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The Romance of Ministerial Fellowship

By W. S. Purinton*

IN THE SENSE in which the word romance is here used, it is not difficult to connect it with fellowship. They go together. My subject is "Ministerial Fellowship"—fellowship among brethren in the ministry. In its broad sense, we thoroughly believe in this and practice it. I heard Dr. D. I. Vanderpool express it recently when he said: "One of the greatest blessings for Nazarene preachers is the marvelous, glorious fellowship we have." We look forward with anticipation to the conventions, preachers' meetings, camps, district assemblies, and to the General Assembly; not alone for the inspiring messages we will hear, but for the fellowship we will enjoy. When we consider that we are all one in Christ, and are brought together because of our call from God, and that we all have common desires and purposes, then certainly no group should enjoy this fellowship more.

Beyond this, however, every Christian minister is, or should be, a Christian gentleman. Christianity and courtesy go together. Peter said: "Be courteous." Courtesy is "politeness combined with kindness." Paul writes to the Colossians: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and for-

giving one another . . . And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-14). He also said: "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed" (II Cor. 6:3). Ministerial fellowship is a fellowship founded on divine love and Christian courtesy, and based on mutual love and admiration one for another.

Such is the ideal. But I know that there have been cases of broken fellowship among us, more serious even than that of Paul and Barnabas when they decided to disband their evangelistic team. If I am to be helpful here I must point out any lack, and show where Satan will do his best to divide us.

I note at least four essentials for fellowship among us as ministers.

HAVE A CHRISTLIKE SPIRIT

Our spirit must be Christlike. We must be dead to carnal self and have clean hearts and pure motives. We must exemplify the fruit of the Spirit. Paul gives the list (Gal. 5:22). James reminds us that the wisdom that is from above is, among other things, peaceable (Jas. 3:17). Peter exhorts us to "love as brethren" (I Pet. 3:8). Someone might say: "Does such a gentle spirit make for strong leadership?" Well, it did with Christ, and He is our Example. Just as people loved to gather around the Master and listen, so will people today be at-

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tracted to one who possesses these qualities of Spirit.

Though there may be differences of disposition and of temperament, differences of culture and training, differences of conscience and conviction of Christian standards, yet if the quality of the Spirit is Christlike there will be real ministerial fellowship.

But this quality of spirit is sometimes put to the test. For instance, when changing pastorates—do we do our best to decrease and cause our successors to increase in the love and confidence of the churches we are leaving? Do we appreciate the toil and sacrifice of our predecessors in our new appointments, and give credit for their accomplishments? When I read some reports in the *Herald*, the question comes to my mind: "Whom is this writer seeking to exalt, Christ or himself?" Discourtesy to a former pastor does not make for true ministerial fellowship.

This quality of spirit will be tested when a brother minister makes a glowing report at the assembly, and you must follow him with a report that is not so glowing; or when another is elected to a district office and you are not. In the fruit of the Spirit there is no place for envy or jealousy. Or you may be sorely tested when a brother pastor receives some members from your church. Shall you be unethical because you feel he has been unethical? Suppose an ugly rumor is started about your brother minister. What will be your attitude? Will you believe it without investigation? He may be innocent and need a friend. Of truth, to have that right quality of spirit will create a rich and holy fellowship.

BE BIGHEARTED

The quality of one's spirit is the result of a work of divine grace. The natural man cannot manifest a right

spirit. Bigheartedness, in the sense in which I use it, may be possessed by natural man. He may inherit it, or acquire it by proper training. Such a trait can be developed. Many sinners are bighearted, kind to a degree, liberal enough to share all they have. Yet some who profess holiness and some who are ministers appear to be little and small in their dealings with others; so little that they seem most concerned in what will advance their own interests, and not enough concerned in what will advance others; little in business dealings, in financial matters concerning both themselves and their church. Others, instead of being open and aboveboard, appear sometimes to be tricky and need watching. They will do a favor if it will help them in return. One such who wanted a favor said to me once, "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." Another, nearly every time I meet him, starts out with: "How much salary are you getting now?" and then he tells me of his latest raise. I have heard of some that pulled for a large offering in a revival, and then wanted to withhold some of it from the evangelist. I have talked with some that seemed most interested to get a new member who had a good salary, just because of the amount of his tithe. And, brethren, I have actually known ministers who persuaded their boards to increase their own salaries, and then came to the superintendent complaining that their budgets were too high, and that they wouldn't be able to pay them. I know one who withheld his tithe from the church treasury and used it to make improvements on the parsonage where he lived. And I have known others that will draw \$60.00 or more per week salary, live in the church parsonage, and then go out on the church's time and make \$60.00 more every week in secular work.

You say, "What has this to do with ministerial fellowship?" Just this—the pastor who is little enough to do these things would take advantage of and break fellowship with his brother minister if it would be to his own advantage and personal gain. It is this type that will criticize and blame the district superintendent if he is disappointed in not getting the high-salaried church he thinks he should have. In order to deepen our ministerial fellowship, let us all seek to avoid being little. Let us strive above all else to be bighearted, to be big men.

HAVE A BREADTH OF VISION

It is important to have the ability to see beyond one's own self, his own church, his own desires, and his own problems. I feel we would do well if each of us would often ask this question: "Whom am I working for—myself, my church which pays my salary, or the Lord?"

I know that our loyalty as pastors belongs to our churches. But if this is all that we see, then our vision is too limited. I know some pastors who apparently are so absorbed in their local churches that they have but little interest in the program of their zone or their district or their denomination. They are careless in attendance at district gatherings, careless in their reports, and careless in presenting the program of the district. They seem to resent any conflict with their local program, for it is all-important to them. They are not enthused about home missions and foreign missions. They go their own way, running their program, that is, until they run it into the ground; and then they want the superintendent to help them pull it out, or to give them another church to handle in the same way. They fail to see that the church they pastor functions as a unit within a world-wide movement,

one that is seeking to carry out the plan of God. Our job is bigger than any local church, and we must have that breadth of vision. Paul said: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (I Cor. 12: 12). We each have a place to fill, but God's plan is bigger than our place. If we work for Him we are back of His entire plan.

I have heard it said: "If you really want to get a job done, give it to a busy man." I believe there is a double meaning here. Not only is he industrious, but he is bigger than the job he is now doing. He will find room for another. I have noticed that the men who succeed are those who are willing to take on something extra, those whose vision reaches beyond their present tasks. If we are to maintain proper ministerial fellowship, we must be willing to step in and help lift some other minister's load; we must be willing to help start a nearby home-mission church, for which we will get no credit in our own church, and in so doing we may even have to give up some members. Also, our interests must reach out to include the foreign missionary interests of the church. We cannot be ingrown in our vision.

