed deist, once said, "Had the doctrines of Christ always been preached as they came from His lips, the whole world would have been Christian."

*Pastor, Whittier, California.

Napoleon Bonaparte said, "Jesus Christ was more than a man."

In these cases, as in countless thousands of others, there are recognition and observance but not surrender. It is now popular in America to be religious and to say nice things about Jesus and the Christian religion. Even former blatant athiests and Christ-rejecting modernists find it to be an expedient thing to sing praises of the wonderful character and great wisdom of the Man of Galilee. But this kind of passive response does not change the life and character of mankind. A man can be damned admiring the greatness of Jesus if his admiration does not lead him to repentance and saving faith. "Indifference," said Caesar Malan, "is the deepest of all infidelities."

Definite rejection is another response that men can give to this question of vital consequence. The rich young ruler who was so graciously challenged by the claims of Christ heard the demands of full surrender, and rejected them in the full light of a convicted conscience. "He went away sorrowful" says the Word of God as it surveys the tragedy of a youth with great promise making life's greatest failure. Many who listened to Christ's ministry and saw His miracles while He was upon the earth refused to believe, because they loved the fleeting things of sin more than the joys that endure forever. Jesus said in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Men heard Christ in His earthly ministry and rejected Him just as men now reject His ministry through the blessed Holy Spirit.

Pilate found no fault in Jesus and, like Wells, Ingersoll, and others, gave

Him admiration for His character; but when face to face with the necessity for a decision of destiny, he rejected His grace. It was the fear of the crowd that motivated his spurning of the mercies of the Saviour. In spite of the warnings of his wife and the goadings of his own conscience, he turned Him over to His persecutors.

Our world today is full of Pilates who will admire Him, but when faced with the question of their individual responsibility toward Him will refuse and reject His offers of mercy and grace.

The only proper response to give to this first great question is full acceptance. To receive Him joyfully as our Saviour is the way to meet our obligation to this great challenge. On the Jericho road Jesus came in contact with a poor, blind beggar who sat by the wayside. When he learned that Jesus was passing by, he loudly cried out for mercy. Jesus stood and commanded the blind man to be brought to Him. When the blind man stood before Him, there Jesus restored his sight and told him that his faith had saved him. Moving on into Jericho, Jesus saw a man named Zacchaeus, who was chief among the publicans and a rich man. Because he was small of stature he had climbed a tree to have a better view as Jesus passed by. But Jesus saw him, and bade him to make haste and come down. When he later gave evidence of his repentance, Jesus announced that salvation had come to his house. Christ had the blind beggar to stand up and the wealthy publican to come down. When both were on the common level of His presence, He saved them. The salvation of Jesus Christ is the great leveler of mankind. Both of these men were made supremely happy because they had joyfully and completely accepted Jesus as their Saviour.

If we were to call the roll of great men who had experienced this happy meeting, we could find some names widely known. Augustine of Hippo was transformed from a life of sensual pleasure to the realm of devoted Christian service by his acceptance of the Christ. John Newton, who in his own words had lived a life "flagrantly profane," was changed by the amazing grace of God. John Wesley by a strange warming of the heart was made a flame of holy fire instead of a cold, ritualistic clergyman. There are thousands of others both famous and unknown who will rise up in the day of judgment to testify that life first took on real meaning when they turned in repentance from their sins to accept Him who had died for their salvation.

II. WHAT SHALL I DO WITHOUT JESUS?

Here is the second great question that we wish to consider. This question becomes especially significant when old age draws near and our physical powers are in a state of decline. According to the plan of the Creator men find their bodies changing with the passage of time. Ecclesiastes 12 gives a dynamic word picture of the advancing old age of a human being. Old age too often means the onrushing of fears as well as years, and the coming of gray days as well as gray hair. Only Jesus can help us meet the many problems of old age.

I have never in my life seen a happy elderly person who was not a Christian. In rest homes and institutions for the aged I have seen the loneliness of the folks who thought that they could leave God out of their lives. Bitter and cynical in soul they sit on the side lines of life with physical powers gone and no spiritual powers to uphold them. Paul spoke of the perishing of the outward man. He knew that this was the natural process

of life. But he experienced the secret of growing old with Christ when he spoke of the renewal of the inward man day by day. With this kind of life one does not have to grow old inside. Dare we face old age without Jesus?

We shall also all face sorrows and losses in the life that stretches ahead. The hand of death will remove from us those that we love. In my capacity as a Christian minister I have had the sad duty many times of standing near in the hour of death. In one instance I had to break the news to a member of my congregation that the wife had lost her life in an automobile accident. His response was, "Lord, You have left her with me for thirty-three years and now if You wish to take her home, I say, 'Thy will be done.'"

How different the situation of the family of the suicide when I told them of the passing of their loved one! Life tumbled in upon them because they had no connection with Christ or His Church. "Preacher, what can you say to us at a time like this?" was their question to me. They were facing a tragic loss and they had no invisible means of support.

We shall all need Him when such times come. Again I ask, "How shall we face the losses of life without Him?"

It is appointed unto man to die. What shall we do without Jesus when we are facing the hour of our passing? The Apostle Paul saw the hour of his departure at hand, and with the Christ of Galilee by his side, he said, "To die is gain."

Charles Lamb, English man of letters, had a different viewpoint of death. "Out upon thee, thou ugly, foul phantom. I detest, abhor, and execrate thee to be shunned as a universal viper, to be branded, proscribed, and evil spoken of. I do not care to be carried with the tide that

smoothly bears human life to eternity. I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here—a new state of being staggers me.”

However, we all wish to live as long as God sees fit to leave us here. We need not look upon death with fear as a dark intruder. The death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is a glorious example of how the righteous die in the triumphs of a living faith.

What will you do when the shadows lengthen if Christ has been left out of your life? When the dews of death dampen your brow, when pain throbs through your body, and your eyes take the stare of death—what will you do without Jesus? The answer is obvious. We cannot do without Him.

III. WHAT WILL JESUS DO WITH ME?

The Word of God teaches that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment. If we reject Christ throughout our lives, what can we expect Him to do with us in judgment.

We read in II Corinthians 5:10 that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”

II Timothy 4:1 says, “The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” Paul taught and believed that the day would come when our Lord will judge all mankind. We find some solemn and stern warnings concerning the judgment of Jesus, as we read further in the New Testament. II Peter 2:9 says, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” We can see in this passage the fate of the man who turns his back upon the Lord.

