

PREACHER'S

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A SUNDAY NIGHT OF SALVATION

Edward S. Lawlor

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN OF THE PULPIT

Editorial

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ABOUT THE SELF**

Jack Ford

—proclaiming the Wesleyan message

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A Sunday Night of Salvation

By Edward S. Lawlor*

WERE YOU CONVERTED IN a Sunday night service? I feel sure many of you were. But I have wondered if the reason many of our pastors are not enthusiastic about the Sunday night service is that they themselves were not converted in a Sunday night service, nor have they ever really seen an old-fashioned Sunday night of salvation. It always thrills me to meet pastors who tell me about Sunday nights with times of mighty visitations of God the Holy Spirit in salvation, and who are hungry for the repetition of such services.

I was converted in an old-fashioned Sunday evening service of salvation, and I have always felt I must see such visitations of God in our Sunday evening services. We are too apt to say that what happened years ago cannot hold today. Really that is not the answer in full; it is but an excuse to save our consciences and ease our endeavors. I believe that the Holy Ghost is waiting and available on Sunday nights in 1962, for the Holy Spirit can still break and mend the hearts of men on Sunday night in our age.

What happens in your Sunday evening services? What type of atmosphere is produced? Is it drowsiness? Surprise? Resentment? Pity? Amusement? Or is it a sensation of being lifted into a higher atmosphere?

There Must Be Planning

I believe that any church irrespective of type, size, or location can have a Sunday night of salvation with Jesus if it will pay the price. But the service must be painstakingly planned—as definitely outlined as the blueprint of an architect.

We leave too much to chance! We wait for inspiration to come! The truth is that inspiration is mostly perspiration. We shall not get back to the Sunday night of salvation in a month, or even six months. It will take time and we will have to be willing to keep on keeping on. Let every service be planned in the spirit of prayer. Take care that we do not allow our Sunday night services to become cheap or inconsistent with the essential spirit of evangelism. Plan always for the opportunity of drawing the net!

There Must Be Strong Preaching

We must get back to the place of giving preaching a sensational part in the Sunday evening service. The preaching of the apostles made such a sensation that they were accused in the Early Church of turning “the world upside down.” Messages became moral earthquakes in the cities in which they were preached. Finney, Spurgeon, Moody, Wesley, Bresee—these were men whose words produced a powerful sensation among their hearers. And let us never forget that Christ himself was sensational in His preaching. His words thrilled the longing multitudes until they said to Him, “Never man spake

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like this man." I have always felt that we need to learn in our day the type of sensationalism employed in Sunday nights of salvation in the yesteryears.

There Must Be Attraction

It seems to me that there is need for realism in this business of our preaching on Sunday nights. Let us use any methods that will attract and bring people. We can see much accomplished by the sanctified use of our own personalities in the presenting of our message. The employment of our natural mannerisms and ability can be developed into something worthwhile. Think, for instance, of Paul before Agrippa, or Martin Luther at Worms, or Wesley preaching in the open air of England. These were times when the sensationalism of a pure and simple gospel moved hearts and consciences. The utterance of stale platitudes in essay form is an insult to Christian intelligence and an affront to the gospel. Remember, preacher, the gospel contains in itself the mightiest attraction that man has ever felt. The preacher who, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, can realize that eternal life or death for every soul is involved in the proclamation of the gospel will, I believe, utter on Sunday night all its truth. In doing that he will not fail to produce a sensation among his hearers.

What if Seekers Do Not Come?

I tell Him that, if they come, He shall have the glory. If they do not come and if I see no one seeking Him, I shall trust Him to carry on the battle and to follow them like the hound of heaven, even in the silence of the night after they have passed out of my sight.

The winner of souls cannot agonize over souls only when the altar call is on. That must be done when he is alone before God. During the altar call he is believing. He is fighting the fight of faith against unseen spiritual foes, and he is watching for a way to win the battle. For him, the altar call after preaching is the battlefield!

What About the Altar Service?

I have had many preachers ask me, "How shall I, during an altar service on Sunday night, pray for sinners after I have preached my best and pleaded with them to come to Christ?"

Speaking for myself, I do not pray much during the altar service for sinners. I do most of my praying before I go to the service. I talk it all over with God, and let Him do some of the talking while I listen and take orders, and get light from Him. Then when I have preached my message and the altar call is on, I remind God of His promises and remind Him of my helplessness unless He helps me. I remind Him of the need of the Holy Ghost to convict men of sin. I remind Him that these are sinners, He loved them, He redeemed them. I remind Him that I have done my best and that I rely on Him.

So pray before the Sunday evening service expectantly. Watch for God to show His hand during the service and for a break. Watch as a general watches for advantages and victory on the field of battle. Also remember that in Sunday night salvation work you must have patience, the kind that James talks about, that patience that waits in hope for the harvest. Let us reap in earnest, hasten while the fields are ripe for harvest.

Sunday nights of salvation are the urgent need of the Church of Jesus Christ in our day.

What would you consider to be—

The Unpardonable Sin of the Pulpit?

PREVIOUSLY in my editorializing I have noted the editorial "firsts" of Dr. J. B. Chapman and Dr. D. S. Corlett. Now it is my privilege to peer over the shoulder of the late Dr. L. A. Reed as he wrote his first editorial for the *Preacher's Magazine*. It was for the March-April issue of 1949.

I could almost have predicted his point of emphasis. During the years 1945 through 1948 I was a student of his at Nazarene Theological Seminary. A dynamic man was L. A. Reed. He left an indelible stamp on all his classes. You might not always agree with Dr. L. A. Reed, but you could never ignore him, nor forget him. In those classes he covered the broad scope of practices and the reaching ministry. Yet he had an emphasis which repeatedly flashed out like an airline beacon on a dark night. Here it was: *Preaching must be interesting.*

So I was not in the least surprised as I read his first editorial to find words like these, "If a sermon is not interesting, then it should not be preached." Blunt words! They slap us across the face like a cow's tail in fly time. The meaning is clear—

Make the Sermon Interesting or Else Don't Preach It

To L. A. Reed the preacher's unpardonable sin (professionally speak-

ing) was dullness. A sermon might not tickle the stars. It might lack in homiletical balance. Its transitions might be seriously defective. *But it must never be drab.* The audience might not be swept off its feet by soaring eloquence, but they must not be left yawny. Dr. Reed did not minimize such sermonic virtues as Biblical content, accurate exegesis, apt illustration, or progression of thought. He might forgive the absence of one or more of these; but he could never forgive the nausea of pulpit boredom. I can almost hear him say, "Be an interesting preacher, or else turn in your credentials."

The Tragedy of Pulpit Dullness

Recalling L. A. Reed's forthright position on pulpit boredom, I must confess he had logic on his side. There are safeguards set up to keep our preachers from heresy, but none to keep them from ennui.

Every minister in the Church of the Nazarene must answer annually to his presiding general superintendent regarding his soul welfare (and this includes, by influence, his orthodoxy). What's more, if he begins to drift one wit from the Wesleyan position on doctrine his audience will detect it soon. And word will quickly get to his superiors. But while he may be as orthodox as St. Paul, his sermons may be no

more palatable than flour. His audience may be subjected every week to the horrendous ordeal of sitting through several installments of tepid sermonizing, as devoid of inspiration as a dry river bed.

If a minister wrests the Scriptures, we have laymen who will spring into action like unleashed hounds and, like Aquila and Priscilla, will fly to their prayer closet to pray him back into the path of Biblical accuracy. And thank God we have such laity! But a preacher may divide the Word with razor-like sharpness and yet be as dull as a drizzly twilight. And who can find a cure?

So Dr. Reed was not beating the air in his strong feeling that pulpit dullness was the preacher's unpardonable sin.

What Causes Pulpit Dullness?

From the same incisive pen (pardon me, typewriter) there come these embarrassing words, "We are compelled to admit that generally a lack of interest is due to two things, namely, poor sermons and no enduement."

The lack of sermonic sparkle, he was saying, arose from the sad fact that the preacher was inwardly ashamed of his sermon and therefore felt no enthusiasm for it. And an unenthusiastic preacher soon begets a snoozing congregation. Sermons better prepared, quality in content, pertinent to the listeners—these would give to the pulpit a sense of urgency which would catch fire in the pew. These are strong and humbling words; who can bear them?

Better sermons—we do have a means of solving that. But when he mentions "no enduement" he pricks us at a point of keenest sensitivity. This matter of anointed preaching is a major issue. Laymen wish we would come to grips with it. They

weep over it and plead for more anointing in the pulpit. We could well devote an entire preacher's meeting to a frank facing of this momentous matter of anointing. As to a lack of anointing, I plead guilty and confess for most of you.

Why Is Our Preaching Not More Anointed?

Is the lackluster preaching caused by prayerlessness? Or is it the result of deteriorated spiritual sensitivity? Do we have the "feel" of lift when there is anointing, and do we sense the "drag" when we seem to be going it totally alone? Do we fail to sense the Holy Spirit and His presence, and thus fail to co-operate with Him? Who can reply to all these questions?

Of this I am sure: there is no simple answer. Prayerfulness alone does not guarantee interesting preaching. I have known men who soaked their sermons in prayer and yet preached their congregations into a stupor. Let me be honest: I can much more easily diagnose than I can prescribe. I am a patient and not a physician. I feel my own pulse in the matter of anointed preaching and it is altogether too weak.

But I do know this: a preacher must maintain that "feel" which alerts him immediately if he is losing any major segment of his audience. This applies whether he preaches to a dozen or a thousand. If a preacher does not know when his listeners have tuned him out, at least a major part of them, he has a ministerial millstone around his neck. If interest does wane seriously, a preacher has but two alternatives: re-create interest or pronounce the benediction. It is folly to keep a congregation in church physically when they have gone home mentally.

From Whence Shall Our Deliverance Come?

How can a preacher know that he is no longer the spokesman of God but merely a prattler of lullabies? Perhaps a church-wide custom of ours makes it harder for God to help us relative to a better evaluation of our own preaching. When our sermons are ended we walk to the door and greet the people as they leave the church. Many of us who would have been able to weigh our sermonic success as we walked the aisle to the back of the church cannot in any wise do so after we have shaken hands galore. Here is the problem: Well-meaning, kindhearted laymen file past and shake our hands. If they would merely say, "Good-by, Pastor, God bless you," it would be fine. But they are courteous and feel compelled to pour syrup on us. "That was a sweet service." "Your great message helped me." By this time the average preacher is clear out of focus. Our name might have been Oke when we finished preaching, but it is Beecher by the time we have greeted the last member of the congregation.

The truth remains that some of our discerning laity were perhaps biting their lips to keep from saying, "I was never more bored in my life."

Who will wake us up when we

lapse into pulpit monotony? Cannot some inventive genius develop an interest meter? I would gladly buy one for my own ministry. It would be attached to the pulpit and would automatically register the interest-quotient of the audience. It should have a face like a temperature gauge with a safe operating zone and a danger zone. It might be well to have it emit a sound like a snore when the interest drops into the danger zone.

In utter candor, who will alert us to the lack of interest in our preaching? Should not our wives be delegated so to do? Or would most of us be willing to listen if our wives turned to us after church with, "Honey, the audience reaction to your sermon this morning reminded me of a caterpillar with sneakers on crawling over a Persian rug." No, I guess that would be too blunt. But it does suggest a practical solution.

So if no ecclesiastical Edison comes out with an interest meter, I vote for our wives—with candor and tact—to keep us informed. After all, we are proclaimers of an evangel, not dispensers of soothing syrup.

Whatever it may take, I say it again in unison with Dr. L. A. Reed, "If a sermon is not interesting, then it should not be preached."

And, in the same breath I cry "Ouch!"

A Hearty Thank-you

CHANGE IS AN integral part of life. We meet and greet our friends, and then wave good-by; that is life.

As we usher in the year 1962 we find it necessary to say good-by to two splendid, long-time contributor-friends of the *Preacher's Magazine*

—James McGraw and Mrs. Ruth Vaughn.

Professor James McGraw has provided the "preacher personality" series since January, 1955. For ninety-six months he has gathered pictures and material. He has chosen

well; he has maintained an unusually high degree of interest. His descriptions of the preaching of the worthies of the pulpit has made a contribution that will not soon be forgotten. Ninety-six men have been introduced on the cover and through the pages of the *Preacher's Magazine*—to each of these Professor McGraw has been a master of ceremonies de luxe. He is being released from this particular responsibility, but we are planning to use his talents in other areas of contribution in the near future.

Mrs. Ruth Vaughn concluded her editorship of the "Queen of the Parsonage" feature last month. Since June, 1959, she has given splendid

service. The *Preacher's Magazine* is by very nature largely masculine in its outlook—blunt, muscular, perhaps awkward. That is just because we are men. Mrs. Vaughn has provided the charm, the femininity, the ruffles and lace. And the *Preacher's Magazine* has been the better for it. So, after more than a year and a half of fine service, her monthly pages of portraits, recipes, and chats will be missed. A stomach-minded soul like me could almost smell the spice and the perfume as I perused these pages. Thanks, Ruth Vaughn. You have made a host of friends for the *Preacher's Magazine* from the petticoat portion of the parsonage household.

—N. R. O.