BE WILLING TO CO-OPERATE

There will not be proper consideration given to the ethics of ministerial fellowship until we learn how to co-operate with our brethren, until we learn to fully appreciate the work of others. Too many, I fear, find it difficult to practice teamwork. It is easier to be a free lance or an independent. But the team that wins is not the team where one man stars and keeps in the limelight, but one which practices co-operation and plays together as a unit. So it is in the

church. God has called us to a great task; some to be prophets and preachers, pastors and evangelists, and some teachers. We owe to our leaders and fellow ministers the same co-operation that we expect from the laymen in the churches that we serve. We all want to succeed. But can we succeed as ministers without pushing someone else down? Can we succeed and at the same time help others up? I believe *we can* and *must*. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (I Cor. 12:4-6). How glorious and how wonderful to find our place in the great plan of God, and then to co-operate with every other part.

This thought to me is clearly expressed in the homely little verse:

*I'm but a cog in life's vast wheel,
That daily makes the same old trip;*

Yet what a joy it is to feel

*That but for me the wheel might
slip!*

*'Tis something after all to jog
Along and be a first-class cog.*

I believe that, in the main, we do have an exemplary fellowship. I believe it can be deepened and become more universal if we will practice these qualities. In fact, with them, broken fellowship even can be restored.

I believe the classic Bible example of such a fellowship is found in the case of David and Jonathan. Though Jonathan was in line to be king, he thought more of the will of God than of his own personal advancement, and deeply loved the man who was to take his place. Phillips' translation of Rom. 12:10 reads: "Let us have a real warm affection for one another, as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit." This will produce real ministerial fellowship.

Temptation

A great deal could be said about the friendly side of temptation. This so-called "enemy" is often the very seed of Christian virtue, encouraging patience, establishing powers of endurance, bringing the satisfaction of moral victory. It is at once the mother of ethical life, the training ground of perfection and the classroom of character. All this, plus the additional opportunities it offers to bring light to wisdom, a spur to discipline, and an inspiration to courage, marks it as one of the most valuable forces in our lives.

Shall we continue to run from temptation like frightened hares before the hounds? Shall we snuggle down deep into our little fox-holes of fear and plead for an untested peace of mind? Emphatically no!

Righteousness is the means to happiness. It is the most important element in Christian life. We dare not shun what does most in the molding of our characters, in the creation of our spiritual greatness, and even in the establishment of our happiness. Our responsibility and our opportunity, therefore, are to call first on Divine assistance, then to rush out gladly to meet this friendly enemy.

From **Friendly Enemies**

By Robert R. Brown

(Fleming H. Revell Company)

The Bible Societies and the Church

THE BIBLE is the Book of the Christian religion, and as such is the meeting place of all denominations and the common source of all creeds and theologies. However else we may differ, however far apart are our rituals and our creeds and our methods, we all meet at one rendezvous—we all drink at one spring—the Bible.

It is not unusual, then, that we find throughout history men of varying backgrounds and faiths contributing to the translation, the distribution, the interpretation and the preservation of God's holy Word. The Protestants must praise the Catholic monks who sheltered the Word from the plunderings of barbarians during the Dark Ages. The Catholics must give credit to the early Protestant leaders who brought the Bible out of the wraps of scholasticism and ecclesiasticism and put it into the hands of the plowman and the milkmaid. All denominations can find some contribution that all others have made through some emphasis or interpretation of the Word of God, which has benefited all Christendom and each denomination in particular. Each looks to the Bible as the indispensable source of its respective belief.

Hence, we find that Christians from the earliest day until now have been interested in the Word, and interested in getting it into the hands of others. It is thrilling and gratifying to see the extremes of Protestantism come together today to join hands

in the task of getting the Bible into the hands of all people.

This vision is so much an integral part of every Christian movement that each would be engaged in translating, printing, and distributing the Word of God if the job were not being done satisfactorily by some other agency. In fact, if Christendom went at this task as she goes at most other common Christian tasks, each denomination would have its own agency for this very purpose.

But fortunately, and no doubt in the providence of God, the pattern was set early in the modern Christian movement of interdenominational co-operation in this all-important mission. In 1804 in England a handful of men burned with the vision of getting Bibles to the underprivileged in their neighborhoods and communities. In a short time this vision spread to getting Bibles to other countries. This was the birth of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which celebrated its third jubilee (150th anniversary) last year. This movement spread to America and in 1816 the American Bible Society was born. Today there are twenty-five of these national Bible Societies functioning in as many countries. These societies are the vanguard, the spearhead of Christianity's mission in our day to spread the use of the holy Word "without note or comment" to the entire world.

Out of these national societies, two are outstanding for the world-wide

outreach of their work. First of these in date of origin and breadth of activity across the years is, of course, the British and Foreign Bible Society. Of the 1,084 languages into which some portion of the Bible is translated, the British and Foreign Bible Society has been responsible for 832. The second of these is the American Bible Society, which, while it has been functioning effectively for its long period of history, stepped to the front during and following World War II, when Britain's economy was so severely upset. Today it would be difficult to say which of these two societies has the greater influence; in fact, few would think of asking the question. The two societies work together throughout the world, each implementing the work of the other, one coming to the aid of the other where specific emergencies arise.

The church should see the work that these societies are doing in the world. Pastors in particular should see clearly just what is the relationship to these societies of both his denomination and his local church. At the point of support, of course, the churches in the nations of the British Commonwealth contribute to their respective branches of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Churches in the United States and her territories contribute to the American Bible Society. In essence, the work of these societies is the same. Let us see briefly what is the scope of this work and in particular see what is the relationship of our own denomination to it.

1. The Bible Societies, first of all, are concerned with translating the Scriptures into the languages of the people. While it may appear that the 1,084 languages into which portions of the Bible are now translated is about the end of this task, and it does touch the languages of about 95 per

cent of the world's population, in fact there are still about 1,000 languages and dialects to go. In a sense this is the harder half of the work, for in many cases these people do not have a written language and the process is a slow one of reducing the spoken language to written form, translating a portion of the Scriptures into the language, and then in teaching the people to read their own language. The Bible Society works with denominational missionaries on the respective fields to give technical advice and financial assistance when one of these projects is undertaken.

Also the Scriptures used on the respective mission fields are made available through these Bible Societies. Japan, India, Spanish America, Syria, Korea, Italy are some of the major ones. Our missionary work would be at a standstill if it were not for the Scriptures made available to us by these societies.

2. But those with no Bible in their tongue are not the only ones to whom the Bible is lost. There is also that great group who cannot read, not because they have no books, not because they have not yet learned to read, but because they have no eyes with which to read. Hence, the Bible Societies have felt the urgency of providing Scriptures for the blind. They have done so in two levels of Braille, the Moon System and on Talking Book Records. And this service has gone beyond English. Steps have been taken to provide Scriptures for the blind in other languages.

3. But translating is only a part. The Bible Societies also print these Bibles, Testaments, and portions in order to make them available to those for whom they were intended, at the lowest possible cost. Without doubt, this policy of the Bible Society, through the years has greatly influenced the low price of Bibles

around the world. In fact, there is a Bible within reach of most of the world's millions, a portion of God's Word at a price they can pay. The Bible is not a rich man's Book alone; it is for the poor as well, thanks to the diligent efforts through the years of the Bible Societies.