Is it reasonable to believe that a Christ of love and mercy shall one day sit upon a throne of judgment to condemn those who have refused His proffered grace? Jeremy Taylor phrased it properly when he wrote: “It is but reasonable for the interest of virtue, and the necessities of this world, that the private should be judged, and virtue should be tied upon the spirit, and the poor should be relieved, and the oppressed should appeal, and the noise of widows should be heard, and the saints should stand upright, and the cause that was ill judged should be judged over again, and tyrants should be called to account, and our thoughts should be examined, and our secret actions viewed on all sides, and the infinite number of sins that escape here should not escape finally.”

Aeschylus, the ancient classic tragedian, graphically said, “Death is no escape to the wicked from their sins, or the consequences of them. There is a tribunal which the wicked cannot escape, and a faithful record of their lives and a just judge, who will bring them to judgment and punish them according to their deeds.”

Man makes his own choice of his eternal destiny. The Bible everywhere assumes that man was placed on earth as a free being, made in the image of God; that of his own free will and accord he chose to sin; that God finds him in this fallen condition and appeals to him by all the instrumentalities in His power to turn away from a life of sin. He woos him by all the power of the Holy Spirit to accept the salvation which has been provided for him, and promises him peace, joy, and happiness here, and never-ending blessedness hereafter for so doing. If man will not have life, if he persists in wrongdoing, if he will choose evil in spite of all these

mercies, he must then accept the consequences of those mercies.

On the obedience to the laws of God depends the safety of our souls. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is really a merciful proclamation. "He that offends in one point . . . is guilty of all," is equally just and benevolent.

The Word of God teaches that the condemnation of the wicked is a terrible, eternal punishment. All that we know about this state we read in the Bible. We are taught there that in hell men lose many things but also lose the hope for better things. The rich man in Luke sixteen was no longer enjoying the "good things" of this life. What a source of remorse it must have been to him to "remember" what good things he enjoyed in this world, things that he was not properly thankful for; then, how he forgot God, forgot his own dependence, forgot the passing away of his years, forgot his responsibility to God, forgot the judgment—all these and a thousand other things he would remember!

This place to which the lost sinner is condemned is also described as a world of "darkness" and "outer darkness." Heaven is described as a place of light. Revelation 22:5 says, "The Lord God giveth them light." The soul that is lost never sees that light.

One of the most striking illustrations of the hopeless and consciously suffering condition of those who are finally impenitent is the fact that their suffering is closely identified with that of the punishment of the fallen angels and Satan. Matthew 25:41 says, "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Also in II Peter 2:4, 9 we read, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them

into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment . . . the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

What will Jesus do with the saved in the day of judgment? They shall hear the glorious words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father . . ." What a joy it will be to look upon His face! The sorrows of life will pale into utter insignificance when we stand in His presence.

It is related of a company of crusaders that when they approached the Holy City, and for the first time beheld its spires and turrets in the distance, some knelt in silent praise, others kissed the earth, while others laughed and wept in wild emotion; old and young raised the exultant cry, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" What shall it be when the Christian pilgrim, having ended his earthly journey, beholds the heavenly city all resplendent with the glory of God?

What shall it be to stand before the throne of God without "spot or wrinkle"? What shall it be to be the companion of angels and the righteous of all ages? To sing the song of Moses and the Lamb will be a joy supreme—to behold the One slain and humiliated, now glorified as the King Eternal. All that we can ever dream or hope will come into sweet realization in that great day when we stand upon the "Sunny Banks of Sweet Deliverance." If we have suffered with Him, we shall reign with Him, in the presence of the hallowed hosts of that heavenly land.

May the Holy Spirit's guidance be felt as you, my friends, ponder these three great questions of life:

What shall I do with Jesus?

What shall I do without Jesus?

What will Jesus do with me?

III. The Outline of a Good Sermon

By W. E. McCumber*

It is fair to ask the question, "Does a good sermon really require an outline?" The answer is, "Yes, for the same reason that man requires a skeleton, to give both rigidity and flexibility to his body, making efficient locomotion possible." The sermon worth preaching is going somewhere. To arrive, it must progress by means of logical and orderly arrangement. Otherwise it will be a gelatinous mass of verbal confusion, drifting with the changing currents of an undisciplined mind toward a dimly perceived and slowly reached goal. Heaven pity the congregation in that case!

A good sermon not only needs an outline, but it needs a good outline. And a good outline is marked by purpose, adapting it to the nature of the sermon; by progress, moving it to the climax of the sermon; and by paucity, fixing it within the limits of the sermon.

A good outline is marked by purpose. The purpose of the outline is to adapt it to the nature of the sermon.

If the sermon is topical, the divisions will develop the topic. Without orderly, symmetrical, and progressive divisions the topical sermon, more than any other kind, can swiftly degenerate into a merry-go-round of innocuous pseudo-exhortation. But a worthy topic that unfolds some portion of the will of God and the truth

of the Bible, developed by a succession of thoughtful divisions, can be a potent force in persuading the listeners to the obedience of faith.

Disturbed, as are most pastors, by the infrequency of many members in church attendance, I developed a very simple outline for a message entitled "AWOL"—absent without official leave. The text was Luke 4:16, "As his custom was, he [Jesus] went into the synagogue on the sabbath day." The subject was developed in these four divisions:

1. The example of Jesus gives you no leave.
2. The precepts of the Bible give you no leave.
3. The conscience of your church gives you no leave.
4. The responsibility of your influence gives you no leave.

Buttressing each section with appropriate scripture the sermon plowed deep, exposing careless church attendance for what it is, a grievous sin against others, the church, the Bible, and the Saviour.

If the sermon is textual the divisions will analyze the text. Most texts that yield themselves to this type of treatment have natural lines of cleavage and practically outline themselves. Often the very words of these inter-textual divisions will serve as the sermon "heads." Usually, however, the divisions are better stated in the minister's own phrasing, as the words of the scripture passage

*Pastor, Thomasville, Georgia.

suggest the leading thoughts of the outline.

For example, I was once impressed with how vividly the drowning of the demon-ridden swine at Gadara illustrated human life in the grip of evil forces. So I proposed the subject "When the Devil Drives," and used the text, "The herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked" (Luke 8:33). I drew the divisions directly from the text as follows:

1. When the devil drives, the direction is always down. "The herd ran . . . down . . ."
2. When the devil drives, the speed is always fast. "The herd ran violently down . . ."
3. When the devil drives, the end is always ruin. "And were choked . . ."

It has proved a good text and outline for hammering home the truths that sin always leads to deeper degeneracy; that Satan's stratagem is to keep men busily chasing the illusory bubbles of transient and material goals, lest they stop and think seriously about eternal matters and turn to Christ; that life mastered by evil forces ultimates in ruin physically, mentally, socially, and eternally.