QUOTES and NOTES

E.U.B. Leaders Study Methodist Merger Plan

Dayton, Ohio—The next General Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren church, scheduled for October, 1962, will receive a definite proposal for or against merger with the Methodist Church in the United States.

This was made clear in a formal statement released by Dr. Reuben H. Mueller, senior E.U.B. bishop and chairman of the E.U.B. commission on church federation, which will meet April 17 with a similar group from the Methodist commission on church union to discuss the factors involved in such a proposal.

However, E.U.B. leaders have already voiced concern about such factors as "questions of absorption" into the Methodist episcopate, the Methodist organizational structure, and the difference in size between the two bodies. (The Methodists

number 9,000,000 while the E.U.B. church is composed of some 760,000 members.)

Bishop Mueller noted that, if the General Conference votes favorably it may authorize the commission to work out a plan and basis of union for submission to the 1964 Methodist General Conference and the 1966 E.U.B. Conference.

Critical of "Revival"

The contemporary religious revival has itself contributed to the current decline of ethical standards, in the opinion of social philosopher Wil Herberg of Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. Dr. Herberg spoke recently on the sixth annual Bishop Donald H. Tippett Lectureship at the University of the Pacific at Stockton, California.

He called it both platitude and paradox that America is at once "the most religious and most secular nations," and urged a recovery of conscience and character to stop moral disintegration.

THE SUNDAY NIGHT STORY

THE DEPARTMENT of Evangelism will try during the coming months to tell the story of what happened during the "Shining Lights on Sunday Nights" part of the "Evangelism First" emphasis in various sections of the church.—EDWARD S. LAWLOR, *Secretary Department of Evangelism.*

Chosen this month is the story of what happened in:

Location: Woodland Church, Hammond, Indiana

Pastor: Rev. Owen M. Burke

Number of members: 102

Average Sunday school attendance: 105

THE WOODLAND CHURCH of the Nazarene in Hammond, Indiana, has made the Sunday night service a vital part of their evangelistic outreach. The pastor, Rev. Owen M. Burke, has led the church in a planned program of calling, evangelism, and revival with special emphasis on making the Sunday night service vital and spiritual.

Unergirded with prayer, this church has enjoyed the blessing of God on their labors. During an eight-week emphasis featuring the Sunday night service, the Sunday evening attendance doubled. They enjoyed a 45 per cent increase in attendance after the special campaign was over, and the pastor received twenty new members into the church. When he was sending in his report he had another class ready or membership. The Sunday school is showing a 30 per cent increase.

We asked Pastor Burke to share his plans for this special Sunday night emphasis with you, and we pre-

sent here some of the plans and ideas he used.

Plans were laid in advance for an eight-week campaign of Sunday night evangelism. The Sunday evening service was planned to be spiritual and interesting to the outsider as well as the members of the congregation.

The church was divided into two teams called the "Sons of Thunder" and "Gideon's Band." Each side had a captain, a theme chorus, and a team color. A banner, three feet by six feet, was prepared. It was red on one side and blue on the other, with the following wording on both sides:

CONQUESTING FOR THE KINGDOM

Evangelism First

OBJECTIVE—Souls

MEANS—

Great Evangelistic Rallies

(Name of team)

The contest was based on attendance. The captain of the winning team for the night would come forward and put the banner on his side with his team color and name on the outside. No other awards were given. The congregation entered into the spirit of the contest and the wholesome rivalry helped to create an enthusiasm for the service.

Each Sunday night service was carefully planned in advance. A theme was chosen for each night and a song was highlighted in keeping with the theme. Various people and methods were used to call attention to the theme for the night, and to encourage the congregation to invite people to the service.

The following themes were used:

Work

Jesus

Heaven

Whosoever Will

Revival

God's Grace

The Old-time Religion

Country Music Night

Country Music Night was a real success. The music was with the accordion and guitar. The people were asked to come as they would dress "back home."

Atmosphere for the eight-week campaign was created by suspending a large globe of the world from the ceiling. The slogan "Evangelism

First" was placed above the globe in large letters with flags of all nations around it. The Christian and American flags were prominently displayed with this arrangement, along with the "Try Christ's Way" signs located in strategic places throughout the church.

The people were interested in the gospel messages by Rev. Burke. He would have his message well in mind, use just three points, and then preach for only fifteen minutes with all the fervor and power that God would help him with.

Sunday night evangelism has captured the heart of the pastor and people. They are planning another series to emphasize the evangelistic service on Sunday night. They have experienced the thrill of seeing souls accept Christ and cannot be satisfied with less.

Rev. Burke testifies: "I believe the Sunday night service is the key to our programs in the Church of the Nazarene. I cannot see preaching a pastoral message on Sunday nights because only church people are there. I believe we can put on a program of evangelism with revivals, calling, and planning that will bring the outsider to church on Sunday night."

The Sunday night story does not end here. It will not end as long as we keep the spirit of New Testament evangelism alive and confront the lost with the message of Christ on Sunday night.

How Dr. Bresee prepared his sermons:

1. He studied each morning (Saturday was his day off).
2. He wrote out his notes—which he seldom used.
3. He went to bed on Saturday afternoon with his sermons—to soak in them.

—Submitted by A. H. EGGLESTON, *Picture Butte, Alberta*

Gleanings from the Greek New Testament

By Ralph Earle*

Romans 14:18—15:6

PURSUE PEACE

THE VERB "follow after" (v. 19) is *dioko*, which means "pursue." It is used in Heb. 12:14, where the literal rendering is, "Keep on pursuing peace with all men, and the sanctification apart from which no man shall see the Lord." This message has a similar emphasis: "Let us keep on pursuing the things of peace."

EDIFY OR UPBUILDING?

The last clause literally reads, "and the things of upbuilding to each other." The noun is *oikodome*, which comes from *oikos*, "house," and *demo*, "build." Literally it would mean the building of a house. But it came to refer to any building. It is used of the beautiful "buildings" of the Temple (Matt. 24:1; Mark 13:1, 2). Elsewhere it is found only in Paul's Epistles (fifteen times). There it always has a metaphorical sense and is usually translated "edifying" or "edification." It may be that this word is thoroughly understood by many Bible readers. But it is doubtful whether the idea of "building up" is conveyed today by this Biblical term. The clear sense is this: "Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (R.S.V.).

DESTROY OR OVERTHROW?

The Greek word for "destroy" here (v. 20) is different from that in the fifteenth verse. This one is *kataluo*, is translated "break down" by

Moffatt and in the Berkeley Version. Arndt and Gingrich prefer "tear down." Abbott-Smith suggests "overthrow," which fits very well here.

OFFENSE OR STUMBLING BLOCK?

The Greek word for "offense" is the same one which is translated "stumblingblock" in verse thirteen—*proskomma*. Occurring six times in the New Testament (only in Paul) it is rendered "stumbling" or "stumblingblock" in every other case.

That idea should probably be retained here. The Berkeley Version reads, "It is wrong for a man to eat what means a stumbling block." The Revised Standard Version has, "It is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats." The New English Bible says, "Anything is bad for the man who by his eating causes another to fall."

ALLOWS OR APPROVES?

"Alloweth" (v. 22) translates the Greek verb *dokimazo*, which means "test," then "prove" by testing, and finally "approve" as the result of testing. It comes from the same root as *dokimos*, which is translated "approved" in verse eighteen. Probably the best rendering here is "approves" (R.S.V.).

DAMNED OR CONDEMNED?

"Condemneth" (v. 22) is the verb *krino*. "Doubteth" (v. 23) is the verb *diakrino*; and "damned," *katakrino*. The simple word *krino* meant

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first of all "to separate, select, choose," then "to be of opinion, judge, think," then "to decide, determine, decree," and finally "to judge, adjudge, pronounce judgment."¹

The compound *diakrino* means "to distinguish, discriminate, discern," then "to settle, decide, judge, arbitrate." In the New Testament and ecclesiastical writers it often means "to be divided in one's mind, to hesitate, doubt."² It is the last sense which fits best here.

But what about *katakrino*? Literally it means to "judge down" or "give judgment against." Occurring nineteen times in the New Testament, it is translated (K.J.V.) seventeen times as "condemn" and twice as "damn" (here and Mark 16:16). The point hardly needs to be labored that the latter is an over-translation amounting to a mistranslation. Eternal damnation is not suggested here. Rather, one is "condemned" if he does not act in faith.

INFIRMITY OR WEAKNESS?

The noun *asthenema* is found only here (15:1). It comes from the adjective *asthenes*, "without strength, weak, feeble." The verb *astheneo* occurred three times in the previous chapter (14:1, 2, 21). There it was translated "weak." It would seem that "weaknesses" is the best rendering here.

POWERFUL AND POWERLESS

"Strong" is the plural of the adjective *dynatos*, which means "strong, mighty, powerful."³ From the cognate term *dynamis* come dynamo, dynamic, dynamite. "Weak" is the plural of the adjective *adynatos* (a [negative] plus *dynatos*). Hence it

means "powerless." The Berkeley Version gives a very accurate translation: "We who are strong ought to put on ourselves the weaknesses of those who lack strength." The New English Bible runs the two chapters right together—there were no chapter divisions in the New Testament until the thirteenth century, and then the job was very poorly done—and sets this verse in its context with the following translation: "Those of us who have a robust conscience must accept as our own burden the tender scruples of weaker men."

PLEASE OR SERVE?

Once each in the first three verses of this chapter we find the word "please." That is the most common meaning of *aresko*. But Abbott-Smith thinks that in verses one and three it means "render service to."

The basis for this is pointed out by Moulton and Milligan as follows: "For the idea of *service* in the interests of others which underlies several of the NT occurrences of this verb (I Th. 2:4; Rom. 15:1, 3; I Cor. 10:33), we may compare its use in monumental inscriptions to describe those who have proved themselves of use to the commonwealth."⁴ This was a usage of the word in that period.

One can see the advantage of translating the first clause of verse three "For even Christ served not himself. That fits with His own statement "For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, R.S.V.).

REPROACHES OR INSULTS?

Almost all translations have "reproaches" (v. 3). But it may be that

¹Abbott-Smith, *Lexicon*, pp. 257-58.

²*Ibid.*, p. 108.

³*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵VGt, p. 75.

this is not forceful enough today. The verb here, *oneidizo*, means "reproach, revile, heap insults upon."⁶ The noun *oneidismos* means "reproach, reviling, disgrace, insult."⁷ With us "insults" seems stronger than "reproaches," and so may be preferable. The Berkeley Version reads, "The abuses of those who abused you fell on Me."

LEARNING OR INSTRUCTION?

The word rendered "learning" (v. 4) is *didaskalia*. Its usual meaning is "teaching, instruction." The term "learning" today has two mean-

ings. It is used not only for the process of learning, but also in such statements as, "He is a man of great learning." This would not fit here. So unquestionably the best translation is "instruction" (Weymouth, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Berkeley, R.S.V., N.E.B.).

PATIENCE OR FORTITUDE?

The rendering "patience" for *hypomone* is too weak and passive, as we have noted earlier. The word has the stronger, active sense of "steadfastness" (R.S.V., Berkeley, Moffatt, Goodspeed). Perhaps even better it might be rendered "fortitude" (N.E.B.). That is what a Christian needs more than "patience." Fortitude keeps us in the race until the goal is reached.

⁶Arndt and Gingrich, *op. cit.*, p. 573.
⁷*Ibid.*

How the Apostles Creed averted—

A Suicide

THE LATE PRINCIPAL RAINY used to tell of a man in Edinburgh who was a bad character and a confirmed lawbreaker, often in the hands of the police. He had only one redeeming feature in his life—his love for his little girl, who was an only child, the very image of her dead mother. He committed burglary and was put into prison. During the term of his sentence, his child died. On the day he came out he learned of her death. It was a shattering blow. He could not go back to the house. He was simply broken. In his wild and bitter distraction he resolved that when night came he would end his life in the river beneath the Dean Bridge. At midnight he stood on the bridge. He was climbing the parapet when suddenly, for no reason that he could think of (as he himself said afterwards), there flashed into his mind the opening words of the creed—"I believe in God the Father Almighty." And he stepped back. Again it came stronger and clearer this time—"God the Father Almighty." He knew nothing of God, but he did know something of fatherhood. "Why," he found himself saying, "if that is what God is, if God is like that, then I can trust Him with my lassie and with myself!" And from that moment death receded; life began anew. The thought of God as a Father saved him from being defeated by overwhelming despair.—J. C. MITCHELL, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND.

Ministers are always anxious to alert themselves to the theological currents of their day. A well-qualified scholar has consented to give an introductory discussion of one of the popular philosophies of our time.—Editor.

What Is Existentialism?

By Delbert R. Gish*

TROUBLED TIMES usually give birth to radical ideas and viewpoints. The twentieth century, with its great wars, its encounter with Marxism, its serious economic depression, and an attempted genocide, has known agony of soul. Because of this it has also spawned some radical views about life. One of these, born out of experiences of crisis and despair, is existentialism.

While existentialism is not easy to define for reasons which will be stated below, existentialists hold some attitudes and ideas in common. For example, all are concerned with man's predicament in the world. They believe, first, that all men face the danger of losing their individuality and freedom; second, that science and systematic ways of meeting human needs furnish little real help; and third, that only those who suffer in an effective way can hope to keep their individuality.