4. The Bible Societies spearhead a world-wide Bible distribution plan. Our churches in America, our missionaries, along with special Bible Society colporteurs, are pioneering in every area where there is a need for the Word of God. This is not to just one specified group but to all races and peoples.

The Bible Societies have historically taken the responsibility of providing New Testaments (and Bibles on request) for men and women in military service. These are supplied to the chaplains and are distributed to all servicemen who do not have a Testament and who will receive one. We can be confident that no service fellow is farther away from the Word of God than his nearest chaplain. Former Chief of Chaplains Bennett says: "Thirty-eight million New Testaments have been given to servicemen since the first one was given. If these men were lined up, with the chaplains who gave each one, and if we were to inspect the column, it would take 100 hours in a modern stratocruiser to see them all."

The Bible Society makes available to each newly organized church, on request of the presiding district or conference leader, a pulpit Bible. Many churches throughout America have used their pulpit bibles for years.

5. The Bible Societies also spearhead a Bible-reading program. In the United States there is the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas emphasis, the yearly Bible reading list, radio, TV films, posters, mail, and personal con-

tact, encouraging people to read the Word of God. Our people benefit from this. Our part in the Bible Society helps those we could never touch, to read God's Word.

The Bible Society, and the American Bible Society in particular, has taken steps to keep close to the churches, recognizing that theirs is a task which specifically relates to the denominations. The American Bible Society has one secretary with the sole responsibility of cultivating the interest of the churches. They also have created an Advisory Council to which representatives of more than fifty denominations come once a year. Before this council the secretaries carefully report on their work, outline their plans, and give detailed reports of all finances. The secretaries and Board of Managers carefully weigh any suggestions made by this council.

These Bible Societies are the minds, the hearts, the feet, the hands of the Christian churches to get the Word of God to all the peoples of the world—to do the job Christian love would demand we ourselves do if there were no such agencies in existence.

There are other groups engaged in some phase of Bible work. Some of these are bona fide, some are not. But at best, these operate only in a limited area, with a specific task in mind. Because of the complete coverage of the British and Foreign and American Bible Societies, more than fifty Protestant denominations have selected these as the official agencies to represent their denominations in the broad, over-all task of translating, printing, and distributing the Word of God. Bible Sunday, the second Sunday in December, is the time when many churches make an opportunity to share financially in this co-operative task.

The Preaching of John Huss

By James McGraw*

MARTIN LUTHER WROTE, "When I was at Erfeert I found in the library of the convent a volume of the sermons of John Huss. On reading, I was overwhelmed with astonishment. I could not understand for what cause they had burnt so great a man, who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and skill."

The man to whom Luther paid this tribute was born of peasant Bohemian parents in July of 1369, and chose his own surname from the town of his birth, Hussinec. The earliest reliable information concerning his life dates to his scholarship in the University of Prague, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Free Arts in 1393, and within the following three years the degrees of Bachelor of Theology and Master of Arts. He later taught at the university, became the dean of its philosophical faculty, and achieved fame as its much loved rector and spiritual leader.

John Huss is remembered as a witness and a martyr. The word martyr, as we use it today, "one who dies for a cause," formerly meant "witness." It gained its present meaning when many early Christians "testified" to their convictions by dying for them. In the ministry of John Huss, the Bohemian, we have an excellent example of Christian *witness* and Christian martyrdom.

Huss drew upon himself the disfavor of Rome when he, like Luther, spoke out against the things he found to be at variance with the teachings of

the Nazarene. He saw, during those days of his prominence in Prague, that the claims of universal power on the part of the papacy were contradictory to the statement of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world." As would be expected in view of the usual pattern of such things, Huss was banned from all the churches in Prague except two, and was later exiled.

It was during his exile that his preaching and his writing achieved a peak of intensity and effectiveness. We note some of the distinguishing characteristics of his pulpit power, hoping his example will inspire emulation among preachers of our time.

SINCERITY

Dr. A. S. London has often reminded his readers that "sincerity" is one of the greatest virtues of the Christian. It is, he says, derived from a word that literally means "without wax," or without any of the veneer that might cover or modify the genuine. In John Huss, there is one of the fine examples of this quality of character. His preaching was sincere.

When Huss spoke, piety and sincerity breathed through his words, and the people were moved. His glowing zeal for the glory of God impressed those who listened to him preach. In his personal conduct, even his enemies could find nothing to blame. Admirable as were his intellectual qualities, his moral qualities were even more distinctive of his Christlike character.

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SYSTEMATIC

Huss had the fortunate and desirable quality of orderly and systematic thinking habits, and this contributed significantly to the success of his ministry. While many people of his day seemed to be content with superficiality, Huss went to the roots of things, where ignorance and knowledge part company. He was thorough in whatever he undertook, and he undertook whatever he thought would please God and advance His kingdom.

His study habits during his formal education, and his desire for knowledge and understanding which received its fulfillment during his days as a brilliant student in Prague, continued to characterize his attitudes as he developed his ministry. His intellectual power was recognized by all who heard him, even as it impressed Martin Luther when he read his sermons more than a century later. It is interesting to note that while distinguished scholars attended his church in large numbers, and were thrilled by his preaching, the common people also looked upon him as their champion and defender. Peasants and royalty alike were to be found among his listeners. Is there anything that could be said of his preaching that could be more significant than this, in describing its effectiveness and its influence?

FEARLESS

John Huss was bold to proclaim his faith, and unafraid to defend it. Papal bulls did not intimidate him. Threats and abuses did not turn him from his steadfast position, and storms of ecclesiastical criticism did not veer him away from his purpose. He knew how to be tactful, yet he never vacillated when under pressure. To read some of his sermons is to feel

the effect of skillful appeal, tactful suggestion, and stimulating demand.

During the increasing tensions that surrounded him in those last days of his fruitful ministry, he declared boldly: "I avow it to be my purpose to defend the truth of the Holy Scriptures, even to death, since I know that the truth stands and is forever mighty and abides eternally; and with Him there is no respecter of persons. And if the fear of death should terrify me, still I hope in my God and in the assistance of the Holy Spirit that the Lord will give me firmness. *And if I have found favor in his sight he will crown me with martyrdom*" (italics mine).

The brand of boldness Huss had was the kind that expected opposition, welcomed it, and accepted the suffering and death that were possible by-products of it. A preacher like John Huss would apparently not be unduly impressed by negative votes, nor by defiant deacons, critical "Christians," or bullying board members.

SCRIPTURAL AND DOCTRINAL

John Huss was dramatic in his use of illustrations, but he was not an entertainer. His popularity in Prague would not have developed through sensational appeals nor superficial sentimentality. The people came in great numbers to listen to the preaching of this man because his preaching was Christ-centered, and it was Biblical.

James Farris, studying the life and ministry of Huss, observed that in some 35 letters Huss wrote there were 172 references to Scriptures. He discovered that 18 books in the New Testament and 10 in the Old Testament were quoted; and that there were 149 quotations from the New Testament and 23 from the Old Testament.

Preaching that is saturated with scripture and sound in Biblical doctrine will have tremendous effect upon those who hear it, especially when presented by a man whose heart is burning with love for Christ, whose mind is trained and active in straight thinking and adequate knowledge, and whose life is above reproach and beyond blame.