If the sermon is expository, the divisions will unify the paragraph. In preaching from a unit of scripture as large as a paragraph it is easy to ramble from verse to verse through a sermon that lacks the cohesion and climax which gives driving force and arresting power to the message. The paragraph must be broken up in order to display the various facets of truth therein; but it must also be integrated to give the central truth its total impact upon the listening mind and heart.

The *Preacher's Magazine* kindly published one of my expository sermons entitled "The Prophet's Purg-

ing." It grew out of the experience of Isaiah recorded in chapter six, verses one through nine, of his book of prophecy. The outline is built around the three little rhyming words, "woe," "lo," and "go."

1. A word of conviction. "Woe is me! . . . because I am a man of unclean lips."
2. A word of cleansing. "Lo . . . thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."
3. A word of commission. "Go, and tell this people."

The prophet's experience is duplicated by several other Bible characters, conclusively showing that God responds to our consciousness of pollution with a deep, divine purifying, and this purging creates an intense passion for souls, impelling the sanctified believer out into paths of service. I do not know of any message our grimy and flabby church age needs more than this one!

These are the purposes of an outline with respect to the type of sermon preached. They serve to develop the topic, analyze the text, and unify the paragraph.

A good outline is marked, also, by progress. A good sermon aims to do something—to bring men into alignment with the will of God. A sermon that aims at nothing will be a bull's-eye every time! But if it has a specific objective the divisions should not be parallel lines, but converging lines that form the acute angle of climax. Every division ought to be a hammer blow that sinks the nail of truth deeper and deeper until the final thought clinches it.

Charles Spurgeon outlined a sermon on the incident of Peter's futile attempt to walk on the water, his desperate cry to Jesus when threatened with a liquid grave, and his subsequent rescue by the Lord, recorded

in Matthew 14:30-31. I have preached from the outline several times (always giving Spurgeon credit for it!) because I do not see how it can be improved. These are his masterful divisions:

1. Sinking times are praying times. "Beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."
2. Short prayers are long enough. "He cried, saying, Lord, save me."
3. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. "Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him."

Here is an excellent illustration of progression and climax of thought. In times of trouble, especially when aroused to a sense of guilt, men instinctively pray. This truth will enlist the attention of every listener, for all will be thinking of just such moments in their own lives. Further, the unconverted will realize that such a moment has arrived under the convicting power of the Spirit. Therefore, the next division assures them that God's help comes in response to the sincere cry, not the flowery prayer nor the arduous human struggle. The very sort of prayer they can right then and there lift to God will bring divine succor! The final division buttresses and clinches this truth. Where bitter tears, prolonged struggles, and desperate resolves have failed, the short and simple prayer can avail, because God brings the victory and deliverance through grace, grace that is opposed to human energy, wisdom, and merit.

In that manner, by such smooth transitions, the outline of a sermon ought to march purposefully forward to its intended goal. The divisions should lead out from one another like the sections of a telescope, finally focusing the whole truth of the text

upon the individual hearer with a well-nigh irresistible power of appeal.

A good outline is marked, finally, by paucity. Let the divisions be just as few as are really necessary to accomplish the purpose and progress of the sermon. Where divisions are concerned, brethren, if you must sin every sermon in word, thought, and deed, sin by economy and not by prodigality.

The paucity of divisions will fix the outline within the limits of a sermon. And a sermon should be limited, not by the exhaustion of the preacher, but by such considerations as the congregation's power of attention and ability to remember. The value of an outline, in great measure, is to enable the speaker to arrest the attention of his auditors, and to fix the brunt of his message securely in their memories. And the human mind can digest and assimilate just so much truth at one time! An undue number and length of divisions can result in mental dyspepsia.

That disease must have reached epidemic proportions in the congregation of the Puritan preacher, Thomas Lye. Harwood Pattison tells of a sermon that Lye preached from I Corinthians 6:17, in which he used thirty "particulars" to explain the text and fifty-six more to explain the subject; then he calculated nicely that the message embraced one-eighth of the mind of the Spirit on the matter. I must confess to a little strain of Puritan blood myself, for I painfully recall that the first sermon I ever attempted had eight main divisions and twenty-four subdivisions. Since then I have learned the wisdom of a dictum attributed to Confucius: "You don't have to be a cabinetmaker to know how to put a seat in a chair!"

Think of how unforgettable and provocative were the divisions, shaped by some alert preacher long, long ago,

in a sermon on the parable of the prodigal son: (1) Sick of home; (2) Homesick; (3) Home. No sermon will ever fizzle out in the minds of a people saturated by boredom if it even approximates that example of divisions economic in number and penetrating in phraseology.

Outline your sermons. Let the divisions articulate and unfold the subject. Keep them as few as possible in number. Arrange them in the most climactic order you can devise. Then remember that it is only an outline, and no congregation is edified by having dry bones rattled in their ears,

however cleverly the skeleton may be assembled. But neither are people edified by a flapping scarecrow devoid of structure and form! Jown Owen, the great Puritan preacher, has a delightful story of a man who sought to pass a corpse off as a living person. After several futile attempts to prop it up on a seat he muttered, "*Oportet esse aliquid intus.*" "It needs something inside it." A good sermon needs something inside it. It needs the bones of an effective outline, and it needs even more the breath of the Holy Spirit's anointing.

SERMON WORKSHOP

Contributed by Nelson G. Mink*

COULD YOU QUALIFY?

Urgently in need of sleeping cars, a Canadian railroad inserted the following advertisement in one of the railroad trade papers:

"300 sleepers wanted at once."

A short time later the Canadian Railroad Company received a letter from a minister of a church in Iowa offering his entire congregation.

—Copied from *Bethlehem*
First Church bulletin

JUDGE NOT

*Judge not the heart; thou canst not see.
What looks to thy dim eye a stain
In God's pure light may be a scar
Brought from a well-won battlefield
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.*

—Anonymous

A BULLETIN SHORT

Some folk attend church only four times. When they are hatched, matched, patched, and snatched.

—Wenatchee, Washington, bulletin

TITHING

John D. Rockefeller once said: "I never would have been able to tithe my first million dollars I made if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 a week."

SENTENCE SERMONS

"It is predicted that by the year 2000 A.D. we will work only one hour per day —some fear that this will end the coffee break.

"Sometimes the grass is greener on the other side of the fence because they take better care of it over there.

"Don't look down on others—only God sits that high!

"The modern girl usually gets along with her mother-in-law, because she can't afford another baby sitter.

"It has been said that the Garden of Eden was called Paradise because Adam took a good ribbing without complaining about it, and Eve couldn't throw up to him the better men she might have married."