The difficulty about defining existentialism stems partly from the fact that its proponents prefer to be guided by feelings and moods rather than by clear-cut concepts. To decide and act positively seems better to them than to rest in the static

grandeur of the thought world. Though reason may be crystal-clear, yet for them it is meaningless unless it comes to grips with man's hardest problems—his existence.

Confusion about the meaning of existentialism also arises from the fact that some who are usually classed as existentialists do not want to be called by that name. In this group is Marcel, who as a theist is sharply at odds with the atheist Sartre. While Sartre likes the term existentialism, Marcel and Heidegger (Sartre's onetime professor) do not; yet all manifest some of the characteristics of existentialists.

Loss of Freedom

Three of these characteristics are singled out for attention here, *the first being distress over the loss of individuality and freedom*. Modern man's soft, indecisive, sheep-minded crowd-conscious way of living robs him of authentic selfhood. His institutions, his way of life, his love of ease all weaken his will to assert himself, thus lessening his use of freedom, and robbing his life of meaning. By the use of mass media in education and communication (radio, tele-

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vision, newspaper, magazines, moving pictures, etc.) he is trained like a robot to think the same thoughts and follow the same fashions as the crowd. Socialistic, paternalistic government more and more does for him what he ought to do for himself. At his work he is treated impersonally, like a cog in the assembly line, and referred to by a number. He tends to treat others in the same way—like things instead of like persons. Because of this situation he meets the temptation to evade responsibility, to avoid destiny-determining decisions, and to take his place merely as one more anonymous face in the crowd. The price of yielding to his temptation is meaninglessness inauthenticity, loss of self-respect, and finally the loss of everything—including his soul. Existentialists react strongly against this tendency.

Inadequacy of Reason

A second conviction characteristic of existentialists is that *science and logic afford men little help with their real needs*. Perhaps no existentialist would repudiate all use of the pure reason, but all would recognize its lack of power to clarify the mysteries which affect our destinies. It is human to take both mysteries and destinies lightly and live for the moment. One way of taking them lightly is to treat them as we treat riddles, puzzles, or various kinds of problems—something for which we find an answer and then forget. Gabriel Marcel has made the distinction between mysteries and problems. The latter are solved and set aside, but the mystery is never solved. It is always with us, and we are always involved in it whether we know it or not. Sin and evil are mysteries. They affect our destiny, and we can neither evade them nor give final

answers to them. Our proper response to them is decision and action as long as we live, not just to think about them.

Ministry of Suffering

In the third place, *existentialism speaks of suffering*. Only at the price of a vital kind of suffering can personal authenticity (or individuality) be gained. Men endure certain pains as a matter of course: the physical kinds, then grief, boredom, despair, frustration, and dread. Dread, let it be explained, is not the fear of something in particular, but rather the universal anxiety that human beings experience because they are finite and have insufficient strength to cope with many of life's demands. They feel dread especially in solitude, and it often haunts them in the night hours. Frequently it comes as a feeling of estrangement: estrangement from God, from other persons, from the physical world, from oneself. It is the common lot of humanity to be thrown into the world where one cannot be fully at home.

Yet, even with the suffering that is already our lot, existentialists teach that in order to become truly authentic persons we must suffer still more. We must deliberately face up to the possible loss of our fondest hopes and dearest possessions, and to our own death. To push such thoughts aside is to move deeper into despair—to remain inauthentic persons. Kierkegaard wrote that suffering is the identifying mark of the Christian, for yielding to Christ means losing oneself—a most painful experience. Nothing short of giving up all to Him can invest human life with any valid meaning. Voluntary spiritual suffering is required of us; the alternative is loss of everything.

No discussion of existentialism

would be complete without some mention of Kierkegaard, known as the father of existentialism. Kierkegaard lived from 1813 to 1855. Certain dangers which he saw in the church life of his native Denmark caused him to react with utmost vigor. The essence of first-century Christianity, he said, had long since leaked out, and the people were being deceived by their spiritual leaders into believing themselves to be Christians when they were not. If one only goes through the forms and the motions, his life is meaningless.

Kierkegaard made it his personal mission to get preachers and laity to be honest, to cease playing at religion, and to discover again its real meaning. But neither while he lived nor for several decades after his death were his exhortations very seriously taken. Until the twentieth century he was hardly known outside Denmark, and not until the later 1930's did his works become generally available to American readers. For a little over two decades now there had existed in the United States what might be called the Kierkegaard vogue.

Existentialism has influenced almost every major thinker of our time. Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich are well-known names, and they acknowledge the effect of Kierkegaard upon them. Jacques Maritain (Roman Catholic), Nicolai Berdyaev (Russian Orthodox), and Martin Buber (Jewish) manifest existentialist characteristics. There are numerous other important living representatives of the movement. Although one may have paid it little attention, it will have affected him through his reading of religious journals, news magazines, and through many forms of writing.

For those who would like to become better acquainted with existentialism there is abundant material. If one

has access to some kind of guide to periodical literature, he will be able to find excellent articles from the past several years. One should read from Kierkegaard. Perhaps the direct works (those written under his own name) would be best for a start. Uplifting devotional ideas can be found in the *Edifying Discourses*, *Works of Love*, and *Training in Christianity*. *The Attack upon Christendom* shows how severely Kierkegaard could castigate what he believed to be false religion. *The Journals*, written as a combination notebook and diary and covering his life from 1834 to 1854, are revealing reading. *The Point of View* explains some of his purposes in writing as he did. *Fear and Trembling* might be a good transition to the works which he wrote under assumed names. It contains the intriguing study of Abraham and Isaac, the teleological suspension of the ethical which points out that Abraham was willing to commit murder in order to obey God. One excellent source book for these writings is *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, edited by Robert Bretall, now available in the "Modern Library" series at a most reasonable price.

One can get some of the best in existentialism in paperbacks. For a first glimpse into the subject. Roger Shinn's *The Existentialist Posture*, and L. H. DeWolf's *Present Trends in Christian Thought* (chapter four) are especially helpful. Both are published by Reflection Books, Association Press, New York. Much writing in the field seems more mystifying than clear, but those who persevere will find stimulating and informative reading that should add a new dimension to their conversation and public speaking. One may be sure that the vogue of existentialism will fade away, but the insights it offers us will remain.

Have you ever thought of being hitched to a plow?
Ridiculous?

Maybe not: anyway it would prove whether or not
we have

The Measure of Giving More

By Albert M. Wells*

SCRIPTURE: Mark 12: 41-44

Introduction

John Wanamaker, noted merchant and liberal Christian giver, made a trip to China to determine how well the money he had given for missions was being used. Upon arriving in China he came upon an old man plowing in the field. He was using a crude instrument for a plow that was being drawn by an ox and a young man hitched together. Wanamaker was surprised and asked for an explanation. The old man told how a chapel was being built in the village and how it needed a spire so that the church would be visible for miles around. The members of this little church had prayed and had given all that they could, but their gifts had not been enough. The old man's son had suggested to his father: "Let's give one of our two oxen, and I will take the yoke of the ox we give."

Wanamaker said that when he heard this story he immediately

offered up a silent prayer. He said: "My prayer was: 'Lord, let me be hitched to a plow, so that I may know the joy of such sacrificial giving.'"

We live in a critical time. The future of the Christian Church rests on the shoulders of persons just like you and me. I suggest that what we need is a concern so great that we are willing to be hitched to a plow. I refer to the plow of sacrificial giving. Christian discipleship and sacrificial giving are in my opinion synonymous. And Jesus said: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Just prior to this (in fact in the same chapter) Jesus also said: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." This is Christian discipleship. This is sacrificial giving. This is the plow to which our Lord referred when He said: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

In the Nineteenth chapter of Matthew we read this story. "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall

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I do, that I may have eternal life? and he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

There are too many in the ranks of the Church today who, after hearing this same call of Jesus, have gone away sorrowful, not because they have failed to keep the commandments, but because they have refused to crucify their affections for things—the things of the world. Jesus told this young man to give his things and his wealth to the poor. Why not to the Church? First of all, the Church had not been born into existence; and secondly, the religious systems of the Jews were usually too corrupt to merit a gift. So the next best recipient for such a gift was the poor, who had great needs. At any rate it is important to note that Jesus did not ask the young man to simply dedicate his things, but Jesus said: "Give them." In essence Jesus was saying that, until you turn loose your grip on things, you are in no position to give yourself to Christian endeavor. Giving, then, is a prerequisite and a coexistent with this matter of following our Lord.

I. A High Degree of Devotion

Now, I want us to notice a little story which is recorded in the twelfth chapter of Mark. "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Her life was characterized, not just by giving, but by the measure of giving more. The measure of giving more is really the stature of Christian discipleship. The Christian life is simply, but exclusively, a life of giving. And until we can give our dollars to God, we can never effectively give ourselves to God, if we can give ourselves to God at all.

This widow possessed the "measure of giving more." I want you to note that the "measure of giving more" is obtained first of all by a high degree of devotion. Notice verse 42 says the poor widow put in two mites. The same verse says that two mites make a farthing. Now in order to understand what a farthing represents on our present-day scale of values, I went through some reference books and found that a farthing would be one-half of a penny. The widow had two mites, which make a farthing.

It is significant that this widow had two mites instead of one farthing. If she had one farthing she would have had to give all. But this widow had two mites. She could have given only one and kept one—I dare say

that, had she done this, none of us would have scolded her, not even the Lord. But though she could have given only one, yet, because she possessed the "measure of giving more," she gave both her mites. This represents a high degree of devotion.

Devotion to the cause of Christ is not a mere abstract principle which we speak about and ponder on from time to time. Devotion is represented in our giving—and our giving of dollars is no exception of this rule.

On the front cover of a book by Stephen Graham is a picture of a lighted candle. Underneath are the words: "May I waste so that I show the face of Christ." This picture with its inscription portrays the devotion of twenty centuries of Christianity. And I say to you that if Christianity in our day is losing ground it is because we lack a high degree of devotion; it is because in the areas of service and stewardship we are only giving one mite instead of two.

Granted that most of us cannot do great things. But with a high degree of devotion—like the widow—we can do small things in a great way. Giving is not measured so much by what is given as by what is left. A. M. Hunter says that the greatest gift is that which cost the giver most. God is not necessarily impressed by large amounts. God is impressed only by amounts that represent a sacrificial spirit of devotion.

A high degree of devotion that enables us to possess the "measure of giving more" is not to be isolated in the lives of first-century Christians. It was a spirit of great devotion which led Harmon Schmelzenbach to the dark continent of Africa. The more he gave himself to the cause of Christ, the more devotion he seemed to possess. Upon arriving in Africa, he felt that God would have him go to deep Africa and into Swazi-

land. There he could preach to people who had never heard the gospel before. He wrote to the Nazarene mission board telling them of his desire. The mission board sent back this reply: "Go, but we can't send you any more money." How could he possibly go without more money? Such a long trip would take a sturdy wagon, several donkeys, and extra supplies. Then Harmon Schmelzenbach came upon a possible answer when he thought of his own small savings he had made in the States in a pottery factory. Said this devout missionary: "We will live on that and save all our funds from America." For one whole year they saved every penny that came to them from the mission board. This high degree of devotion, this willingness to give more, made it possible for Harmon Schmelzenbach and his wife to carry the gospel to Swaziland. So inspired was he after giving his dollars for Christ that he became willing to give his life for Christ.

The widow who gave her two mites, all she had, and Harmon Schmelzenbach, who gave his meager savings, all he had, are both inspiring examples of the fact that a high degree of devotion enables us to possess "the measure of giving more."

II. A High Degree of Joy

"The measure of giving more" is obtained first by a high degree of devotion, and secondly by a high degree of joy.

Note, if you will, that verse 42 says that she "threw in two mites." The account does not say that she slowly eased up to the collection cup. She could have clutched these two mites to her bosom and wavered on indecision, but she didn't. She could have taken a long last look at her last mite before finally letting it slip from

her fingers into the treasury, but she didn't. It says that she "threw in two mites." With no hesitancy, but with great joy she most willingly tossed them in. It was with a high degree of joy that she accomplished "the measure of giving more."

The reluctant giver really doesn't give anything. He simply "gives way" under pressure. The very word *giving* carries with it a built-in connotation of joy, for giving is a voluntary move made with high inspiration. Giving under pressure is not really giving at all.

Over in Second Corinthians let us notice what the Apostle Paul has to say about the joy of giving as it related to the Macedonian Churches. Beginning with the first verse of the eighth chapter we read these words: "Now, my brothers, we must tell you about the grace that God has given to the Macedonian Churches. Somehow, in most difficult circumstances, their joy and the fact of being down to their last penny themselves, produced a magnificent concern for other people. I can guarantee that they were willing to give to the limit of their means, yes and beyond their means, without the slightest urging from me or anyone else. In fact they simply begged us to accept their gifts and so let them share the honor of supporting their brothers in Christ" (Phillips).*

Notice what Paul said about the financial condition of these Macedonians. They had a great deal in common with the widow, for Paul says they were in most difficult circumstances and down to their last penny.

The liberality of the Macedonians is described as: "The grace of God giving in the churches." Obviously they had been liberal in their giving,

even though they were poor and poor indeed. But now comes the significant part of it all. These people gave with great joy—they were cheerful givers—for Paul asserts that their joy produced a magnificent concern for other people. The joy they experienced in giving was better and more satisfying than anything their money could buy. Observing this fact, Paul says: "I can guarantee that they were willing to give to the limit of their means, yes and beyond their means, without the slightest urging from me or anyone else" (Phillips).