WORDS AND ACTIONS

Those who like the popular and indeed valid saying, "I would rather see a sermon than hear one," or "What you are speaking so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying," would esteem the preaching of John Huss. He spoke the truth, and he put his words into actions.

Faced with the choice of recanting or burning, he stood before an evil council with all the strength that remained in his body, that was weak from imprisonment and disease, and he would not recant nor change his position.

The council ordered the execu-

tioner to burn him, and they branded him an arch heretic, and devoted his soul to the devils in hell.

He faced eastward as they tied him to the stake, but they turned him westward, thinking it improper for a heretic to die facing the east.

While the flames leaped about his body, John Huss cried, "O Christ, Thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon us!" Someone watching was heard to say, "What this man hath done before, we know not; but now we hear him put up excellent prayers to God."

Some men are gifted at saying words that sound great, and others cannot seem to express themselves in words and yet they demonstrate with their actions that they have found the truth. John Huss died with the flames smothering the last bit of life from his body, and in so dying he put into actions the words he had so eloquently spoken: "I am glad to wear this crown of infamy, for the love of Him who has worn one of thorns."

This Is Today

Today is here. I will start with a smile, and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste my valuable time.

Today has one thing in which I know I am equal with others—time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes, hours.

Today I will not waste my time, because the minutes I wasted yesterday are as lost as a vanished thought.

Today I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

Today I am determined to study to

improve myself, for tomorrow I may be wanted, and I must not be found lacking.

Today I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make success with what material I have.

Today I will stop saying, "If I had time," for I never will "find time" for anything—if I want time I must *take* it.

Today, I will act toward other people as though this might be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.—*Heart and Life.*

Principles of Pardon

By Doyle C. Smith*

SCRIPTURE: Mic. 7:18-20; Isa. 55:7

TEXT: . . . *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God* (II Chron. 30:18-19a).

INTRODUCTION:

The words of my text are borrowed from a brief prayer of one of Judah's greatest kings. It was during the observance of Passover in the time of Judah's great religious revival and reformation that King Hezekiah prayed this prayer, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God"; a prayer to which God hearkened in behalf of the people for whom supplication was made.

The word "pardon" suggests a very beautiful sentiment and conveys a strong meaning. But like many other words, it has been given to such common use that I fear it has lost a great deal of significance for us. In its most common use today it is no more than a conventional form of apology. In its civil use a pardon remits an offense and releases the offender. The moral and spiritual suggestion of pardon is the comprehension of divine remission of transgression and the forgiveness of the transgressor. In no other relation is the word used in the Scriptures.

If you want to know the real meaning of pardon, ask the criminal who had been locked behind bars of the inner confines of some federal peni-

tentiary as a life-termer—until that great day that he was issued a parole and walked out of that dreadful, doleful place of darkness to face the sunlight of a new day, and to thrill to the sensation of being a free man. Or better still, ask the man who was once a vile and vicious sinner, held fast in the mire of his transgressions, stumbling and groping in the midnight of spiritual darkness, slavishly serving the devil and the lusts of the flesh, sinning against God and heaven, condemned to eternal death—until that glorious day that God, through Christ, reached down and plucked him as a brand from the burning, and said to him, "Thy sins, which were many, are forgiven. Go and tell what great things the Lord has done for you." Such a person may not be a Webster in defining words, but as a newborn soul he can tell you the meaning of pardon.

Let us note the principles of pardon:

I. PARDON PRESUPPOSES PENITENCE.

A. Whether the pardon is issued by a governor to a criminal or by God to a sinner, there must be evidence of a penitent spirit. No governor or parole board can be prevailed upon to issue a pardon to a man if they aren't convinced that he is remorseful over his crime, and that his repentance is of the depths that would change his career from crime to citizenship.

*Pastor, Asheville, North Carolina.

B. God never issues a pardon to an impenitent sinner. Repentance always precedes remission of sins. God demands godly sorrow, a broken and contrite heart. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" (Ps. 34:18). David again realized the need of contrition; for, in his penitential psalm when he was seeking forgiveness for his awful sins of murder and adultery, he said, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

C. So, when we ask for pardon, whether it is to a person for a mere breach of etiquette or whether to God for a breach of divine law, it is assumed that we realize guilt and are really penitent.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

In a certain penitentiary where several criminals awaited execution, a minister was asked to come and recommend to the governor one of the prisoners for pardon, the one who, in the minister's opinion, was the most worthy of a pardon. The minister went from cell to cell talking with the individual criminals. One after another was very bitter—criticizing his country, vilifying the law, sneering at justice, claiming frame-ups as being responsible for his imprisonment. Finally, the minister came to the cell of one who wept bitterly; he had no defense to make; he admitted his crime, and seemed very penitent and remorseful; confessing his sin against God and society, he acknowledged that he deserved the sentence placed upon him. The minister immediately called to the governor and said, "I recommend this man for pardon." The Bible said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso

confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

D. While penitence precedes pardon, it is not pardon itself. Both are necessary for man's salvation.

Across the river Zambesi, below the Victoria Falls, is a bridge which spans the widest chasm and overlooks the most terrific turmoil of waters to be seen on any river in the world. That bridge was made by building out an arm from either shore and uniting the two outstretched arms in the center over the roaring stream. Neither arm could have reached the opposite bank by itself; the two were needed to meet each other. Such are penitence and pardon, which form the bridge across that tumultuous stream and those stupendous falls which seem to separate the soul from God. At first one is inclined to say, "Why cannot the bridge of pardon be thrown over exclusively from the side of God?" Others perhaps are tempted to say, "Surely the bridge of penitence will span the chasm and bring the soul to God." But, no, the truth lies here: pardon without penitence is impossible, and penitence without pardon is useless.

II. PARDON PROCURES PEACE.

A. Peace is that rare blessing that all men desire, but few possess. Sin has locked humanity behind the bars of guilt and condemnation—producing a life of bondage, and under the sentence of eternal death there can be no peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21). Man was made for peace; for peace is the fruit of freedom, and God intended that man should be free.

Bondage genders strife, misery, and warfare. The prisoner, locked out from the free world about him and locked in to the dark, monotonous grind of prison life, knows no peace.

The sinner, barred by his sins, smit-

ten by his conscience, imprisoned by his lusty appetites, enslaved by his carnal fears, is a total stranger to peace. But let the prisoner receive his parole, and the sinner accept his pardon, and theirs will be a peace that is akin to that of the celestial world. St. Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." One of the wonderful graces of the fruit of the Spirit is peace.

B. This peace of pardon is the peace of knowing we are absolved of our sins. We are reconciled to God; on praying grounds and pleading terms with Him. No longer rebels and enemies, but now friends and followers. It is the peace of an intimate acquaintance and friendship with the Lord Jesus. It is the peace of freedom from sin and fellowship with the Saviour.

C. Do you have the sweet peace of God's forgiving and pardoning grace in your heart and life just now? Can you sing with the poet?