—Copied from "*Selah*"

*Pastor, Connell, Washington.

TRIALS

"Trials are medicines which our Wise Physician prescribes because we need them; and He proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires. Let us trust in His skill and be thankful for His prescription, which if we do, we will find earth less attractive and heaven more desirable."

—*Rev. Budd Attick*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pasteur was forty-six when he had a paralytic stroke, but for twenty-seven years after he went forward—relieving suffering in the world.

Robert Schumann's middle finger became paralyzed, and his future as a pianist seemed at an end, but—

Sir Walter Scott was lame from infancy.

Beethoven was deaf.

Prescott was almost blind.

Stevenson was ill all his life.

Dr. Johnson suffered scrofula.

Schubert was afflicted with severe chronic headaches.

—*Selected*

WHO HAS NOT LEARNED:

That when alone he has his thoughts to guard,

And when struggling with mankind his temper,

And in society, his tongue?

—*Pasadena, Texas, Nazarene Bulletin*

THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH

The wise man endeavors to shine in himself.

The fool to outshine others.

The former is humbled by the sense of his own infirmities;

The latter is lifted up by the discovery of those

which he observes in other men.

The wise man considers what he wants, and

The fool what he abounds in.

The wise man's happy when he gains his own approbation, and the fool when he recommends himself to the applause of those above him.

—*JOSEPH ADDISON*

Subjects to "Stop the Summer Slump"

By *Eric Jorden**

1. Victorious Christian Living (Romans 6:22)
2. Spiritual Gymnastics (I Timothy 4:7)
3. The Great Mediator (Romans 5:8)
4. Marred Vessels (Jeremiah 18:4)
5. Can We Know We Are Saved? (I John 5:13)
6. Can We Know We Are Sanctified? (Hebrews 10:14-15)
7. Whom Do You Serve? (II Kings 17:33)
8. Service Without Servility (John 8:36)
9. Paul's Self-revelation (I Corinthians 2:1-4), Declaration, Determination, Demonstration
10. Three B's of Christian Character (Ephesians 4:32)
11. Life's Greatest Discovery (John 1:45)
12. Where Do You Dwell? (Genesis 13:12)

*Nampa, Idaho.

Subjects to "Stop the Summer Slump"

By *George Emmitt**

1. Established Hearts (I Thessalonians 3:13)
2. Pressing Forward (Philippians 3:14)
3. The Man Who Failed God (I Samuel 15:24)
4. Walking in the Old Paths (Jeremiah 6:16)
5. Unmerited Salvation (Ephesians 2:8)
6. Called unto Holiness (I Thessalonians 4:7)
7. The New Heredity (II Corinthians 5:17)
8. Born to Battle (Ephesians 6:12)
9. Refuse Not Him That Speaketh (Hebrews 12:25)
10. Uttermost Salvation (Hebrews 7:25)
11. Borrowed Lives (I Corinthians 6:19-20)
12. The Peril of Divided Allegiance (Matthew 6:24)

*Pastor, Somerset, Pennsylvania

On Fire for God

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:30-35

TEXT: Luke 24:32

INTRODUCTION:

- A. These disciples were experiencing a touch of fire in their hearts from God.
- B. We talk of being "on fire for God."
- C. We sing, "The fire of heavenly love is burning in my soul."
- D. John the Baptist preached of a baptism with fire.
- E. Sincere persons admit we need the fire of God burning in our hearts.
- F. There are some things necessary for fire to burn.

I. MUST HAVE A START.

- A. Crisis experience.
 - 1. We grow in grace, but we do not grow into a saving experience.
 - 2. John 3:3 says, "Ye must be born again."
- B. Fire is started by contact with other fire. God alone can start this fire in our hearts (Acts 4:12).

II. MUST HAVE FUEL.

- A. If we are to burn consistently we must receive fuel regularly.
 - 1. The Word.
 - 2. Private devotions.
 - 3. Public worship.

III. MUST BE STIRRED.

- A. All the wood on a fire will never be burned unless it is stirred.
- B. When a fire is stirred, the ends not yet exposed to heat are placed in the fire.
- C. Necessity of letting God stir us so we will serve Him with all our souls, minds, and strength.

IV. MUST HAVE AN AIR ESCAPE.

- A. Big fire can be smothered if air vent is closed.
- B. Our service to God is the vent that keeps the fire blazing in our souls.

C. Many Christians lose fire when they stop:

- 1. Teaching a Sunday school class.
- 2. Calling for church.
- 3. Attending prayer meeting.
- 4. Personal evangelism.

CONCLUSION: Fires will last if they are started by God, fuel is applied regularly, we allow God to stir us, and the flame is kept blazing by consistent service.

—RALPH L. SLAYTON
Arcata, California

Who Are the Elect?

SCRIPTURE: Romans 9:6b-23

TEXT: I Peter 1:1-2

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Varied answers to this important question but agreement that the elect are a fortunate and favored people.
 - 1. Freedom from condemnation through faith in the atonement and all-sufficiency of Christ (Romans 8:32-33).
 - 2. Shepherded by sacrificial ministry—brought to glory by the sufferings of Christ and His servants (II Timothy 2:10).
 - 3. Special protection in life's trials and problems (Luke 18:7).
 - 4. Choicest fellowship in Christ (II John 1:1).
- B. Election carries such high privilege, important to know: "Who are the elect?" further, "Are we among the elect?"
 - 1. Definition and scriptural use of the word implies selection and choice, a right constantly exercised by God.
 - 2. Christian content: the choice or selection of God for salvation and destiny. Not as the Westminster Confession: "By the decree of God and for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto eternal life, and others foreordained to death." The

creedal statement adds that God has ordained also the means by which chosen ones shall be saved, and ends: "neither are there any other redeemed of Christ but the elect only."

a. Many Calvinists revolt against, even reject the harshness of this Confession. Still those who teach:

b. Unless elected, no salvation; further, if elected must wait "God's time." He alone knows when we have come to "an end of ourselves." Contrary to II Corinthians 5:15; Acts 17:30; John 6:37; etc.

c. If elected, no possibility of being lost—one act of faith guarantees a future heaven whatever a man may do after being saved. God will, if necessary, "save by fire," where neither desire nor fitness for heaven exists. Contrary to conditions of salvation, scriptural warnings and examples of judgment.

3. Comfort of the doctrine. To those "scattered," disowned and afflicted as Christians, compensation in being God's chosen, I Peter 1:1. But never a false comfort which makes God unjust or unfair, limits the atonement, contradicts John 3:16, and gives license for sin or compromise. The comfort God intended is given by three governing truths.