I was talking with a Christian minister recently, and he said: "Pastor Wells, it has been my experience that, by and large, those who have the least give the most." Perhaps those who give the most may have the least in terms of dollars, but they have, I'm sure, a joy and a satisfaction and a heavenly treasure that no amount of dollars can ever buy.

Paul sums up the joy of the Macedonians in giving when he says: "They simply begged us to accept their gifts and so let them share the honor of supporting their brothers in Christ" (Phillips). Listen! We have brothers in Christ on the district level and in the general church that need our support. We have brothers in Christ on the foreign fields in the persons of missionaries and new converts. They need medical supplies; they need land and property; they need Bibles and Christian literature; they need typewriters and duplicators; they need our support, and they need it badly.

God hasten the day when we, like the Macedonian Christians, will need no urging but on the other hand we will beg the church to let us give more in the support of our brothers in Christ. This is giving with a high degree of joy.

*From *The New Testament in Modern English*, © J. B. Phillips, 1958. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company.

The widow did not give slowly or reluctantly. The account says she threw in her two mites. She gave beyond her means. With a high degree of devotion and a high degree of joy this widow accomplished "the measure of giving more."

III. A High Degree of Stewardship

In the story of the widow we see that the measure of giving more is accomplished thirdly with a high degree of stewardship. In verse 44 Jesus says of the widow that she gave of her want, that she "cast in all she had, even all her living."

This phrase, "even all her living," is important. For it tells us something of her stewardship. She was not only willing to sacrifice the comforts of life for God's cause, but she chose to sacrifice even the necessities of life, for Jesus said: "She . . . did cast in all that she had, even all her living." This was a high degree of stewardship which made it possible for her to possess "the measure of giving more."

Perhaps you are thinking now that this poor widow didn't have much to begin with, so that actually it didn't make any difference whether she gave her bit or not. I know what you may be thinking. To have two mites and to have nothing is all about the same thing. Though this idea might seem to bear logic, Jesus, our Lord, did not see it that way. According to Jesus, this widow's living and existence depended upon those two mites. Further, to say that this widow had so little that her giving made no difference is to boast your own mind to be wiser in this matter than Jesus Christ himself. This widow had such a high degree of stewardship that she was willing even to sacrifice the necessities of life.

All of us believe that God is all-powerful, and that in God there are no limitations. This is a brief but common, and I believe correct, concept of God. And in light of this fact it is obvious that God does not need the gifts we are able to give Him. The cause of God was not dependent upon the two mites which the widow gave that day. But what God needs is the giver, and in order to have a giver there must of necessity be gifts, which gifts God then uses for our good and His glory. The heart of Almighty God is not concerned with dollars and cents. The heart of God is concerned with and desirous of persons—persons who are willing to sacrifice the comforts and even the necessities of life for the sake of His kingdom.

This widow had a kind of stewardship that made her realize that even the two mites she possessed were not actually hers. For it was by the mercy and providence of God that she possessed what she did. In giving her two mites she was not really giving so much as she was exercising a high degree of stewardship. She was being a good steward over that which God had given her.

We often rather glibly say that everything we possess belongs to God. I don't believe that and you don't either. If this were true, if everything we have really belongs to God, then every time we see a need we would give of everything we have until that need is met. And we just don't do this. We simply remain unconcerned as needs of the Church and of our Lord's kingdom move past us, and plague us for days and weeks and months and years.

I fear that we have our first lesson in Christian stewardship yet to learn. And this widow which Jesus describes in the twelfth chapter of Mark

sets the pace for us. Whether we will rise to the same high degree of stewardship which characterized her life simply depends upon our eagerness to see the kingdom of God advance.

Because she was characterized by a high degree of stewardship, the widow possessed "the measure of giving more."

Conclusion

There are some persons today who are going about wringing their hands, and saying: "Oh, my, what are we going to do? The materialistic trend and the materialistic emphasis is about to get us." And I say, Don't kid yourself. Materialism isn't about to get us—it's got us! Materialism has got us by the throat in a death grip and is choking the spiritual life right out of us.

The Bible says the love of money is the root of all evil. You say, The

love of money is evil, but money itself isn't evil. And I say, That's debatable. Love for the things which money can buy, from a college education on down to an ice cream cone, has been the most frequent stumbling block to genuine Christian stewardship. Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Martin Luther had something to say about materialism and things. Luther said: "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess."

What about our possessions then? I agree with the man who said: "We don't own them; we owe them."

The need of the church on local, district, and general levels are for us a wonderful opportunity to exercise a high degree of devotion, a high degree of joy, and a high degree of stewardship, and thereby embrace "the measure of giving more."

Continued from last month

II. Are There Souls in Our Statistics?

By Dwayne Hildie*

PERTINENT to the study of the causes for defection is the consideration of where we look to receive our membership. It would seem that they come to us from four areas: (1) adults from other denominations, (2) adults saved through our evangelistic efforts, (3) boys and girls from Nazarene homes, (4) children of our Sunday school whose parents are non-Christian.

It has been my experience that there has been relatively little difficulty with two of these four groups as regards church loyalty. Once an adult from another denomination has decided that the theology and spirit of the Church of the Nazarene are the sort of thing he has been shopping for in a church home, he is not given to further moving about. He usually makes a good, stalwart member. It

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takes the Methodist fire and the Baptist water to generate the steam to blow the Nazarene whistle.

Nor have we reason to expect any high percentage of defection from the boys and girls whom we receive into the fellowship of the church from Christian or Nazarene homes. It is obvious that all of them have not stayed with the church, but the number who have justified our hopes in them at the time they joined the church is gratifying.

The same cannot be said of the lad or lassie who comes into fellowship with us from a home which honors neither God nor the Church. There are some churches who may have done a better than average job with this sort of membership through conducting a pre-membership catechism class, the conclusion of which culminates in a special service in which these boys and girls are received into church membership. It would be my feeling that this would be the minimum standard to be required before taking such a class into membership. It has frequently been argued in this matter of taking children into membership that the Lutherans and Catholics do an outstanding piece of work in building children into their membership. This is admittedly true, but it is equally true that these other church groups do not make the demands in terms of experimental grace and consequent holy living which is expected of the Church of the Nazarene membership. Boys and girls are great "joiners." They also drop out with equal facility.

In the case of church membership, involving as it does a high negative standard, without the backing of a Christian home the adolescent boy or girl is subjected to more pressures than he can logically be expected to bear. Our own Church Schools depart-

ment has taken cognizance of this fact, and has given us statistics to indicate that, if we are going to hold the boys and girls of our present Sunday school, it is imperative that we reach the parents. If it were my conviction that church membership would in any way act as a deterrent to the boy or girl to keep him or her from drifting back into the world, or if I felt that as a church member this boy or girl would develop as a Christian with any greater celerity, I would want to be the first in the movement to take him or her into membership. My experience in the matter has not given me assurance that such is the case. Rather it has been my observation that young church members of this description will fall victim to the allurements of the world almost as certainly as their counterparts in the Sunday school who have not taken the vow of membership. It is admitted that a class of junior or intermediate age children coming into church membership looks mighty attractive—totally aside from the fact that they made good statistics—but unless their dads and mothers are sitting in the congregation proudly looking on, it would seem to me that there will come a day when they will be regarded as deadwood by our successors.

The fourth area to which we look to provide us with an assembly report in the column of "Profession of Faith" is that group of adults whom we have reached through one of the evangelistic arms of our church. Their numbers are not as great as we could wish for, and we should give them the greatest consideration. While they should represent our greatest and most desirable potential, unless properly led into church membership they could also come to be one of our statistical hazards.

Membership with the Church of the Nazarene should combine in the mind of him or her who would join the church a feeling of honor and a sense of responsibility. It would be my opinion that some of our methods employed in receiving believers into fellowship would not leave the candidate with that feeling. To receive a candidate into membership without instructing him as to his privileges and responsibilities as a member leaves the door wide open for misunderstandings and defections. While it is true that the experience of sanctification is not a prerequisite of membership, it would seem that a pastor in our church would want to be very sure that the candidate for membership had at least a scriptural and doctrinal understanding of the cardinal teachings of our church, and was indeed a seeker after a personal Pentecost in his life. It would be my conviction that a part of any course of instruction for proposed members of the church should include the matters of our responsibility toward the church's financial program, local, district, and general, with as much time as possible spent in the area of our responsibility in the matter of witnessing to others. If we will

spend some effort at this level, it is reasonable to suppose that we may develop the kind of church members we have been wishing we had. On the other hand, I can see how failure to observe the importance of preparation for membership could well result in folk who are not well grounded and established, and who in a relatively short time could drift into habits of carelessness and backsliding. Our successor will see them as deadwood.

Nor should this paragraph be taken as a contention for a policy of probationary membership. There is a dignity and legitimate honor to becoming a member of the church which, in my opinion, is dulled if the individual has been taken in on approval for a time. It were better to convey in his mind that he is passing through an instruction period prior to being fully received into membership. If sufficient time is given this new branch so recently grafted into the vine to mature and develop, the very fruits he will produce will make church membership both natural and desirable without necessity for us to sell it.

(Continued next month)

To Feed or Flay?

(A Layman's Complaint)

"Oh, feed my sheep!" the Saviour said . . . "Yes, feed my hungry flock!" . . . And when they come to thee for food . . . do not their hunger mock . . . Dear pastor, have you ever thought . . . when sitting all alone . . . how often you've been asked for bread . . . and you have giv'n a stone? . . . Or when some bruised, aching heart . . . has longed for Christian cheer . . . you've donned the magisterial robe . . . and roared in tones severe? . . . We often come to church in hope . . . sad-hearted go away . . . and this the tenor of our thought . . . Friend, do you feed or flay?—CHARSTEN CHRISTENSEN, *Calgary, Alberta.*

Really the request is for a saintly

efficiency expert married to an angel

Wanted: A Preacher

WANTED: A preacher who may be seeking a new field of endeavor and who can meet the following specifications:

This man must have pulpit eloquence without show of oratory. His message must be simple enough for the simplest, and profound enough for the deepest thinkers. His sermons should not be short enough to make the service seem abbreviated but neither should they be long enough to inconvenience those who have planned a Sunday afternoon trip. His car should not be large enough to appear showy, but it should be big enough to serve as an auxiliary to the church bus and roomy enough to haul chairs, camp-bound youngsters, and food for church suppers. He should refrain from preaching money from the pulpit, but he should be a genius at securing funds without asking for them. He should be a regular and generous giver to set an example for his people, and should always have a five or ten dollar bill ready when some worthy cause comes along. While age is not of first importance, he should strike a happy medium between youth and old age. He must appeal to the grandparents in his flock, but must be young enough to fill the pews with boys and girls.

The size and age of his family are of great importance. The children should not be young enough to keep his wife from active participation in church affairs. On the other hand

they should not be old enough to damage the parsonage while playing cowboys and Indians. Married children are preferred, unless they come too often with their rowdy grandchildren.

His wife should not look too much older than her husband or too much younger. She should dress conservatively without appearing too much behind the times. She should be able to play the piano, but should evince great reluctance when someone else wants the job. She should be eager to teach a class, preferably one which has made others quit in exasperation. She should roll up her sleeves and help at all church suppers, etc., and should ever be ready to pick up loose ends overlooked by the janitor.

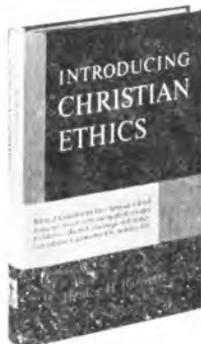
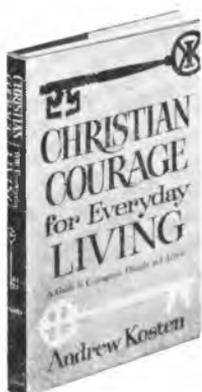
A preacher who can meet the above requirements will be hired if he can also please 15 per cent of the people who never miss a Sunday, the 35 per cent who come with fair regularity, the 25 per cent who come when the spirit moves them, the 20 per cent who have not missed Easter, Christmas, or the annual picnic in years, and the 5 per cent who have not darkened the church doors since the last preacher was hired, but who will no doubt be curious enough to look over the new man.

If you know such a man, please send his name, address, and salary expectations to the district superintendent, who will have it available for the church looking for such a paragon.

—DAVID BARR, *Indiana Observer*

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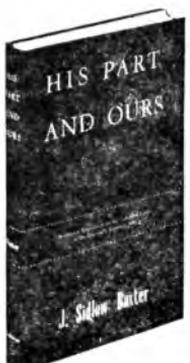
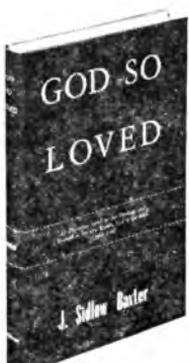
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"QUEEN of the PARSONAGE"

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

Hats Off to the Queen

For many months Ruth Vaughn has contributed material for the "Queen of the Parsonage" feature. The December issue was her last one.