*Far away in the depths of my spirit
tonight*

*Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm;
In celestial-like strains it unceasingly
falls*

O'er my soul like an infinite calm.

Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace,

*Coming down from the Father
above!*

*Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray,
In fathomless billows of love.*

III. PARDON PROPOSES PROBATION.

A. A pardon is conditional. It does not do away with probation or moral trial and testing.

B. A pardon provides its happy recipient with liberty to triumphantly

meet the test and trial of probation here in this life; it does not give license to throw aside moral restraint and sin again. To abuse a pardon is to nullify it and bring oneself right back into condemnation and sin.

C. A pardon absolves a person of all his sins of the past but certainly it does not within itself unconditionally atone for sins that may be committed in the future. Man is on probation as long as he is in this life. Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." And again, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." II Pet. 2:20-22 and Ezek. 3:20 certainly refute the doctrine of unconditional eternal security.

D. Pardoning grace frees us from the sins of the past, awakens us to our moral trials and tests, and gives us fellowship with Him who promises victory for the present and future so long as we "walk in the light, as he is in the light."

IV. PARDON'S PURCHASE PRICE.

A. There is one word that names the price of pardon—sacrifice.

B. The criminal deserves imprisonment and the sinner deserves damnation. To vindicate right, to hold to the letter of the law, and to execute justice the poor offender must pay for his crime; but just in the nick of time vengeance is sacrificed for compassion, the letter of the law for the spirit, and justice for mercy—and the guilty is pardoned. Sacrifice paid the price.

C. God's law said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." His law is irrevocable, but, thank God, He had no law against a sacrifice. Christ became that Sacrifice for our sins. On that immortal day in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified, Barabbas was

released; set free, because Jesus took his place. Every redeemed soul is a Barabbas—sinful and condemned to die till Jesus took his place.

CONCLUSION:

Yes, God wants to freely pardon every sinner. He isn't obligated to keep calling to us; He has made the provision to pardon us all, but the majority of the world's millions will forever die and suffer eternal punishment—because God will not force a pardon on us, and it is not good and efficacious to us unless we accept it.

In 1830 George Wilson killed a man while he was robbing the U.S. mail. He was tried and sentenced to be hanged. Andrew Jackson, then president of the U.S., sent him a pardon. When Wilson refused the pardon, no one seemed to know what to do. The case was carried to the Supreme Court of the U.S. Chief Justice Marshall wrote the opinion for the case. In it he said: "A pardon is a slip of paper the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." And he was.

The Man, Christ Jesus

By S. C. Swinney*

"Behold the Man" (John 19:5)

THE VIRGIN BIRTH of Christ (Luke 1:35; Isa. 7:14) is said to be the alpha of our Christian faith; His resurrection, the omega of our faith. Pilate ascribed to Christ the name "man." He was both God and Man.

As God, He is the world's only Rest. As a man, He grew tired. As a Man, He was hungry. As God, He fed thousands with a small amount of bread and a few fishes. As Man, He was hungry; as God, He is the Living Water of eternal life. As a Man, He was tempted as we; as God, he lived a sinless life. As a Man, He slept on a ship; as God, He spoke and the storm ceased, the angry lightning ceased to flash, and the muttering thunders roared no more. The people were amazed and said, "What manner of man is this, that the winds and waves obey Him?" As a Man, He

was a Passenger on a ship; as God, He walked on the waters without sinking. As a Man, He accepted an invitation to a wedding feast; as God, He turned water into wine. Like other men, He shed tears; as God, He raised the dead, cleansed the leper, healed the broken-hearted, and made the lame to walk, the blind to see, cast out devils, and healed a woman of a disease of long standing by her only touching the hem of His garment.

As a man He suffered, therefore He was capable of sympathizing with a suffering world. He was both God and Man, made so to fulfill the eternal purposes of God. He sympathized with the sick, suffering, and dying. He was our great High Priest that could be touched with our infirmities, for He had experienced all the suffering to which the human family is subject.

*Genoa, Arkansas.

Gibraltars of the Faith

By J. Kenneth Grider*

II. The Gibraltar of Christian Devotional Life

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

DURING HIS EARTHLY SOJOURN Jesus needed to pray—and did. Often He sought out the Father's face while other men slept, keeping audience with Almighty the whole night through—the sinless God-Man communing with the Transcendent One. What blessed fellowship He had with His Heavenly Father! What strength He must have received for His trying times!

So Jesus knew how important it was—and is—for His followers to get low before Heaven, there to worship and make petition. He therefore not only set an example in prayer life, but gave us a model after which we could pattern our own prayer procedure.

The prayer He taught us, a bit of glory written out, has been on our lips and in our hearts these nineteen centuries. The first-generation Christians used it often. Paul, for example, probably alludes to it a number of times, as in I Cor. 10:13. In the *Didache*, a manual of church order dating at least to the middle of the second century, all Christians are enjoined to pray it three times a day. And unlike the Apostles' Creed, the Greek Orthodox, as well as the Roman Catholics and Protestants, use this

prayer. Surely it has been the Gibraltar of Christian devotional life—a bulwark against devotional practices which would not be conducive to the spiritual life, and a positive guide to proper ones.

Its Opening. The ancient Jews were instructed in solidarity to such extent that, when they prayed, even in private, they were to use plural personal pronouns in order to remind themselves of their relatedness to other Jews and in order to include the others in the petitions they were making. Even though we as Christians do not have the racial solidarity of the Jews, we still know that we are all bound together in the Invisible Church—and thus in this prayer, which is better for public use than for private repetition, we are taught to use the plural pronoun *our*.

And it is to our *Father* that we address the prayer. What presumption! In all the prayer intimacies that have come to us from David, we never hear him calling God his Father. Sometimes, however, in the Old Testament, God is called *Father*. But in those days they did not pack so much into the term as we Christians do. For instance, Malachi meant by the term only that God is Creator.

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He queried, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" (2:10). And Isaiah seems not to have meant much more by the term (see chapter 63). But it was prophesied, "Ye shall call me, My father" (Jer. 3:19). And although there were foretastes, this was not actually fulfilled until Christ revealed God as loving and sympathetic and helpful—and this even toward Samaritans.

This Father is said to be in heaven. That is, He is separate from all that is earthly: independent of time and space, limitless in all His capacities.

Its Focus upon God. God's name: His being and His attributes combined—it is asked that all this be hallowed or sanctified,¹ set apart from and above all else that touches our lives.

It is also asked that the Father's kingdom might come.² Here it is desired that God might reign more intensively—to greater degree; and more extensively—in the hearts of men everywhere.

It is asked, also, that His will might be done by us men, here on earth, even as it is done by the angels that surround His throne, worshiping and serving Him continually. This is necessary if His kingdom is to come about.

Its Focus upon Ourselves. The prayer also contains three requests in which we ourselves have central place—but each of the three is asked only that the Father, whose person we sanctify, might accomplish His will for us by reigning supremely in our hearts. We pray for daily bread: for

what is necessary in order to keep alive day by day. We ask that the Father might direct us, in order that we might avoid temptations and, if they flood in upon us, that we might be kept from succumbing to Satan, *the evil one* (an alternative translation). But between these two requests is one over which there has been much difference of opinion. We pray the Father to forgive our debts—or our trespasses. Here is the part of the prayer which most needs clarification among our people.