I. ELECTION IS ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

A. Omniscience must include foreknowledge of every life, of all possibilities, including who will be saved, who will be lost.

B. Foreknowledge does not mean foreordination to heaven or hell. In the light of His knowledge God encourages the responsive and seeks to restrain the rebellious (I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9).

II. ELECTION IS ACCORDING TO THE FAITH OF THE HEART.

A. Election and faith are linked (Titus 1:1; II Thessalonians 2:13). God in love wills to save all men. In sovereign wisdom He has elected to save those who will believe.

1. To show there is no respect of persons with God.

2. That no glory should be diverted from His Son.

3. That love's gratitude should be inspired in those who believe.

B. No one can blame God for a lack of faith; the grace and power to believe are God's gift to "whosoever will." An act of believing is a human responsibility. Faith, not election, determines destiny (John 3:18).

III. ELECTION IS ACCORDING TO THE FRUIT OF THE LIFE.

A. With the foreknowledge of love and wisdom, in consistency with His own character, God "selected" precious Blood as the means of salvation, faith as the method of salvation, and holiness as the goal of salvation (Ephesians 14; Colossians 3:12). Faith is the foundation upon which God builds His eternal plan, that His believing elect should be "conformed unto the image of his Son" (II Peter 1:5-8; Romans 8:29).

B. God's plan necessitates God's power—we are elect "through sanctification of the Spirit" (I Peter 1:2). No unconditional security after believing, an inescapable responsibility to press on to Christian perfection, to become increasingly Christlike in the "all things" of experience.

CONCLUSION: Election is to faith; predestination is to character.

—ALBERT J. LOWN

Pastor, Lisburn, North Ireland

The Unmoved Christian

SCRIPTURE: Acts 20:17-24

TEXT: Acts 20:24

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Many notable Christians, past and present.
- B. Most notable New Testament Christian was St. Paul.
We can think of St. Paul as:
 - 1. The constant traveler
 - 2. The contending warrior
 - 3. The courageous witness
 - 4. The conquering Christian
- I. ST. PAUL WAS UNMOVED BY TESTS AND TRIALS.
- II. ST. PAUL WAS FULLY YIELDED TO GOD.
- III. ST. PAUL'S IMPELLING MOTIVE WAS THAT HE MIGHT FINISH HIS COURSE WITH JOY.
 - A. This should be the impelling motive of every Christian.
 - B. We must remember it is easy to start but difficult to finish as strongly as we began.
- IV. ST. PAUL'S GREAT COMMISSION.
 - A. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light.
 - B. To testify the gospel of the grace of God to have and keep under all circumstances.

CONCLUSION:

- A. We are on display on God's show window.
- B. To show to others what God has done for us and can do for others.

—V. C. MULKIN

Youngstown, Arizona

Losing by Saving— Saving by Losing

TEXT: Mark 8:34-35

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Religion of Christ is eminently a religion of self-denial.
- B. It is a religion of love, and great love always prompts self-denial.
 - 1. Christ gave up His glory in heaven.
 - 2. He took the limitations of our humanity.
 - 3. Endured the pain of misunderstanding.

- 4. Suffered the agony of the Cross.

I. WHAT IT MEANS TO BEGIN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

- A. Turning from all sin and following Christ.
- B. Receiving Christ joyfully.
- C. Full surrender of one's self to Christ.
- D. Serving under new leadership. Once Satan and now Christ.

II. FALSE BELIEF SHOWN IN LIVES OF MANY.

- A. Those endeavoring to be Christian.
 - 1. No sacrifice, little burden, no tears, clouded vision, and no travail of soul.
 - 2. They will be saving yet losing their souls.

III. SAVING BY LOSING.

- A. By leaving place and position to God.
- B. By dying to opinions of friends, willing to lose their good will.
- C. Enduring the frowns and sneers of world.
- D. Placing life and possessions at Christ's disposal.

IV. ALL FOR THE GLORY OF CHRIST.

- A. Pray and fast for His sake.
- B. Give sacrificially for His sake.
- C. Build and equip churches for His sake.
- D. Endure all things for His sake.

CONCLUSION: Will you be His disciple and wear His yoke—have His favor—bear His reproach—receive His smile—carry His cross—gain His crown?

—V. C. MULKIN

The Glorious Commission

TEXT: Matthew 28:18-20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Redemption was planned by God, provided by Christ, and administered by the Holy Spirit. It is received by sinful, repentant men.
- B. Christ has finished His earthly mission.
- I. A GREAT STATEMENT
 - A. He is risen, triumphant over Satan.

B. Risen!—Conqueror of sin.

C. His reward.

1. Sin is conquered.
2. Death is conquered.
3. Hell is conquered.

II. A GREAT IMPERATIVE

- A. "Tarry ye" for purity and power.
- B. "Go ye." Yes, it is His command.

1. The field is the world.
2. The Bible is the message for the world.
3. God loves the whole world.
4. Jesus is the Redeemer of all mankind

III. A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT

- A. His presence with us always.
- B. "Go" praying, studying, giving, living, believing, and achieving.

CONCLUSION: What is your interest in His "Go Ye"? In His "Lo, I am with you"?

—V. C. MULKIN

Can Man Hinder God?

TEXT: Psalms 78:41

INTRODUCTION: Our text relates an event in the history of the Israelites (Numbers 14:1-4). Evil report of the spies, the weeping, complaining, and turning back of Israel. Thus they were tempting God and insulting His promise to them.

I. THE CHURCH CAN LIMIT GOD.

- A. Set bounds to its operations.
- B. Limiting God's power to work in the church.
- C. But God is in the salvaging business.

II. SINNERS OFTEN LIMIT GOD.

- A. By saying that they are too great sinners.
- B. What *should* be done *can* be done.

III. HOW MAY WE LIMIT GOD?

- A. By limiting our prayers.
- B. By being unfaithful in reading God's promises.
- C. By limiting our faith.

IV. CONSIDER THE GREAT EVIL OF LIMITING GOD.

- A. We classify God as finite.
- B. We doubt God's power.
- C. We reflect upon God's past mercies.

CONCLUSION: Let the sinner cast himself upon the mercy of God. He will save now! Christ specializes in things thought impossible—nothing is too difficult for Him.

—V. C. MULKIN

The Burden of the Lord

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 23:29-40; Matthew 11:28-30

TEXT: Matthew 11:30

INTRODUCTION: Some people regard the revelation of Jesus Christ as a burden. The cross, sacrifice, judgment, all sound to many as if the way of Christ was a way of heaviness instead of a way to heaven, a way of gloom instead of a way to glory, a way of oppression instead of a way of inspiration.