But we wanted to include her in this month and a fine friend sent in this unsolicited tribute. Mrs. Vaughn—we salute you as a fine parsonage queen, mother, and author. Thanks so much for your editorship of this feature.—*Editor.*

Portrait of a Queen

I WOULD LIKE TO introduce to you Ruth Vaughn. Many have known her as the writer of "Queen of the Parsonage." Some ministers' wives have had the high honor of having her feature them as the "queen." She has always written of others and contributed numerous articles for everyone to enjoy. As a heartfelt appreciation and respect for her, I dedicate this article from one who had the privilege of being a church member and close friend. She not only possesses writing abilities but is an outstanding minister's wife and a remarkable individual.

Our first Sunday night in a strange church was made warm and welcome by a young couple called Rev. and Mrs. Bill Vaughn. Right after church she came up to me with a smile that was radiant and warm. Somehow it made me feel welcome, wanted, and needed immediately. "Where are you from? Can we help you in any way?"

She expressed how glad they were to have us in a way that you could feel was sincere. It was not because it was her job or duty, but because she loves people. Her warm welcome made a pull at your heartstrings and all of a sudden you didn't feel like a stranger at all! "Will you come over to the parsonage for a little while?" What a treat that was! Here we had just arrived in the city and in just a few moments she had opened her heart to us. We have been in the air force and traveled much, been to many churches, but never welcomed in such a wonderful way.

My first impression has not been changed. I have seen visitors come many times and this spirit of welcome is genuine, because it is from her heart. It is something you cannot even imagine unless you have experienced it.

By coincidence one day I came across an article in the *Herald of Holiness* that she had written. I was

amazed! Here the person I had for a minister's wife and friend—who amazed me so many times—was a writer, but never did she mention this. I talked about this to her and she became quite flustered and embarrassed. This was very unusual for her. She said with tears streaming down her cheeks, "God gives me the words to say. It is a precious gift from God that I try to be worthy of. Within myself I am nothing. I deserve no credit. I will never accept the credit. I am just the tool that God is using. Without God giving me words I could not write anything. My only desire is to be worthy of it." She is much too humble to tell you. I could never get over how a person, so talented and so gifted in every area, could be so humble.

Ruth Vaughn is so much like the rest of us, yet possesses all these things. You will find yourself wondering how it can all be real. I can only say I believe it is because she lives so close to God! God has endowed her with so many gifts because He can trust her with them. With her, there is no thought of her talents or achievements; only to do more for God each day. She lives by this every minute of the day.

Her spirituality shows itself in every situation. When she testifies there is always a renewed ring of victory. Even during hard places and in dark valleys there is no questioning—only giving thanks to God for everything. During financial crises she never doubted or wavered. Always God would provide. I would be concerned for them but she'd say, "We've tested and proved God. He always supplies." Marvelously He did!

I remember one particular incident. The ladies of the church had come for morning prayer meetings for the revival we were having. One lady

was talking about one of her trials and how she could not pray over it. It was a real concern for her. We all listened and Sister Vaughn started talking. It became so quiet as she talked that you could feel God's presence come in waves. When she talked, you knew that God was giving her words, wisdom, and advice. When she finished, we got on our knees and God answered prayer marvelously. As I listened I thought, How wonderfully she shows forth the beauty of Christ! She spoke so simply a child could understand. I left there with even more respect for her and much closer to God.

Another time her husband was not able to go to the hospital to pray with one of the ladies who was having surgery. She went for him and was there before the lady went up to surgery. She also was there when she came out of surgery, and on and off constantly. The lady said, "She prayed so wonderfully with me! She makes you feel so much better."

I have seen her call and visit because she loved to show others to Christ. It was no trial to her. I've been with her and at each home they'd welcome her and she'd pray with them. Some would say to me later, "She is the most wonderful minister's wife I've ever met." Why? Because she is so gifted with a heart of love and concern they could not get over it.

She is invited to banquets from all our churches to give readings—not only gives them, but writes nearly all she gives.

At present she has two books out for the youth of our church. She is loved by all young people. Many who considered themselves tough and wanted no part of Christianity have become Christians by the love she shows them. She doesn't just tell it to them. She plays with them! She

gets in the games! I have watched her take part in all their activities and then give devotions. All listened, responded, and respected her.

She has two little boys: one a new baby, the other four years old. Every day she prays with the oldest and tells him Bible stories. He can answer hundreds of Bible questions that would put most of us to shame. He can quote Bible chapters and promises so readily it's hard to believe. No matter how busy the day, this is always a part of it. She prays with others around the altar and can talk to them so simply that all can understand. She can quote scripture readily to help and knows her Bible from beginning to end.

I have never met anyone who did not respect and love her. So often the comment is, "She makes you feel you want to be a Christian."

I shall never be the same for knowing her. My life is much richer. She

truly helped me to know God as a real Friend and constant Companion. She is always ready to help and give of herself.

Many of you do not know she is very young, and yet is so mature in her thinking and in her spiritual experience that you can hardly believe it. With all these talents and gifts she shows forth nothing but love and makes Christianity attractive to all. But most important of all, she loves Christ supremely. She makes Christianity a beautiful, vital thing. To know her is to love her, and is an opportunity to see a Christian in action. To know her makes it easy to understand why she has been so blest. You can so completely understand her articles when you know her life is His and to Him she gives all credit. She is an outstanding minister's wife, author, and individual—most of all, an outstanding Christian.—*Submitted by Mrs. Colleen M. Hussong, Amarillo, Texas.*

What "parsonage queen," at the evening of a weary day has not felt like praying as did the poet?

Thou Knowest, Lord

*Thou knowest, Lord! the weariness and sorrow
Of all sad hearts that come to Thee for rest;
Cares of today, and burdens of tomorrow . . .
O Saviour, Thou hast wept and Thou hast loved;
And love and sorrow still to Thee may come,
And find a hiding place, a rest, a home.*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

The Seat of Ezekiel the Prophet

By Hugh Gorman*

And I sat where they sat (Ezek. 3: 15).

EZEKIEL, being led by the Spirit to his first appointment, was not looking forward to the task which God had given him. His assignment was to work among the exiles at Tel-abib, and the one thing that constrained him to go was the assurance that the hand of the Lord was strong upon him. This new preacher did not know where he would start; he hadn't a clue to what he would say, and he did not know just what he was going to do, but the thought came to him, Well, I know that God's hand is upon me, and if I obey His promptings I will be all right.

When Ezekiel arrived at the river Chebar, he saw the people to whom he was sent to preach to. They were all over the place, some lying here and others sitting there; and a rougher, tougher crowd he never did see. "Where am I going to start?" he sighed. The answer came back as if instilled in his mind by the Spirit of God. Oh, I know! I will sit where they are sitting. Surely he was being led of God when he reached this conclusion, for this was one of the secrets which brought blessing and success to Ezekiel's ministry, as it will do to all who will apply the message to their own hearts and lives. His pulpit was a seat right in the heart of the people.

Afterwards Ezekiel was able to

write, "I sat where they sat," and the wealth of material buried behind these words can be known only to those who have put themselves in the position of the prophet, and are able to say, "I sit where my people sit."

HE GOT CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE

Ezekiel, as he "sat where they sat," and looked around, was overwhelmed. One whole week passed before he came to a clear understanding of what he had to do. But light would not have come to him had he remained apart from his congregation. It was as he clung to them, for God, that the will of the Lord was revealed to Him:

If a man is to succeed in the work of the ministry, it is imperative that he follow the example of the Master, and get close to His people whom he wants to win for Christ and for the church. Jesus turned aside from His own disciples, when they returned from their mission to Galilee, to answer the call of the five thousand and meet their needs.

Do not let us be like the monk who went out into the desert and built a high pillar, so that he could "leave the world and get closer to God." One day he heard a voice, and cried, "Where are You, Lord?" and a voice from below answered, "I am down here in the world, with My people." Let us keep our heads out of the clouds, and like Ezekiel, sit where they sit, and get close to our people, showing them that we are men of like passions.

*Glasgow, Scotland.

HE GOT TO KNOW THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PROBLEMS

It is possible that we see people coming into our services, shake their hands as they leave the sanctuary, greet them in the street, and yet we do not really know them as we ought; nor do we know their problems, which they are longing to have solved—and they think that no one cares. If the Christian minister is not going to care, who else will? Ezekiel was in the place where he got to know the exiles in a genuine and personal way, because he sat where they sat. To the modern preacher this means visiting the people in their homes, and if possible in their places of employment. When people see that you have a personal interest in them, they will open up their hearts to you, giving you the opportunity to discuss their problems, and help them by prayer and spiritual guidance.

Recently a young woman from another denomination came to me for some spiritual advice, explaining that her minister did not seem to be interested in the personal problems of his people. Brethren, let us show a keen interest in the affairs of our people ere we lose their confidence, their membership, or worse, ere they lose their souls, and we be to blame. Let the people feel that you are part of them. Ezekiel threw in his lot with the people at Tel-abib without reserve, making their fortune, and their misfortunes, his own.

HE GOT TO KNOW HOW TO HELP THE PEOPLE

When the prophet "sat where they sat" he put himself in their place. The exiles would never be able to say, "Ezekiel, if you knew the circumstances in which we live, you would never preach like that." Ezekiel knew the circumstances, because he placed

himself in the same environment with his people.

When we are dealing with the problems of mankind we must, as much as in us lies, place ourselves in their position and think from that point. The questions to ask yourself are, What did I do when I was faced with this problem or, How would Jesus want us to solve this difficult problem? People often have problems which seem unsurmountable; but when we know the problem, know God, and know that God is able and willing to help, then we are on the victory side.

During the Billy Graham Crusade in Britain, 1961, I was asked to address one of the crusade meetings in Belfast Prison. As I looked out over the sea of faces my heart went out to these lads, for I understood the feelings within their hearts and I longed that God would do something for them. Nine years previously, before my conversion, I literally sat where they sat—as a prisoner in that same prison. I knew many of those prisoners and I knew that God could help them and save them, because once I was one of them. They would never be able to say, "It is all right for you, but you have never been in our situation." I had been and was that day putting myself in their position, in order that I could help them to find God.

I am not asking all my brethren to do a stretch in prison so they can understand what it is like to be a prisoner, but I plead with you as you deal with human lives, for whom Christ died, that in your thinking you will sit where they are sitting.

The Apostle Paul knew something about the subject which we are considering. Do you remember his words to the Corinthians? "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. Indeed, I have become everything in

turn to men of every sort, so that in one way or another I may save some. All this I do for the sake of the Gospel, to bear my part in proclaiming it" (I Cor. 9: 22-23 *New English Bible*).* Putting yourself in another's position will mean that you may often have to take the lowest place; but if you do that, you have the assurance in the Word of God that one day you will hear the voice of the Master saying, "Come up higher, My friend."

May the prayer of every heart, as you face your responsibilities, be expressed in the words of Ben Lemas-ter:

DEAR FATHER:

Help me to sit in the pews as I preach.

Help me to sit beside the one who has lost his way in sin's dark night, that I may sense the

needed word that will draw him to thyself.

Help me to slip into the pew close to the one who is bent low with crushing burdens, that I might sense the needed word that will encourage him to stand up-right and gain new strength from Thee.

Help me to move unnoticed near to the one who has felt the pull of temptation, that I might sense the needed word from which he can gain power to overcome.

Help me to find a place close to the one who has said or done things which I feel are meant for me, that I might sense the needed word to allay the difficulty for both him and myself.

Help me to sit beside each person in the sanctuary, that I might sense the needed words to help them all into closer fellowship with Thee.

Amen.

*The *New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961.

For Your Bulletin Board

Men honor results. God honors effort.

We can always live on less when we have more to live for.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.

A man can fail many times, but he isn't a failure until he begins to blame somebody else.

Few of us can stand prosperity—another man's, I mean.

Originality is simply a pair of fresh eyes.

There is only one rule for being a good talker: learn how to listen.

God, keep me still unsatisfied.

In helping yourself you help others.

Those who can—do. Those who can't—criticize.

Interest always is compounded on borrowed trouble.

Success—a thing that does not depend on sitting up late at night so much as it does on being awake during the daytime.

Many people have the right aim in life but they never pull the trigger.

Most of God's troubles with laborers in His vineyard can be traced to absenteeism.

In which the author insists that the gifts of the Spirit should be more earnestly sought. Only, however, that they might be practiced in love.

The More Excellent Way*

By Dr. Skevington Wood

THE PHRASE which supplies our title occurs right at the end of the twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

In the previous passage Paul has been referring to the more spectacular consequences of the Spirit-filled life. He has enumerated the extraordinary endowments of Pentecost: gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. But after this catalogue in verses nine and ten he makes it clear that, just as it is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to produce these *charismata*, so also it is His prerogative to apportion each one severally as He wills. The distribution to each individual is left entirely to the discretion of the Third Person of the Trinity. "Even as he wills' should remove all complaint on our part and thus all envy, on the one hand, and all boasting on the other," comments Professor Lenski. "What a blessing it is for all of us that the distribution lies in the Spirit's hands, and that

He allots the gifts as He does!"

From verse twelve down to verse twenty-six Paul works out an illustration from the human body to

which he has alluded elsewhere in his correspondence. Then he proceeds to set the *charismata* in the context of corporate Christian life, and in verses twenty-nine and thirty he underlines his previous emphasis that, since it is reserved for the Spirit himself to endow whom He will, not all possess the same gifts. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" Those are highly relevant questions. The evident and expected answer, as is indicated by the interrogative particle, is: "No. All are not; only some are."