All of us know that Matthew records the Lord's Prayer as we have come to know it, and that Luke gives a similar one. Of the two, E. F. Scott says: "In substance they are in full agreement, . . ."³ Yet anyone can see differences. Luke's is much shorter, it does not give the closing doxology, and it has *sins* instead of *debts*. Some sources consider the two prayers as two versions of what Jesus said on one occasion, the variances being partly explained by the fact that different persons had translated what Jesus had said from the Aramaic into Greek. Yet not all the differences can be explained in this way, so these writers proceed to ask which is nearer to what Jesus said—some suggesting Matthew, and some Luke. E. F. Scott says, "They [Matthew and Luke] seem to disagree as to the circumstances in which the prayer was given."⁴ If one considers, as Scott does, that the two prayers are different versions of what Jesus said on one occasion, he has to say that at least one prayer is not correct and that one of the writers was actually wrong about the circumstances surrounding the giving of the prayer. But these prayers are surely not two versions of what Jesus said on one occasion.

¹The word used is "hagiastheto," from "hagiadzo"—the common word for sanctify. This is an instance of use of this word to signify separation instead of purification. The petition is not that God might be made holy, of course, but that to us He might be separated from all else—given a place above all else.

²It is interesting that ". . . in Marcion's edition of Luke's Gospel, about the middle of the second century, 'Thy Kingdom come' appeared in this form: 'May thy holy Spirit come upon us and cleanse us'" (E. F. Scott, "The Lord's Prayer," p. 26).

³Ibid., p. 19.

⁴Ibid.

At two different times, according to the contexts, Jesus suggested similar prayers. In the Sermon on the Mount, probably close to the beginning of His ministry, He gave the prayer we use, recorded by Matthew (6:9-13). Later in His ministry His disciples came to Him and asked that He teach them to pray even as John the Baptist had done for his disciples—a procedure folk in those times expected of their prominent teachers. The prayer He then taught them is recorded by Luke (11:2-4).

Getting back to the important difference itself—the matter of *debts*, as in the prayer Matthew records; or *sins*, as in the one given by Luke—which are we to use, debts or sins, when we repeat the Lord's Prayer?

For one thing, if Jesus' precise directives mean anything, it seems that either passage could be used; for in Luke, Jesus told His disciples, "When ye pray, say, . . ." But also in Matthew He directed, "After this manner therefore pray ye: . . ." Yet from early times Christians have favored the one in Matthew, obviously because its greater smoothness and its measured rhythm make it more suitable for use in public worship.

The prayer in Matthew contains the word *debts*. Some denominations follow in general the prayer in Matthew, saying trespasses.⁵ In fact, this has been the accepted form by many Protestant denominations. Our hymnals have always followed the Matthew passage, reading, as recorded by Luke, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." To those of us who preach that salvation means a total break with sin, by which word we commonly mean willful rebellion, it would be misleading to direct our congregations in asking

forgiveness of sins. But remembering that *hamartias*, the form of the word used in Luke, is understood by most scholars to include nonvolitional shortcomings, it would be permissible to use the prayer in Luke, using *sins*.

Its Close. In the King James Version one finds the doxology, ". . . : for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13). Many manuscripts, some of them from as early as the eighth century,⁶ contain this liturgical close. Moreover, some of the Fathers make reference to it, although they vary in the precise wording. And the *Didache*, written at some time between A.D. 80 and the middle of the next century, which Clement of Alexandria even includes with the Scriptures, closes the prayer with: "For thine is the power and the glory for ever."⁷ So in Protestant circles we fittingly close the prayer in this way. In doing so we assure God that all rule, in time and throughout eternity—for ever *and ever*—should come from Him, through His power; and that our submitting to His rule is not for our own glory but for His.

C. E. Simcox says the Lord's Prayer is ". . . perhaps the most familiar thing in our religion."⁸ But often, since it is so familiar, it is repeated in parrot-like fashion in public services. This need not be so. Indeed, it must not be so, for Jesus had the greatest of scorn for vain repetitions said with no heart. Certainly we should encourage our people to use the Lord's Prayer and at the same time put real heart into it.

⁶All the extant early manuscripts of the New Testament omit this doxology. For this reason all the later English versions leave it out. Adam Clarke, who had to work without the many manuscript finds of the last one hundred years, has this to say: "The whole of this doxology is rejected by Wetstein, Greisbach, and the most eminent critics. . . . It is variously written in several MSS., and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin."

⁷International Critical Commentary," loc. cit.

⁸Living the Lord's Prayer," p. viii.

⁵It could be supposed that "trespasses" is taken from the context of the prayer in Matthew.

The Chronically Ill

By J. E. Moore, Jr.*

This month we are beginning a series of articles written by pastors covering the pastoral ministry to special needs in the congregation. After reading over some of the first manuscripts to be received, your editor is confident this will be an interesting and beneficial series.—Ed.

THE CITY of Tucson, Arizona, is populated with people from many parts of the United States who came here for their health or for a lack of it. People with almost every kind of ailment come to Tucson. Because of this, they are able to live here and are accepted and are not a cause for gaping by inquisitive "peepers" or asked a hundred questions relative to their illness. About 5 per cent of my membership have the kind of illness for which there is no cure. They are what we call the "chronically ill." Their diseases are deep-rooted, the types that linger so long that they *drag* them to their graves. They are some of the finest folks on earth and come from all walks of life and from every part of the country. *These people are needy people.* Their pastor must know them, know their needs, and know how to help them if he is to be the shepherd which God needs for these—some of His choice children.

The chronically ill persons are quite different from almost any other sick person. Life finally gets out of focus

for them. They see too much of themselves and their own problems and not enough of the beauty and joys of life nor the sorrows and sickness of others. *They* occupy almost all their picture of life and sometimes get an exaggerated idea of their own problems and ills. Many of them know that they will never get well. They know almost all the symptoms of the last stages of their own illness, which cause continued fear. They become sensitive and get their feelings hurt quite easily by friends and kinsfolk. After all, they are ill and have been for so long a time. In some cases, they are not able to think normally. They often get a bad case of self-pity, which certainly does not help their chances of recovery. Some eventually lose faith in the possibility of ever getting well, and therefore lose faith in the doctors and nurses who are doing their best to effect their healing.

If these factors were their only enemies, life would not be so complicated; but their physical illness has a tendency to cause some spiritual problems too. The enemy of their souls tests them severely and often accuses them of sinful practices; that their sins are the cause of their illness; that they are having to pay for their sins by suffering. They forget that Christians cannot suffer for their sins—they are forgiven and remembered against them no more. Often

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the enemy takes advantage of their physical problems and tells them that God has forsaken them, else they would get well. Old Split-foot can 'conjur up some pretty good scriptures too. These people read about divine healing and listen attentively to messages by radio "healers" who say that healing is in the atonement, and if they have faith enough they too can be healed. When they fail to get well, their faith is hurt and some have even quit the church. I say that God does not have to heal you or me to prove His love. He proved His love to us on Calvary.