As here in Jeremiah the people had come to look on truth as a burden that brought guilt, condemnation, and rebuke for their sins. The fact that one faces in the light of God's Word is that Christ came to lift burdens, but to spurn Him brings a burden.

I. JESUS CAME TO LIFT BURDENS.

- A. He lifted the burden of the wearisome, Old Testament, sacrificial ritual.
- B. He lifted the burden of law to love.
- C. He lifts people from condemnation to "abundant life."

II. WITHOUT CHRIST RELIGION BECOMES A BURDEN.

- A. It is empty, vain, and a perversion of God's power (Jeremiah 23:36).
- B. Witness the many (over 100 million) members in churches and the lack of activity and response of members to carrying on the work of the Kingdom.
- C. Witness the many who seek some satisfaction in cults and isms and the strange rituals of mysterious religions.

III. TO REJECT THE GOSPEL LIGHT BRINGS THE BURDEN OF CONDEMNATION (Jeremiah 23:34; John 3:18-21).

- A. Truth spurned becomes darkness; soul becomes filled with the darkness of doubt, fear, guilt.
- B. In a psychiatrist-conscious age, people grope through darkness of a gospel-rejection to find a healing balm for the soul.

CONCLUSION: Exchange your heavy burden for Christ's "light" burden.

—CLAUDE E. PITTENGER
Chanute, Kansas

Praying in the Holy Spirit

TEXT: Jude 20

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Every Christian that takes prayer seriously often pleads, "Lord, teach me to pray."
 - B. Paul in teaching others about prayer and dealing with some of the problems of the praying of the Corinthians said, Only as I pray in the Spirit do I pray with understanding.
 - C. Praying in the Holy Spirit presupposes faithfulness to prayer like that displayed by Daniel (6:10).
 - D. The experience of prayer mentioned in the text is prayer extraordinary. It is similar to that Jesus referred to when He spoke the words of Mark 9:29.
 - E. This experience of praying in the Holy Spirit is so sacred and so rare that I stand in awe before it. It suggests the reverence of Moses as he stood before the burning bush. Good Christians too seldom enter within the inner chambers of prayer. The vast majority of professing Christians know nothing whatsoever of its reality. This is something each Christian must find and enter for himself. I can only point you in that direction and perhaps make some suggestions to whet your appetite for the experience, and challenge you to seek it.
- I. PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS FIRST OF ALL THE ULTIMATE IN LOSING SIGHT OF SELF.
- A. Carnal self is the number one enemy to giving all to Christ.

- B. The cleansing of the self or the destruction of the carnal self is the first step to losing sight of self, but a second step is the giving of self fully and completely. Jesus taught the absolute necessity of giving self away.
- C. This experience is an impossibility as long as we insist on pampering self, indulging in loose living, loose talking, loose or unfaithful giving. God help us to cry out with those of old times, "Let me die! Let me die!"

II. PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ULTIMATE IN SHARING CHRIST'S VISION AND COMPASSION FOR THE LOST.

- A. The seventy disciples had been sent out two by two and had healed and cast out demons. They returned rejoicing, not because the lost had been found and poor, suffering humanity healed, but because they had power.
- B. Before Pentecost their soul-winning missions were verbal assignments. After Pentecost their missions were a compelling inner compassion directed by the Holy Spirit.
- C. This praying in the Holy Spirit does not come when we accept a visitation card, though that will help; but as we pray in the Holy Spirit with Christ's vision and compassion we will eagerly seek those represented by visitation cards.
- D. If you have no burden or compassion for the lost, pray, pray until you are praying in the Holy Spirit; then you'll share Christ's vision and compassion for the lost.

III. PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ULTIMATE IN YIELDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BEING POSSESSED BY AND FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- A. Too many want the Holy Spirit and His powers without being possessed by Him.
- B. If you have Him, then He will have you. You'll have no desire to keep any reservations from Him.

- C. It is not enough to have certain emotions and say, "I have the Holy Spirit." You must have Him and let Him possess you.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Praying in the Holy Spirit is the only kind of praying that prevails with God and man.
B. In order to be possessed, filled, and used for God we must "pray in" the Holy Spirit into our lives.

—HARLEY DUNCAN

SPECIAL

Hebrews

Chapter 12

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 12:1-29

INTRODUCTION: The writer, in this twelfth chapter, seems to envisage those to whom he is writing as being engaged in a huge Christian Olympiad. In the spacious amphitheater are the multiplied millions of the Old Testament ages who have given their testimony (or witness) that faith was the strength of their lives. Present in spirit, they are intent upon watching us as we engage in the race set before us.

- I. RULES OF THE COURSE (vv. 1-2)
A. The compassing witnesses (v. 1)
B. The concentration (v. 1)
C. The Constancy (v. 2)
II. RECIPE FOR COURAGE AND CONSTANCY (vv. 3-17)
A. The consideration (vv. 3-17)
B. The chastising (vv. 5-11)
C. The command (vv. 12-14)
D. The carefulness (vv. 15-17)
III. THE RALLYING CHALLENGE (vv. 18-29)
A. The contrasting mountains (vv. 18-24)
B. The call (vv. 25-27)
C. The continuance (vv. 28-29)

—MERRILL G. BASSETT

Chapter 13

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 13:1-25

INTRODUCTION: The apostle has almost completed his exaltation of Jesus as the one supreme and perfect Sacrifice for sin. One thing more remains to be considered—the place of His sacrifice. The writer here reveals that the place of the sacrifice is "outside the camp." Shall we not gird up our loins to follow Him in supreme and eternal commitment?

- I. COUNSEL THAT IS PRACTICAL (vv. 1-7)
A. The compassion to be possessed (vv. 1-3)
B. The chastity purposed (v. 4)
C. The contentment preached (vv. 5-6)
D. The consideration propounded (v. 7)
II. CHRIST, OUR PRIEST (vv. 8-15)
A. The constancy patterned (vv. 8-9)
B. The Christian partaker (vv. 10-12)—partakes of Christ, his Sacrifice, as suggested by Dr. Adam Clarke.
C. The cleansing purchased (v. 12)
D. The consecration presented (or proffered) (v. 13), to the bearing of Christ's reproach
E. The continuing city projected (v. 14)
F. The commanded praisefulness (v. 15)
III. CERTAIN COMMANDS TO BE PERFORMED (vv. 16-25)
A. The communication prescribed (v. 16)
B. The conformity to be practiced (v. 17)
C. The concerned petition proposed (vv. 18-19)
D. The commendation (to God) prayed for (vv. 20-21)
E. The comments in parting (vv. 22-25)

—MERRILL G. BASSETT

We must take Christ in the bright days if we would have Him when it grows dark.—J. R. MILLER.