Now the danger is that, this being so, some might be tempted to be smugly satisfied with the gifts they have received and suppose that they need not yearn for others. This is not necessarily commendable. One may also seek and obtain other gifts

Every believer must "covet earnestly the best gifts."

By these it would appear, in terms of the analogy of the body, that Paul means those which most benefit the whole Church. So in chapter fourteen he ranks the ability to edify the congregation through prophecy far higher than the gift of unknown tongues

*Taken from the *Flame*. Used by permission.

The *charismata*, therefore, are desirable. They come from God and must be good. Although not all may be endued with all, we are nevertheless to call upon the Spirit in prayer that we may not miss by any sin or slackness the gift He has in store for us. Therefore the apostle exhorts his readers in Corinth to set their hearts upon the best of such gifts, and determine to possess them at all costs if they are in God's plan for them.

"And yet," he adds, "shew I unto you a more excellent way." There is something better still. There is a greater gift than all, that is more than a gift; it is a grace. There is an equipment of the spirit more to be desired than the rest of them put together. It is literally "an eminently excellent way." It is the way of ways. It is the high road of holiness. It is the path of perfection. It is the incomparable endowment of love. Here is

The sole safeguard of the *charismata* against corruption.

Here is the bond that will unite the possessors of varied gifts and keep them from jealousy and spiritual covetousness. Where love reigns supreme, we shall not evilly envy the endowments of others, nor will we look down upon those who are not blessed in precisely the same fashion as we are. The teacher will not feel he ought to have been an apostle, or will these with the gift of healing or of tongues expect all to emulate their powers and tend to despise those whom the Spirit has not so equipped. It is only as the "*charismata*" are exercised in love that they can rebound to the glory of God and the good of the Church.

In the thirteenth chapter Paul unches out into an expansive description of love which makes it clear

that he is carrying the conception beyond its initial context into the realm of total Christian living. He is thinking now about the life of entire sanctification; and it is in this richer, fuller sense that we must proceed to consider it now.

The apostle makes it plain that God intends all believers to walk in the more excellent way. There is no double standard of morality hinted at here. There is no suggestion that some may legitimately be content with a lesser achievement. Indeed, the whole contrast implied in this verse is between the exceptional gifts of the Spirit, which however much we may covet them are quite evidently not for everyone, and the grace-gift of perfect love, which is for all. No Christian may consider himself exempt from the claims of this lofty vocation. The more excellent way beckons us all. It lays upon us the onus of choosing or refusing.

"From long experience and observation," wrote John Wesley:

"I am inclined to think, that whoever finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, whoever is justified, has then the choice of walking in the higher or the lower path. I believe the Holy Spirit at that time sets before him 'the more excellent way' and incites him to walk therein: to choose the narrowest path in the narrow way; to aspire after the heights and depths of holiness—after the entire image of God. But if he does not accept his offer, he insensibly declines into the lower order of Christians."

Now although, as we have seen, God does not intend or recognize two orders of Christians, it is unhappily true that in point of fact there are two such orders within the Church,

though the Scripture is clear that only the higher really merits the name. There is a sort of formal, nominal Christianity so-called which is satisfied with the low road. It is content with the minimum of effort and devotion. It is more concerned with what it can get out of religion than with what it can give. It deliberately shuts its eyes to the mountain peaks of holiness. It refuses to consider the more excellent way. It is against this form of godliness without the power that the message of holiness is primarily directed. It insists that the true believer cannot rest in sins forgiven. He longs for the earnest of his heaven. He cannot be content with anything less than God's best for him. The more excellent way is, in short, the only way. Those who are genuinely "born again" will surely yearn to go on unto perfection.

Nowadays we have to contend with a new threat to the doctrine of holiness from the theological front.

The fashionable "neo-orthodoxy" of those who take Karl Barth and Emil Brunner as their guides

is deeply suspicious of Wesleyan teaching concerning the more excellent way. It takes its stand on the Lutheran paradox that man is always a sinner, yet always righteous, in Christ. Following the Calvinist tradition, greater emphasis is laid upon the believer's positional sanctification than upon his actual holiness in this present life. The hope of deliverance from the guilt and power of sin is de-

ferred to eternity. In expounding this viewpoint Reinhold Niebuhr, the leading American representative of this school, somewhat feebly attempts to preserve the moral incentive that has always attached to this doctrine whilst postponing the realization of holiness to the future life. "To understand that the Christ in us is not a possession but a hope; that perfection is not a reality but an intention; that such peace as we know in this life is never purely the peace of achievement . . . does not destroy moral ardour or responsibility." A life made perfect *here* in love is, by contrast, the insistent goal of what Dr. Franz Hildebrandt has called "Christianity according to the Wesleys."

We shall be preserved from unscriptural extremes

if we pay heed to one of the answers to pertinent questions found in John Wesley's *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

"Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?"

"A. By keeping to the Bible, and setting it just as high as the Scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this—the pure love of God and man, the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbours as ourselves. It is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions." May each one of us be drawn by the magnetism of the Cross and the attraction of the Spirit to seek the more excellent way of perfect love.

The best place to have the angels come to us is always at our post of duty, no matter how lonely it is.

—J. R. MILLER

What the New Testament Says About the Self

By Jack Ford*

WHEN I LOOK in a mirror, I see my worst enemy."

We have all at some time echoed the sentiments of the one who uttered those words. Adam Clarke goes so far as to say that "a man's self is to him the prime cause of most of his miseries."

And yet, "no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it" (Eph. 5:29). At times we abhor ourselves, but always we seek to preserve ourselves.

This strange antinomy has led to much confused thinking and teaching. It will help to clear our minds on this point if we glance at what the New Testament has to say concerning self.

Love Thyself

When our Lord was asked which was the greatest commandment, He quoted the Shema, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and He followed it with, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:29-31). Enshrined, therefore, in the second greatest commandment is the recognition of self-love.

Legitimate self-love is basic to human nature, and without it survival would be impossible. A body neglected dies; a mind uncultivated deteriorates; and unless the spirit is valued, there can be no response to the offer of eternal life. Every preacher of the gospel assumes a legitimate

self-love on the part of his hearers. What is the point of warning men to flee from the wrath to come and of inviting them to find in Christ salvation, full, present, and free, if they couldn't care less whether they are saved or damned?

It is interesting to notice that in the above connection self-love is set in a social context. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." A thoroughgoing altruism is of doubtful value to society. If I neglect my garden to tend my neighbor's, the weeds that grow in my uncultivated soil will spread all over the estate. If I neglect my body in service to the community, I may well spread an infectious disease among those whom I serve.

To seek the highest good for myself is my duty to God, my neighbor, and myself.

Yield Thyself

In line with this comes the great New Testament call to the surrender of ourselves to God. "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:13). Enlightened self-love points clearly in the direction of entire consecration. Indeed, the presentation of our bodies to God is described as our logical (Gr. *logikee*) service (Rom. 12:1).

Recently I went into the shop of a Christian friend to buy a wrist watch. I described to him the kind of watch I wanted, and I indicated one in the shop window which had caught my

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eye. "But," I said, "I leave the final choice to you. I can see only the outside of the watch. You know and understand its inner workings." He chose one for me, and I have never regretted that I left the choice to him; I have never had a better watch. And so it is with life. We see only the surface, the appearance of things. If we seek the highest and the best, the sure prescription is to put our lives and leave our choices in the hands of divine wisdom and love.

Paul enforces his appeal to consecration in the sixth chapter of Romans by a comparison of the reader's condition under sinful independence of God and under the saving grace of Jesus Christ. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" he asks, "for the end of those things is death" (v. 21). Self-management inevitably issues in self-destruction.

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." Our own way, the way which seemed right to our proud, un-enlightened minds led us to death (Prov. 14:12). Seeking to save ourselves by avoiding the loving hand of divine control, we destroyed ourselves (Luke 9:24). If we have learned our lesson, prudence as well as overflowing gratitude to our redeeming Lord will draw us in unreserved consecration to His pierced feet.

Reckon Thyself

It naturally follows that if sin is the destroyer of ourselves, causing us even to abhor ourselves, to preserve ourselves we must sever our relationship with it. Sin is the antithesis of God, and turning the face to Him involves turning the back on sin. This is emphasized in the New Testament again and again. The very rite of Christian baptism con-

veys the idea of death to sin & living to God (Rom. 6:4). We to "reckon . . . [ourselves] to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11).

This attitude is made possible by the redemptive act of Christ on the Cross. Our old man has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not be the slaves of sin (Rom. 6:6). We are to reckon on the efficacy of Christ's redeeming act and God will make it a fact in our lives.

Until a complete surrender has been made to God and the merit of the atoning Blood has been applied by faith to our hearts, the spirit of revolt, the mind of the flesh (Rom. 7), still has a place within us and forms a liaison with the spirit of disobedience around us (Eph. 2:2). When we dare to believe God, the bold reckoning of faith releases the power of God in our lives, eliminating the spirit of revolt, and we become dead to sin.

This does not mean that the self has been annihilated. It is dead to sin, but alive to God. It has been emancipated from the destructive elements within it to find real freedom and true self-expression in its original relationship with God.

The maintenance of this freedom is dependent on the continuance of our faith. "Reckon" is in the present continuous tense in the Greek. The experience of full salvation begins with an act and is maintained by a certain attitude. The crisis is followed by the process.

Deny Thyself

But what now is the condition of the sanctified self? It is freed from the spirit of revolt, that spiritua-

complex which sought to organize its instinctual life against God, but its basic instincts still remain. It has still the "drives" of hunger, sex, fear, acquisitiveness, pugnacity, curiosity, etc. These are neither good nor bad in themselves; they are a moral. But they are the raw materials of the moral life. As they rise into consciousness, the will must sanction them or dismiss them in the light of the indwelling Spirit of God.

Jesus called upon those who willed to come after Him to deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23). Deny is in the aorist tense, suggesting that the crisis of self-surrender was foremost in our Lord's mind, but the renouncing of self-government must be followed by the daily discipline of self-control.

It is here that many misunderstand the teaching of scriptural holiness.

They assume that, if sin has gone, the subsequent life will be one of glad spontaneity in which self-discipline is unnecessary and unknown. But Paul kept his body under (I Cor. 9:27), and self-control is part of the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:23). It is in this very process that holy character is formed. The body is given to understand that it is the junior partner of the human trichotomy, and the soul must subserve the interests of the spirit. The spirit itself waits on the pleasure of its redeeming Lord.

But we must not think of the sanctified life merely in negative terms. Self-denial is but a means to an end, and the end is following Christ. We are to die to sin that we may live to God; to deny ourselves that we may follow Christ. Let Christ fill the vision and we shall rejoice in the process which fashions us like unto Him.

Points for the Pastor to Ponder

I Pet. 5:1-4 (Phillips translation*)

"MY FELLOW-ELDERS"

First, give yourself to the work—not just a part. "Accept the responsibility of looking after them willingly . . . because you are really concerned for their well-being."

Second, work for the welfare of people—not for personal reward, "doing your work not for what you can make . . ."

Third, humility as a leader—not a boss. "You should aim not at being 'little tin gods' but as examples of Christian living . . ."

The promise, "You will receive that crown of glory which cannot fade."—CLAUDE E. PITENGER, *Chanute, Kansas*

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Supplied by Nelson G. Mink

QUOTATIONS ON THE NEW YEAR

"We are bound by every rule of justice and equity, to give the New Year credit for being a good one until he proves himself unworthy the confidence we repose in him."—*Charles Dickens*.

"The special insecurity in which we now live in an age in which one civilization is dying and another is powerless to be born is typical of the insecurity in which the children of man have always lived. Each New Year is an adventure into which we must, as did Abraham of old, go out, not knowing whither we go."—*Reinhold Niebuhr*.

"May all your troubles during the coming year be as short-lived as your New Year's resolutions."—*Louisville Courier Journal*.

THIS NEW YEAR'S CLASSIC we were unable to trace to its source:

"He came to my desk with quivering lips, his lesson was done: 'Have you a new leaf for me, dear teacher? I have spoiled this one.' I took his leaf all soiled and blotted, and gave him a new one, all unspotted, and into his childish heart smiled, 'Do better now, my child.'

"I went to the throne; the year was done: 'Have you a new year for me, dear Father? I have spoiled this one.' He took my year all soiled and blotted, and gave me a new year, all unspotted, and into my tired heart smiled, "Do better now, My child."

JOTTINGS GATHERED RECENTLY

"A new hypocrisy, men afraid to appear as good as they really are."—*Ralph Sockman*.

"And all our question marks submerged in the will of God."—*Anon.*

An elderly lady said to Dr. Wiley after a week of the camp meeting: "I've enjoyed your messages so much, I'm just getting fed up on you."

Dr. Torrey Johnson says: "God doesn't send people to hell. They just refuse to go to heaven."

Protestant chaplain to dying Catholic soldier: "You are real sick. Shall I call the doctor or the doctor's mother?"

"The sin you take to bed with you is just like a cancer. It's bigger when you wake up. It can get so big you can't deal with it alone."—*Torrey Johnson*.

"A person who doesn't care what other people think is either at the top or at the bottom."