One of the problems of the chronically ill is that they have too much time to spend on themselves. They often live and relive their lives and get an "overdose" of introspection, so that they become sensitive to people who are well, and read into innocent remarks thoughts which cause them anguish of mind and soul. They once lived normal and healthy lives, which gives them the opportunity to compare and contrast their states of then and now. This causes mental depression and "blues."

THREE ILL PERSONS

To help make my ideas live—let's look at three such persons to whom I have ministered and am ministering: a Mrs. James, a Mrs. White, and Karl Strain (these are not their real names, of course).

Mrs. James is bedfast due to a serious heart condition. She is sixty-five, a widow of a man of wealth, has strong convictions, lives with her married daughter and son-in-law. She is jovial and friendly but very sensitive. She is starved for friendship and spiritual food. She cannot get up for fear of another stroke, so time weighs heavily on her hands. She puts a circle on the calendar every time I see her; and if I don't get around to

her place in about three weeks, she pouts when I do come and it takes me about half my visit to get back in her good graces.

Mrs. White, a lady of about fifty-five, was injured by her drunken husband, who ran over her with his car, trying to get her out of the way, so he could marry another woman. She is cared for by her mother, who is about seventy-five. Mrs. White will not divorce her husband, even though he comes home drunk most of the time and causes her a lot of grief. She has a son who was C.I.C. during World War II and was decorated for bravery. He was wounded a number of times and saw such horrible sights and endured so much that he is a little different from most men. He hates his stepfather so much that they often get into fights, and I am called at three or four in the morning to settle their fussing and fighting. Mrs. White also suffers from blackouts and nervous rigors. What can a pastor do in circumstances like these?

Then there is, or was, Karl Strain, a tubercular, who was thirty-eight years of age and who recently passed on. Poor Karl—his wife left with a young daughter when she found out that he had T.B., leaving him with a crippled boy and an aged mother, who was unable to work for a living. He lived in an old trailer next to his mother, who also lived in an ancient model of a trailer on the outskirts of town. Their only source of support was a small county welfare check. He had spent all he had on medicines and doctors, in which he now had little faith. He had one fear that obsessed him—that he would die via the dreaded experience of lung hemorrhage. In this condition, one coughs and coughs and finally the blood gushes forth from adhesions in the lungs and he soon dies in his own blood. This he finally did. Karl

liked for me to come and see him and read God's Word and have prayer for him. I always took him by the hand while I prayed but, of course, I washed my hands with soap and disinfectant soon after I left. Often a tubercular gets the feeling that folk think of them as an "outcast," and I did everything I could to let him know that I loved him and was not afraid of being around him. He often said that I treated him just like he was a well person.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

These three persons are representative of some of the types of chronically ill persons that I as a pastor must try to help. This is the group which need their pastor as few other groups do. We can and must do our best to make their lives brighter and in some way help them to strengthen their faith in our Heavenly Father.

Here are a few methods I have used both as a chaplain and as a minister, which I humbly offer to you with the hope that they may be of some benefit in the most important of all work—that of dealing with eternal souls.

It may seem trite to say that one of the most important ways to help the chronically ill is to *know and understand* them, but to do this certainly takes more than a passing hello and good-by. It means you must know them personally and understand the "whys" and "wherefores" of their cases. You could misunderstand and be misinformed by "in-laws" and thoughtless kinsfolk and neighbors. You will soon know much about them if you visit them and let them do the talking and tell you all about their "cases." They will tell you about their past—before they were ill, that is. They are glad you are interested in them. For instance, Mrs. James told me of her daughter's marriage at sixteen and how the daughter ran

away to be married. I then knew the reason for some of the resentment between her and the son-in-law. He never had anything until he married and had it given him by Mrs. James. Also, Karl confided in me about his life's heartache, which was his broken home. This often helped me to understand his case and anticipate his needs. Mrs. White never did tell me of her husband's attempt to kill her, but it came out by my listening to her many conversations and by keeping tab on bits of information which I got from her. If I talk to them enough I can find out their likes and dislikes, which helps me, when their birthdays come or at Christmas, to give them remembrances which have meaning to them and cause them happiness.

To understand them, you must visit them a bit differently from a "spot Sunday-school call." After I have listened to them talk, I try to do something to boost their morale either by a joke, a sincere compliment, or something in my prayer that will be a lift to them. They are often more childish than children, so remembering them does a lot for them. We often make one of our chronically ill persons the "member of the week" in our local church bulletin, which means that he will get many cards from many of the church faithful. We give the name and address and say something from the pulpit about his being the "member of the week," which brings a little special attention to him. We also send him the Home Department mail, which includes the weekly bulletin, *Herald of Holiness*, Sunday-school papers, and a personal note. (Don't send a mimeographed letter to him.)

These wonderful people will say some harsh things to me sometimes but I make it a practice never to take them too seriously. Many of their "digs" and pointed questions are not so bad as they sound. I may josh

them about my being such a *poor* pastor and tell them how much I need their faith and prayers for me. This along with my asking for some advice usually ends their prodding. Often they may have held places of responsibility and are able to offer valuable assistance. Regardless of whether I can use their advice or not, I flatter them just by the asking for it.

There are times when I talk to them about spiritual things. It is my earnest desire to know their spiritual welfare, for in all probability I will be the one to officiate at their funerals. Because they are unable to read and pray as they once did, they are often tempted to feel that they are not doing all of God's will. If possible, we try to show them that they do not *have to* read and pray like folk with good health, but theirs is to trust in their Heavenly Father, who knows their heart condition.

It is also my responsibility to help them see the reason for their continued existence even in their condition. Books such as *The Will of God*, by Weatherhead, have helped me in this regard, for some people have done a lot of damage to people's faith by saying, "Your illness is the will of God." Actually, that may not

be the case at all. Let us be careful how we consign to God the things that would put us in jail if we did them. Remember, our Heavenly Father and His nature are not like some ideas that some have had; for He is our Heavenly Father, who can be trusted to do the wisest and best for you and me—under the circumstances of a sinful nature and a sinful world.

Some of these wonderful people can be of great assistance in the church by performing church jobs such as writing cards to visitors, absentees, or using the telephone to contact church lists for various things such as announcing meetings. They are all urged to join the "Prayer Brigade" to bombard the skies. We try to make these folk see that they are valuable to the growth of the church and the cause of Christ.

There is much to do for our chronically ill. You or I could be *one of them* in a moment of time.

Christ's benediction is upon us when we do our best for them, for He once said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Guidance

I wish I could tell you how utterly I believe that God will completely guide every life which is committed to Him. The manner in which He does this will not matter so greatly. With all my heart I warn you not to believe that you will have the same experience of guidance as I or anybody else. Some have strange impressions, mystic illuminations, flashes of remembered scripture in sudden crisis.