Father's Day Message

TEXT: Hebrews 11:7

INTRODUCTION: The very name Noah means "rest, quiet, comfort." He was a quiet, calm soul amid a troubled world. He found tranquillity and peace in his God. A man of rest, yet strong in moral character.

- I. NOAH, A MAN OF PRACTICAL, WORKING FAITH.
 - A. James said that faith without works is dead.
 - B. Noah "prepared an ark to the saving of his house."
 - C. Faith influenced his practice.
 - D. By faith he accomplished his God-given task.
- II. NOAH WAS AN EXEMPLARY, HOLY MAN (Genesis 6:9).
 - A. Before his family.
 - B. Before his generation.
 - C. Before his God.
 - D. Noah walked with God.
- III. THE BLESSED RESULTS OF NOAH'S FAITH, FIDELITY, AND HOLINESS.
 - A. He saved all his family.
 - B. He became a type of Christ (II Peter 2:5).
 - C. He was God's priest to the world (Genesis 8:20-21).
 - D. He belongs to the immortals as a hero of faith.

CONCLUSION: What kind of a dad are you? Will you be the kind of a father God wants you to be? Will you come forward to the altar and let us pray together that God will make all of us fathers better dads? Let us pray.

—E. E. WORDSWORTH
Redmond, Washington

A Father's Responsibility

TEXT: I Timothy 5:8

INTRODUCTION: God places the headship of the home with the father. God wants strong men, not weaklings, for heads of families. A slacker father will be held responsible. He should lead in religious matters, exemplary conduct, Christian example, righteous living. Men can prevent broken homes. A considerate, holy father and husband should be

revered, honored, and obeyed. Text declares two pertinent truths. Listen and learn.

- I. THE FATHER SHOULD PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY.
 - A. Not niggardly, grudgingly, carelessly but lovingly, amply, and generously.
 - B. For the material needs of the home, according to his ability, opportunity, and resourcefulness.
 - C. He should provide for their minds with Christian literature and a Bible for each child, religious instruction, and supervised reading and entertainment.
 - D. Above all he should provide for their souls.
 1. By consistent, holy living.
 2. By family worship.
 3. By Bible reading.
 4. By attendance upon the means of grace.
 5. By a prayerful life.
 6. By careful avoidance of all forms of worldliness and compromise.
- II. HOW TO SAVE YOUR FAMILY FOR CHRIST.
 - A. First be Christlike yourself.
 - B. Family worship.
 - C. Church attendance.
 - D. Much private prayer.
 - E. Proper discipline.
 - F. Games and supervised entertainment.
 - G. Family vacations.
 - H. Supervise associates and hours.
 - I. Be a real PAL to your children.
 - J. Think more of God than of gold.
 - K. Let love abound.

—E. E. WORDSWORTH

The Hills of God

TEXT: Psalms 121:1-2

- I. SINAI—righteousness
- II. CARMEL—might or power
- III. CALVARY—love, salvation
- IV. OLIVET—hope

—BOB BREEDLOVE

Right Attitudes Toward Elders and Associates

TEXT: I Peter 5:5

INTRODUCTION: Following his exhortation to church leaders, Peter turns attention to the younger churchmen and laymen. As in 4:7 he uses again the expression "likewise."

I. YOUTH MUST BE SUBMISSIVE TO AGE.

A. Young churchmen must have respect for the church's proven officials.

1. The comparative adjective *neoteros* refers to the subordinate ministers of the church. Those who are younger in the faith, younger in experience, and younger in years of service. Those who hold positions of lesser responsibility.

2. Peter, in this paragraph (5:1-5), simply echoes the words of Jesus in Luke 22:24-27.

B. Subjection must rule out insubordination.

1. The very energy and enterprise characteristic of youth may tend to make one unduly confident and overbearing.

2. Christian youth should be ready to take advice from elders.

3. Energetic younger Christians should seek to inspire their elders; the conservative elders may tone and temper their impulsive juniors.

C. Youth also must prove itself.

1. Let the younger churchmen demonstrate Christlikeness, capability, consistency, and constancy.

2. Neither God nor the church can use one who will not take guidance or counsel.

II. ALL MUST DON ROBES OF HUMILITY.

A. Gird on humility.

1. The Greek suggests such concepts as: "tie on with a fast knot," "put on as an apron the virtues of meekness," "be clothed with a modest opinion

of yourself in the presence of each other."

2. To be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness one must strip off carnal pride. (Cf. James 4:7 and Proverbs 3:34).

3. This word for humility is not found in classical Greek writers, for it pertains only to a Christian grace. And the word "be clothed" (*engko-baomai*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It has reference to an outer garment worn by slaves and tied with a sash or cord around the waist. Peter surely recalls here how Jesus girded himself with a towel to wash dusty feet on that night of all nights (John 13:2-8).

B. The brotherhood attitude.

1. In the common brotherhood and priesthood of believers each and all have equal standing. Superiority complexes are indications of pride. Strutting may be fitting for peacocks and turkey gobblers, but not for saints. Paul advises, "Let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

2. Our manhood will always be overshadowed and eclipsed by the one perfect Son of Man. Who can feel proud in such a comparison? If Christ be the measure of a man, "O wretched man that I am!"

3. Christians must be willing to take any place and perform any service, however humble, for the benefit of the brotherhood of believers.

III. GOD OPPOSES THE HAUGHTY, BUT GRANTS GRACE TO THE MEEK.

A. God sets the battle in array against the arrogant.

1. God has only contempt for the conceited. Those full of inordinate self-esteem, the spiritually proud, are indicated by this term.

2. A man will never be humble toward his fellows in the church until he first becomes humble-minded toward God.
- B. God shows His favors to the lowly hearts and minds.
 1. Grace makes for greatness. The Christian highway to the Sierra Sancta runs through the canyon of humility. Humble-mindedness is the condition upon which grace is given and God's favor is bestowed. The igloo of Christian grace and warmth has always a lowly doorway.
 2. None can bestow grace upon one who lacks any sense of his shortcoming and need (Psalms 51:17).
 3. The essential dignity of humanity is the fact that it may be the object and the recipient of God's love.

CONCLUSION: Christian holiness sets a high standard for saintly attitudes.

—ROSS E. PRICE

Pasadena, California

God's Call to You

TEXT: I Thessalonians 4:7

INTRODUCTION: There are two outstanding words in our text—"uncleanness" and "holiness." These two words characterize the message of God's Word and His plan of salvation for mankind. We are called to be His servants unto righteousness (or holiness)—which is the opposite of uncleanness (or sin).