"If communism is so wonderful, it looks like they would take down their iron curtains and put in some picture windows."—*Anon.*

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

1. "Too many American mothers work away from home because they want things. American families have sought a higher standard of living, at the sacrifice of a higher standard of loving."—*DR. R. C. BIART*.

2. "Our religion has grown so thin that 'redemption' has come to mean the turning in of trading stamps, and 'dedication' has come to mean that a person likes his job."—*BISHOP H. G. WERNER (Methodist)*.

THEME: FACING A GREAT CHALLENGE

TEXT: Luke 5:4

1. Launch out into a richer Holy Ghost experience.
2. Launch out into a freedom of rejoicing.
3. Launch out into joyful service activity.
4. Launch out into a great revival in our church.
5. Let us launch out into greater spiritual conquests.

The Fragrance of a Godly Life

TEXT: *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish* (II Corinthians 2:15).

A two-year-old youngster was reported in Indiana as having decided to sample his mother's best perfume and it tasted so good that he drank it all. He was rushed to the hospital and attendants said "the place hadn't smelled so nice in years." Swallowing a bottle of perfume would be a cheap price to pay if it would sweeten our dispositions and give one a quality of pleasantness. The fragrance of a godly life comes with a life lived in the love of Christ manifested in these ways:

1. A forgiving spirit (II Corinthians 2:10)
2. A joyful spirit (v. 3)
3. A sympathetic spirit (vv. 1-5)
4. A sincere and transparent spirit (v. 17)

SENTENCE SERMONS:

Dignity is the capacity to hold back on the tongue what never should have been on the mind in the first place.

Progress involves risk—you can't steal second and keep your foot on first.

The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.

Don't worry about the job you don't like—somebody else will soon have it.

Selected

Eis to panteles. These powerful Greek words are found in Heb. 7:25 "... to the uttermost."

The term uttermost in this scripture signifies to the farthest extent, the greatest degree, the most distant point.

The question among theologians: Does uttermost refer to duration or completeness? Oleshausen says: "*Eis to panteles* does not signify evermore, but completely, perfectly."

Lange insists that it means "completely, to the very consummation: *eis to panteles* is erroneously referred to time: the reference is not to His saving always, or forever, but to His saving completely those who come unto Him. The perpetuity of His priesthood enables Him to carry through the salvation which He has commenced."

Dean Alford says: "Some take *eis to panteles* to mean time: He is able to ever save, or He is able to save forever. But this is not the meaning of the word. Completeness, not duration, is its idea; as indeed its etymology would lead us to expect."

Delitzsch says: "*Eis to panteles*, perfectly, completely, to the very end, but without necessarily, any reference to time. Christ is able to save in every way, in all respects, unto the uttermost; so that every want and need, in all its breadth and depth, is utterly done away."

Harper's Analytical Lexicon: "Perfect, complete . . . throughout all time, ever."

Thayer's Greek Lexicon: "Unto completeness, completely, perfectly, utterly, all complete, perfect."

TEXT: Psalms 15; Psalms 24:2-4

1. Here we have the conditions of enjoying the presence of God.
2. Here we have the conditions for understanding spiritual truth.
3. Here we have the conditions for enjoying the pleasure of seeing God.
4. Here we have the conditions for being ready for Christ's second coming.

—LEONARD J. DEAKINS

Perfect Love

SCRIPTURE: I John 4:13-21

TEXT: *Herein is our love made perfect, . . . as he is, so are we in this world* (I John 4:17).

INTRODUCTION:

Perfect love was John Wesley's favorite name for the experience of entire sanctification. He said he preferred not to use the term "sinless perfection" because it is generally misunderstood. He declared that the doctrine of sanctification which he taught was nothing more nor less than loving God with all the heart and loving one's neighbor as oneself.

It might be pointed out that, while the Protestant Reformation was founded chiefly in the Epistles of Paul, the Wesleyan Reformation was founded in the writings of John.

Luther emphasized faith; Wesley emphasized love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God," (v. 7) is typical Johannine exhortation.

I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF PERFECT LOVE OR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION?

- A. Our love must be perfect or without flaw toward God.
- B. There is a difference between seeking to be saved and perfect love.
 - 1. The first could be for selfish interest.
 - 2. In the second self is slain.
- C. God commands love with whole heart, mind, soul, and body.
 - 1. Heart—"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."
 - 2. Mind—must be filled with truth concerning God, salvation, doctrine.
 - 3. Soul—that which is preserved for eternity.
 - 4. Body—God's extermity.

- D. You cannot be perfect in love unless all of these members are given fully with love to God.
- E. Our love must be perfect toward our neighbor. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
 - 1. It is hypocritical to testify, "I am sanctified," while there is hatred or hard feelings toward your brother or sister (v. 20).
- F. Perfect love is that condition or experience which causes a man to be a living sacrifice for God and his fellow man.

II. WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF PERFECT LOVE?

- A. In a sense it has no limits.
- B. However, it doesn't destroy the individual personality
- C. It doesn't exempt one from temptation.
- D. It doesn't exempt one from trials.
- E. It doesn't exempt one from death.

III. WHAT ARE THE CLAIMS OF PERFECT LOVE?

- A. It makes you right with God.
- B. It makes you right with your fellow man. To obtain the experience, you will have to get right with your fellow man first. Restitution, etc.
- C. It destroys carnal fear.
- D. It gives assurance (through joy, peace, and a knowledge of sins forgiven and a yielded will) that all is well.
- E. It insures you of being able to live a sinless life.
- F. It fits you for eternal life.

IV. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF PERFECT LOVE?

- A. Peace of mind.
- B. Be willing to be used of God.
- C. Complete victory in this life.
- D. Eternal life.

CONCLUSION: Perfect love is that experience which gives us a proper relationship between God and our fellow man.

—RUSSELL J. LONG
Cambridge, Ohio

Practice the Presence of Jesus

SCRIPTURE: John 14:16-21

INTRODUCTION: Our attitudes and our deeds are greatly affected by our companions. It will make a difference in our lives if we will honor Jesus Christ and desire His presence. God has always extended His presence in a real, effectual way.

I. THE REALITY OF HIS PRESENCE IN SALVATION

- A. The Jehovah God of the Old Testament revealed His saving presence (Exod. 33:14).
- B. Jesus as God-Man declares His presence to be boundless (Matt. 28:20; John 14:16).
- C. Jesus promises His blessed presence to all who receive His Spirit (John 14:17).
- D. The presence of Jesus is not dependent upon His physical appearance (John 14:21).

II. THE VIRTUE OF HIS PRESENCE

- A. Knowledge of the truth (John 14:17).
- B. The quickening manifestation of His life to us (John 14:19).
- C. The unifying nature of His love (John 14:21).
- D. Enables us to keep His commandments (John 14:21).

III. THE JOYS OF HIS PRESENCE

- A. There is utmost satisfaction (Ps. 16:11).
- B. There is fullness forevermore.
- C. He will be our All in All.

—IVAN A. BEALS

Benton, Illinois

Give Out to Keep Full

SCRIPTURE: II Kings 4:1-6

TEXT: II Kings 4:6

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This family had followed God (v. 1).
- B. The widow was in debt.
- C. She called upon God and the prophet.

I. WE MUST FIRST BE FILLED OF GOD (v. 2).

- A. The widow had a pot of oil.
- B. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit.

C. We must be filled with the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

II. WE ARE IN DEBT.

- A. To pay our debt we are to find empty vessels (v. 3).
- B. The empty vessels represent man's need of God.
- C. Bringing in the vessels represents filling man's need with the ability of God.

III. WE MUST GIVE OUT IF WE ARE TO RECEIVE (v. 5).

- A. As the widow filled the vessels, the pot stayed full.
- B. As we give out to empty lives, only then will our "oil" remain fresh and full.
- C. Our debt to Him is reckoned paid as we give of the grace that we have received.

—IVAN A. BEALS

Repairing the Altar of the Lord

SCRIPTURE: I Kings 18:25-39

TEXT: I Kings 18:30

I. WHAT THE ALTAR MEANS.

- A. It is the place of sacrifice.
- B. It represents our meeting place with God.
- C. Its very essence symbolizes the blessing of God.

II. ELIJAH'S REPAIR.

- A. Bringing the people back to the place of sacrifice.
- B. Rebuilding the altar where God manifested himself.
- C. Convincing the people to change their heart attitude.

III. PRESENT-DAY REPAIR.

- A. Includes the aspects Elijah dealt with.
- B. Return to the family altar and private devotions.
- C. Mend broken vows and take up neglected convictions.

IV. THE FIRE OF GOD FELL AFTER THE ALTAR WAS REPAIRED.

- A. Does God show approval of your life?
- B. Are you in the place where God will meet you?
- C. Is your sacrifice up-to-date?

—IVAN A. BEALS

Settling Your Own Destiny

SCRIPTURE: I Kings 20:28-43

TEXT: *So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it* (I Kings 20:40).

INTRODUCTION: Every man settles his own destiny—a fact many overlook. Many think they are Christians because born in Christian country, have Christian parents, etc. No, *thyself!* Some blame environment, heredity, for their evil ways; say, “I can’t help it.” You can. Choice counts for more than heredity, environment. This chapter shows that your destiny is decided by:

- A. What you do with your immortal soul
 - B. What you do with your sinful nature
 - C. What you do with your opportunities
- I. GIVEN A MAN TO KEEP: You’ve Lost Him!

- A. Every man like this wounded warrior. You have been given a man to keep, your never-dying soul.
- B. You’ve been busy here and there and lost him.
- C. Your soul is lost; what can you do about it? Even if you’ve gained the whole world, you are loser. Two solutions, death or redemption. Silver stands for redemption (Israelites’ half-shekels made into sockets on which Tabernacle stood). Compare Exod. 30:15 with I Pet. 1:18. Are you under the Blood?

- II. GIVEN A MAN TO DESTROY: You’ve Spared Him!

- A. Ben-hadad, king of Syria, represents your old sinful nature. Every man born with it; but God has appointed it to utter destruction.
- B. Notice Ben-hadad’s history in this chapter.
 1. His increasing arrogance (vv. 3, 6, 10).
 2. His first defeat (vv. 13, 20).
 3. His second assault. Proposed strategy, “bring them down into the valleys.” Compare Satan’s strategy with us.

4. His second defeat. Victory gained by sword (v. 29) and burning wind (v. 30). Compare, the Word and the Holy Ghost.

- C. Ben-hadad still alive. Listen to carnality’s last pleadings.

1. “I’ll be your servant” (compare argument which says, “You need a little sin to keep you humble.”)
2. “I’m your brother” (“You can’t live without me”). It’s fatal to spare the old man!

- III. GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBEY GOD: You’ve Wasted It!

- A. Man who met God’s prophet given strange command; said, “I won’t do that.”
- B. God still sends his messengers today. Through one of them you have heard God’s command, “Repent and believe.” Have you said, “I won’t”? Then beware! A lion shall slay thee.

—DAVID J. TARRANT

Port Glasgow, Scotland

Doctor of the Soul

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:18-32

TEXT: Luke 5:31-32

INTRODUCTION:

Our doctor, the good friend we like to see as little as possible. We seldom seek him out when well; but when we feel a pain, an ache, a stiffness, shortage of breath, shiver, or hot flush, we are glad enough to call him. This is what Jesus meant: “They that are whole . . .”

But context shows Jesus spoke not of bodily disease. The health of which He spoke is righteousness, holiness. The disease, sin. He is pre-eminently the Doctor of the soul; in this field He stands alone.

- I. THE DOCTOR’S QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Every doctor must have them.
- B. Jesus’ credentials in two words: “I came.” Jesus perfectly clear as to His origin. Not born by ordinary process of generation bearing thumbmark of devil on His soul.

C. A Visitor from world of perfect health; not just sight-seer, but Man with mission of healing (Luke 19:10; John 10:10).

II. THE DOCTOR'S PATIENTS

- A. Not the righteous, but sinners.
- B. In Britain, everybody has to be registered on his doctor's panel if he is to receive the benefits of the free medical service. But some choose to be "private patients" and pay for their treatment. But Christ has no private patients; we must all register as sinners and get free treatment.
- C. No patient less in need of treatment than others. Respectable sins are the most damnable. (Compare two sons of Luke 15.)

III. THE DOCTOR'S TREATMENT

- A. This Doctor has just one bottle which He gives to all who enter His office. It is marked, "Repentance."
- B. This medicine must be taken to last drop before Doctor will give further prescription. Its action, purgative, emetic; helping us to get poisons out of our system. Unpleasant, but essential.
- C. Other remedies follow: pardon, cleansing, regeneration, etc.

IV. THE DOCTOR'S METHOD

- A. He calls: through sermon, tract, a word overheard, a memory, accident, bereavement, anxiety.
- B. As He calls, He says, "Don't you see sin is root of your trouble? Come to Me: I can heal you."
- C. Delay is dangerous. Will you not come tonight?

—DAVID J. TARRANT

The Cost of the Cup

SCRIPTURE: I Cor. 10:16-21

I. IN THE UPPER ROOM CHRIST GAVE THE CUP (Matt. 26:26-27).

- A. To Judas the cup became eternal, self-selected doom.

- B. To the eleven it became the soul-satisfying portion.

- C. To this generation it is spiritual strength and peace.

II. IN THE GARDEN CHRIST ACCEPTED THE CUP (Matt. 26:36-39).

- A. To the fallen race it became spiritual emancipation.

- B. To the Passover it became a new covenant.

- C. To us it means hope of heaven.

III. ON THE CROSS CHRIST BECAME THE CUP (Matt. 27:22, 35).

- A. To Him it was the darkest hour, a bitter cup.

- B. To the world from Calvary flows a sweet cup of salvation and hope.

- C. To you He says, "Drink this . . . in remembrance of me."

IV. COMMUNION SERVED.

—W. M. LYNCH

Duncan, Oklahoma

Knothole Religion

TEXT: *And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall (Ezek. 8:7).*

INTRODUCTION: During the depression years when kids did not have sufficient money to see a ball game, they would find a knothole their height and watch without charge. If they had the price of admission, they would pay the cashier and walk right into the stadium where the playing field was. Christianity can be likened to a baseball game, and we can either pay the price for admission or peep through a knothole.

I. THE BALL DIAMOND OF THE HEART.

- A. Paul gives the starting lineup in Galatians 5:22-23 as follows:

1. First base, Joy
2. Second base, Peace
3. Third base, Long-suffering
4. Shortstop, Gentleness
5. Left field, Goodness
6. Center field, Meekness
7. Right field, Temperance
8. Catcher, Faith
9. Pitcher, Love

- B. It is a well-established fact that these players play together or not at all. If you send

the second baseman to the showers, the entire team follows.

II. THE MANAGER EXAMINES HIS PLAYERS.

- A. Joy—to rejoice in the true acknowledgment of God as Father.
- B. Peace—at peace with God, others, self.
- C. Long-suffering—to grin and bear it.
- D. Gentleness—kindness in manner and disposition.
- E. Goodness—old-fashioned neighborliness.
- F. Meekness—the ability to be led and to depend.
- G. Temperance—the art of self-control.
- H. Faith—in God, others, and self.
- I. Love—in a triangle: towards God, others, and self.

CONCLUSION: If you are a Christian and have the fruit of the Spirit in the ball diamond of your heart, practice daily to strengthen the team. If you are not a Christian, leave the knothole at which you have been watching Christianity and pay the price through repentance towards God and faith towards Jesus Christ.

—J. W. ELLIS
Pasadena, California

A Foundation for Life

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7:24-29

INTRODUCTION: In this parable of the two foundations Jesus points out that there are two houses, two foundations, and two destinies. In this graphic picture He shows us the two approaches to life, one with God, the other without; one sensible and one foolish.

I. THE FOUNDATION DETERMINES THE DURATION.

- A. This is not a lesson in architecture but in character building. The houses Jesus refers to are not ranch homes or split-level houses but the character of men.

- B. Your foundation is laid during your youth. A biographer of Napoleon stated that at fifteen "he was already formed. True, life had something to add to him, but all the defects and good qualities were there in the fifteenth year."

II. THE FOUNDATION IS NOT SEEN.

- A. To passers-by both houses seem secure. We cannot read men's hearts. Often Christians and worldly persons seem not radically different.
- B. The test of the storms revealed the difference. John Sutherland Bonnell wrote: "When men are up against life and find that it is too much for them: one swears, one gets a headache, one gets drunk and one prays." How we react to the trials of life reveal what we are inside.

III. EVERYTHING THAT CAN FALL WILL FALL.

- A. Hitler boasted the Third Reich would last a thousand years—it lasted twelve. The "Titanic" boasted it could not be sunk. It will forever be filled with water.
- B. Jesus founded an empire on love. Napoleon said, "Alexander, Caesar, and myself have founded empires. But upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force." Jesus alone founded His empire on love, and to this day millions would die for Him.

CONCLUSION: A man must live in what he has built. You are making yourself into a personality. The only person you never get away from is yourself. Put your life in the hands of God. He can make a better person of you than you can of yourself.

—JACK WRIGHT
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

A prayerless life is a self-reliant life.—HAYES.

The Precious Faith Concerning Life and Godliness

SCRIPTURE: I Peter 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

- A. In these verses Peter strikes the keynote to his second Epistle—"knowledge of God."
- B. Following this he will emphasize the blessings and high privileges which beget a great responsibility in Christ.
- C. He extols that "precious faith" founded on "precious promises," involving "all things that pertain to life and godliness."

I. SIMON PETER (v. 1)

A. A Hebrew and Greek name

- 1. Hebrew, *Symeon* means "the reed" (Acts 15:14).
- 2. Greek, *petros* means "the rock" (John 1:42; Matt. 16:18).

B. A Servant

The Greek word is *doulos*; a bonds slave of Jesus Christ. Peter was not his own; he was bought with the blood of Christ. He was a Christ-mastered man.

C. An Apostle

The term is a compound of two Greek words meaning "a sent-out one." A missionary to a lost world. He had heard the Master say: "So send I you."

D. A fellow believer

"Faith with us." If their faith is equally precious with that of the apostles, his faith was equally precious with theirs—gentiles, fellow Jews, and all believers (I Pet. 1:7).

II. UNTO YOU (v. 2)

A. Fellow Believers

1. Fellow believers

- a. Obtained by lot. Cf. the Greek and Acts 1:17. Hence this faith is a gift from God.
 - b. Through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Note that the Greek says: "through our God and Saviour Jesus Christ"—one Person of the Godhead, not Two.
- ##### 2. Partakers of the same faith as held by the apostle. "With us."
- a. The same grand truths.
 - b. With the same grand results.

B. Recipients of grace and peace

1. Which Peter prays may be multiplied unto them.

- a. This is more than a solution; it is a sincere wish for their increase in spiritual welfare.
- b. Grace was the Greek greeting with which to begin a letter.
- c. Peace was the Hebrew greeting with which one began either a letter or a new day, or greeted a friend he met. "Peace be unto you."

2. These are two major items in spiritual well-being.

- a. Grace includes everything necessary to the soul's transformation into the divine likeness.
- b. Peace includes everything necessary for a soul's consolation in the hope and pursuit of heaven and godliness.

C. Spiritual knowledge makes for spiritual increase

- 1. This is the means of grace and peace.

a. Knowledge of God.

The kind of a God one believes in determines the kind of life one will live.

b. And knowledge of Jesus, our Lord.

2. To know is to grow

For knowledge, Peter (like Paul) uses the term *epignosis*, which indicates a full appropriation of divine truth and a personal commitment thereto. Thus it is more than intellectual *gnosis*, which the Gnostics prided themselves in; it involves intimate heart knowledge.

III. UNTO US (vv. 3-4)

A. Recipients of the divine power

1. God's power comes to us through the knowledge of His person.

a. Power for life.

b. Power for godliness.

B. Recipients of the divine calling

1. Whom God has called to glory and virtue.

Disciples are to be like their Teacher. Note His own glory and virtue (John 1:14).

a. Glory (*doxa*)—the manifestation of the divine presence and favor.

b. Virtue (*arete*)—excellence, efficiency, moral goodness.

C. Recipients of the exceeding great and precious promises

1. This is an elative superlative

Precious and exceeding great.

a. Precious because of their content.

b. Exceeding great because of their potency.

D. Partakers of the divine nature

1. To partake means to get part for yourself. The Greek is *koinonia*, suggesting partakers, sharers, companions.

2. The essence of the divine nature is holiness. Purity partakes of Deity. Moral emancipation is definitely a part of such fellowship with Deity.

E. Escapers of corruption (The Greek term *phthora* means moral decay.)

1. Corruption is in the world (cf. I John 2:17).

2. Corruption is the fruit of lust. Lust is inordinate affection for earthly things.

a. Evil desire threw Satan and the angels out of heaven, man out of the Garden, and holiness and happiness out of the heart of mankind.

b. Lust at its core is self-seeking and sin. Man becomes either regenerate or degenerate—these are his inescapable alternatives.

CONCLUSION:

A. Peter returns to the same theme of knowledge and growth at the close of this Epistle (II Pet. 3:18).

B. Written to warn against the Gnostic errors, true knowledge received great emphasis in this Epistle.

C. In the next paragraph Peter directs our minds to the increase of Christian graces.

D. Saving faith begets a life of godliness.

—ROSS E. PRICE

Pasadena, California

PROCLAIMING THE NEW TESTAMENT

(Baker, 1961)

This is a series of books: one volume to cover each of the books of the New Testament. The aim of the series is to provide homiletical comments and ideas. Each volume is arranged the same. There is a chapter in the book for each chapter of the Bible. Each chapter is given a title, and one or more key verses are selected for consideration. Then the chapter is treated under the divisions of "Historical Setting," "Expository Meaning," "Doctrinal Value," "Practical Aim," and "Homiletical Form."

The author is responsible for selecting the important verses in each chapter, and we feel that in each case this has been well done. The idea is that these verses become sermon texts and the preacher has provided for him a series of sermons from an entire book of the Bible. This lends itself well to special services, such as Sunday evening or midweek. The books are good supplements to commentaries and homiletical works already on the shelf. The following three books are available now: *The Gospel of Mark*, Ralph Earle, 119 pages, cloth, \$2.50; *The Book of Acts*, Ralph G. Turnbull, 161 pages, cloth, \$2.75; *The Gospel of Matthew*, Herschel H. Hobbs, 135 pages, cloth, \$2.50.

TIME OUT

Compiled by Al Bryant (Zondervan, 1961, 160 pages, cloth, \$1.95)

This is subtitled "Daily Devotions for Young People." Each devotional includes a brief, pithy meditation based upon a scripture passage for every day of the year. The comments in most cases are quotations from published sermons and books from quite a variety of authors. Some of them apparently come from the pen of Al Bryant himself. The devotional comments are uniformly dependable and conservative, but to be the most charitable, they are not written in the language of youth and especially not in the language of teen-agers.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

Robert G. Torbet (Judson, 1961, 96 pages, paper, \$1.00)

The book covers a rather broad area. It encompasses the conflicts which developed in the established church prior to Martin Luther, completely through to the Wesleyan revival. The writer actually gives Luther a proportionately small place in the total movement. The other characters in the story receive very good, though brief, biographical coverage.

The writer speaks more as a historian than as an evangelical who sees in the Reformation a return to the primitive Christian message of personal salvation. Even the Wesleyan revival is pictured more as a social revolution than as a spiritual revival.

As might be expected, Calvin gets a good play—in fact, as much as Luther does. This would seem to suggest the doctrinal tone of the book. This is good background material from a historical point of view but dissatisfying in its presentation of the spiritual implications of the Reformation (J. FRED PARKER).

PROPHECY FOR TODAY

J. Dwight Pentecost (Zondervan, 1961, 192 pages, cloth, \$2.95)

The author in this book traces the prophetic events from the rapture of the Church to the final judgment. It has distinctly a premillennial point of view, extremely readable and interesting. While much of the material discussed is in a controversial area, yet I have found nothing finer and saner from a premillennial point of view. For a man who is a specialist in prophecy he refreshingly stays away from such speculative areas as the identification of the Antichrist, the number of the beast, etc. There is a strong evangelistic emphasis throughout. There also will be found, in a very insignificant manner, some Calvinistic references (W. E. McCUMBER).

THE ROAD TO POWER

W. Glyn Evans (Moody, 1961, 160 pages, cloth, \$2.75)

This book sets out to explain the real meaning of genuine Christianity and how it fits the need of our particular day. It discusses such phases as redemption, salvation, transformation, freedom, social responsibility, counterfeit religion, and immortality.

The book is exceptionally well written. To the serious reader it will provide a treasure of stimulating material. There will be found some Calvinistic points of doctrinal emphasis, which a Wesleyan cannot accept. It does offer real value despite these occasional problem areas (E. E. WORDSWORTH).

GREAT PERSONALITIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

William S. LaSor (Revell, 1961, 192 pages, cloth, \$3.00)

Here will be found fifteen literary portraits of key personalities of the New Testament. These studies are done in a definitive and dramatic style, scholarly, thorough, simple, and yet heart-warming. I have not read anything better. I wish every preacher, Sunday school teacher, and youth leader as well as parents would read it. It is very readable and wholesome (E. E. WORDSWORTH).

STRUCTURES OF PREJUDICE

Carlyle Marney (Abingdon, 1961, 256 pages, cloth, \$4.50)

Carlyle Marney sees four major structures where prejudice and error thrive: (1) materialism (the metaphysical error), (2) provincialism (the epistemological error), (3) institutionalism (the ethical error), (4) individualism (the theological error). Each in turn is described in exhaustive detail and the resolution in Christian terms is offered. The answer to materialism is Christian realism. The escape from provincialism is in true community. The answer to institutionalism is in the sublimating power of a higher sense of value. The cure for individualism is in the realization of the personal.

The author is patiently a man of incredible energy, for in addition to his clerical labors he seems to have read, seen, and remembered almost everything and everybody. The astonishing array of names, books, anecdotes, phrases, historical and literary allusions leaves one breathless and a little annoyed. It would seem that he is displaying his erudition.

The author would be placed "left of center," liberal definitely, and one wonders how he happens to be a Southern Baptist. This book would appeal to those who carry a torch for liberal, progressive social thought. In a way this is too bad, for prejudice does prejudice these basic issues and many a person, narrowed and blinded by these errors, could be helped by an insight into the cause and cure of prejudices (A. ELWOOD SANNER).

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