I. THE CALL OF HOLINESS—BASED UPON GOD'S NATURE

- A. Commanded because of His holiness (Leviticus 11:44).
- B. Commanded because of His love and forgiveness.
 1. God's holiness demands holy and pure love.
 2. God's love makes possible forgiveness and cleansing from sin.

II. THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS—FULFILLED THROUGH CHRIST

- A. Christ taking away the sin of the world.

- B. Christ forgiving the sins of individuals.
- C. The Spirit cleansing the heart through faith in Christ.

III. THE REALITY OF HOLINESS—LIVED BY CHRISTIANS (I John 1:9)

- A. Accepting the full salvation through Christ.
- B. Receiving the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- C. Living the Spirit-filled life.

CONCLUSION: The call comes to all. We have not been called "unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." Because God is holy, those who wish to serve Him must be holy. Because Jesus made the holy life possible, we are to accept it by faith in Him. Because it is possible, God calls us to such a life and longs to see all walk and live the life of holiness.

—GALEN HINSHAW

A Prayer for Spiritual Victory

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:1-11

TEXT: Philippians 1:9

I. HE PRAYS FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

- A. They are to go on in abounding love (v. 9)
- B. They are to go on in abundant living
- C. They are to go on with their abiding Lord

II. HE PRAYS FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

- A. That they may discern spiritual relationships (Mark 3:35)
- B. That they may discern spiritual riches (Ephesians 1:18)
- C. That they may discern spiritual rewards (Revelation 22:12)

III. HE PRAYS FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL DIFFUSION

- A. There is noted the excellency of their being (v. 10)
- B. There is noted the excellency of their behavior
- C. There is also the excellency of their bestowments

—NELSON G. MINK

Connell, Washington

Book Club Selection for April, 1960

CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN PREACHING

Webb B. Garrison (Abingdon Press, \$3.00)

It has been said that three prime requisites for preaching success are: spirituality, imagination, scholarship. And someone has rated them in that particular order.

Oh, how we ministers wish that imagination would come to our aid more often, for someone else has said, "Uninteresting preaching is unpardonable"! And for sustained interest, preaching must have the aid of a vivid and cultivated imagination.

Across the years that I have been choosing Book Club Selections, I believe this is the first book that has given specific attention to the use of imagination: the value of it, the development of it, the cultivation of it. And closely akin to the use of imagination is the value of emotion.

You will be inspired and perhaps surprised as this author reveals how imagination can glean, even in the darksome and drab routine of the daily life of a minister in ordinary pastoral work. Note these chapter heads:

How to Take the Drudgery Out of Sermon Preparation

All Things Are Soaked with Potential for Revelation

Emotional Factors Bend All Seeing

Think Yourself Out of Your Own Skin

If this book will do as much for you as it did for me, you will have well invested the price of the book. I am more ashamed of the darkness and unimaginative neutrality of my preaching than I usually admit. I commend this book with a prayer that it will give wings to your words and jet propulsion to your imagination.

DOOM OF THE DICTATORS

Delber H. Elliott (Eerdmans, \$2.00)

It is the author's basic supposition that missionary activity has too largely bypassed nations in its search for souls. It is his fear that communism is too much being given a free hand and being left undisturbed in its dominion of vast sectors of the world's population.

Here is a careful, and yet rather popular, study of dictatorship and authoritarianism of all stripes down across the path of history. It culminates quite naturally in a strong statement relative to communism in world governments of today. There is some very fine research and Biblical support for the fact that there will finally be a "banquet of consequences" for the godless dictatorships of the world.

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

George Eldon Ladd (Eerdmans, \$2.75)

This is scholarly and Biblical, but decidedly technical. There is a percentage, however, of ministers who are interested in studying the meaning and message from the kingdom of God. This book uses the Revised Standard Version extensively, and is quite technical, but it would offer sound scholarship to those who have a vital interest in this particular facet of Biblical truth.

ROSES EVERY DAY

Margaret Moore Jacobs (Eerdmans, \$3.50)

The title of this book would hardly let you know what it is about. It is a compilation of devotional tidbits, particularly customized for the shut-in and the invalid. It could be used very helpfully as quotation material and illustrative material for sermons and would be an ideal gift to be given to an invalid who perhaps needs those tiny capsules of inspiration to punctuate the long days of pain, loneliness, and discouragement.

SERMONS ON THE PRODIGAL SON

Thomas A. Whiting (Abingdon, \$2.00)

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ROXIE ANN WESSELS.

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Church Furniture

not only fills a practical need; it also has the role of creating an esthetic sense of beauty. It should be noticeably in good taste, yet be unobtrusive—in keeping with the reverence in a house of worship

Church furniture is expected to retain its dignity and usefulness through the years. It is a sizable investment. Its selection, therefore, is a matter of great importance. As a guide to selecting church furniture may we offer these suggestions:

STYLE Furniture should blend with the architectural style of the church—Gothic, Romanesque, Colonial, Contemporary, and so forth.

DESIGN This is an individual treatment of a given style. Design is concerned with such values as: proportion, balance, symmetry, lines, accent, color.

WOODS AND FINISHES Woods and finishes, like design, are mainly a matter of taste. Certain woods are in short supply and, understandably, are more costly than others. Finishes enhance the appearance and "feel" of wood. They also protect and preserve the furniture.

There are various finishes available in dull, semi-gloss, or glossy effects.

CONSTRUCTION How furniture is built is important because the comfort and lasting beauty depend on underlying strength. Sound joints, dowels, and pegs are essential details. Plywood with veneer facing is considered superior to a single thickness of hardwood because warpage is eliminated. Actually today's method of pressurized laminating results in products that are stronger and more stable than plain, solid wood. To obtain the beautiful effect of matched grains, veneers must be used.

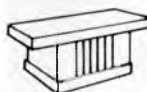
Cost should not be a decisive factor. Important construction features are not always visible. However, costs can be saved by selecting simplified designs.

Illustrated below are samplings of furniture available. For additional information, send for complete catalog.



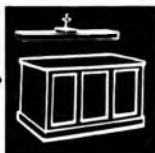
Communion and Altar Rail

Communion Table



Altar Table

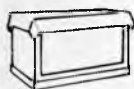
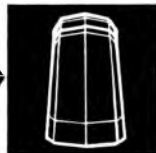
Worship Center



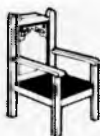
Pastor's Seat and Pew



Baptismal Font



Worship Center and Communion Table



Center and Side Chair

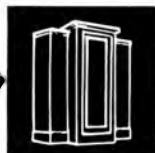


Communion Chair

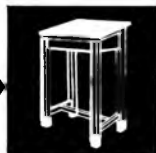
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