Others with no mystic tendency, no psychic sensitiveness, may have no feeling of special guidance at all . . . But this is the thing to be affirmed in trumpet tones: Whoever is committed to God is in some way guided by Him. No matter how it is done, he may take the language of faith and sing, "He leadeth me, Oh, blessed thought!"—ARTHUR WENTWORTH HEWITT.

CRUSADE FOR SOULS

Supplied by Alpin Bowes*

A PASTOR ASKS

QUESTION: *What can I do about the nonresident members on my church roll?*

ANSWER: Members who no longer live in the community are still connected with the church. It is only partly a problem of records. More importantly, it involves the pastor's responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the members in his care.

1. Those in the armed forces of our country are one group of nonresident members. These usually have some contact with a chaplain, but they need to be tied in to their church back home. They should be on the pastor's mailing list for bulletins, news-sheets, and an occasional letter. The pastor may remind the laymen to write them, so they will realize they have not been forgotten by the folks back home.

2. There are also young people away at college and others on temporary assignments out of the city. News from back home should reach these regularly, and an occasional letter from the pastor will be helpful in maintaining the contact with the home church. If those who are away temporarily are out of reach of a Church of the Nazarene, the letters from the pastor should be more frequent, in order to bring counsel and encouragement in Christian living to those who are unable to attend church.

3. Some churches number on their rolls missionaries in other countries. The missionaries are too busy to be expected to write many letters back home, but they will appreciate news of the church in bulletins and other thoughtful remembrances on birthdays and other special occasions. They should be aware that the church has not forgotten to pray for them.

4. Often the largest group of nonresident members includes those who have moved away from the community, either to a distant part of the same city or to another town. It is not always easy for those who have been active in a community and a church for many years to adjust to new surroundings, new friends, and a new church situation. There is a tendency to take it easy for a while before accepting responsibility and obligations in a new church.

The pastor of the church back home is tempted to hold on to these nonresident members as long as possible, for they boost his membership record and perhaps he can get them to send a little tithe back to the church occasionally. Actually these people are in greater need of the tender care of a pastor as they make adjustments to new situations and faces. In their first relationship in the new community the church should be their first contact. The pastor back home must realize this and do his best to see that they become settled in a new church home as quickly as possible.

Beyond this immediate moving situation there are those whose names

*Secretary, Crusade for Souls Commission.

are still on the records of one church while belonging to another because the pastor where they now live neglected to notify their former pastor of their acceptance into his church. All pastors should make it a policy to keep accurate records and to follow through on all transfers.

More attention to our nonresident members and to membership records in our churches would save many churches from the necessity of drastically revising their membership rolls every time there is a change in pastors.

HOW WE DID IT

Evangelism should be central in the pastor's emphasis during the Christmas season. It is a time when people are thinking of Christ and His mission to mankind. The church should not only glory in His coming, but extend an urging hand to those who do not know Him.

One pastor uses the month of October and November in his visitation program for the building of his responsibility list—finding new people and making new contacts for the church. After Thanksgiving the visitation is beamed to bringing these people to the church and winning them to Christ. The pastor teaches a class for new and prospective members for several weeks before Christmas during the Sunday-school hour. This emphasis is climaxed with the reception of new members on Christmas Sunday. The pastor's words in receiving new members carry an impact which makes a strong Christian witness to those who have come to church early for this special Sunday. This helps to keep evangelism in focus as the central task of the Church.

She Accepted Christ

In an Iron Lung!

By Oscar F. Reed

We had prayed that the polio epidemic would not touch our young people, and God mercifully answered our prayer. However, Mrs. Bushert called one morning that her daughter was in an isolation ward and wanted to see me. Her daughter, [a woman about thirty-five years of age,] lived some fifty miles east of Calgary on a wheat ranch.

After donning the mask and cape, I was ushered into a ward, in the middle of which was an iron lung with only Helen's head appearing at the one end. Following a few words of usual conversation, I said, "Helen, do you want to give your life to Christ?" She answered softly with tears in her eyes, "I do." "Are you willing to commit your life to Him if He touches you?" "Yes," she said. So I read those familiar words from First John. "If we confess our sins," and Helen did confess her sins to Christ and accepted the Lord as her Saviour.

I walked from the hospital with my heart brimming with joy. This was the compensation that God gives His children. Is there a greater thrill than to win a soul for Jesus Christ?

The Crusade pays big dividends!

The Pastor's Meditation

You can't lose for winning if you participate in the Crusade for Souls Now.—REV. ANDREW YOUNG.

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Your Faithful Contributors*

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Without Imprint: 100 for \$1.50; 500 for \$6.75; 1,000 for \$12.50

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NOTE: To assure delivery on imprinting, order should be received by December 2.



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1131

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No. 1135 Christmas Program

No. 1131 Christmas Worship

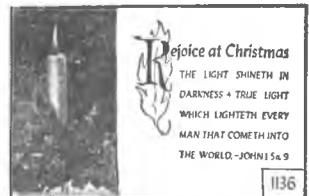
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1065



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No. 7



No. 20

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Glossy, full-color, three-wise-men scene with inscription, "Christmas."

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"QUEEN OF THE PARSONAGE"

Christmas in the Parsonage

By Mary E. White*

IT WAS the Christmas season! Every year people thronged the stores, gay with their tinsel, and sound of Christmas carols played over and over.

In the little parsonage in that city, a minister's wife counted the few cents she had barely been able to save toward gifts for the three children, her husband, the host of relatives and friends for whom she would love to buy gifts. She longed to get that bicycle so expected by Ted, the ten-year-old son.

Then there was Jean, the seven-year-old, who really needed a new doll, for—"Mother, her arms are gone and one rubber leg has a hole in it." And she thought of Baby Jill, just past three, whose eyes danced with joy every time she passed the counter where the big black and white panda stood.

What should she do? Her heart ached to give her children what they wanted. Would it be right to go and open a large charge account and try to pay it out monthly? She wasn't sure she could make the payments. Should she try to find work outside the home and leave her babies to the care of a teen-age baby sitter?

Prayer was the answer. Down through the years God had never failed to give what was needed. As she opened her Bible, her attention was drawn to Matt. 7:11. It seemed

like a real promise. Slipping to her knees, she breathed a short prayer straight toward the throne of God and felt surprisingly light as she rose to answer the telephone and get the baby, who had been awakened by its ringing.

Many of you ministers' wives can guess the ending of this story, for you've found similar incidents in your lives. A note came the following week saying the grandparents had decided to send money instead of buying gifts for the children. Would we get something for them that they really wanted? Two days before Christmas a last-minute sale revealed a bicycle had been scratched in display and the price was cut to nearly half.

Some friends of former years sent a box of gifts to the family in which a doll and lovely Teddy bear were included. On Christmas Eve just before closing time, a shop displayed a large table of various items all heaped together and a sign of "One Dollar" placed above it. From among many types of merchandise, some soiled and damaged, a young minister's wife pulled out a box in which she found a beautiful genuine leather billfold and key ring set. It was the last set of its kind and had found its way to the rummage counter just before the "queen of the parsonage" arrived. Now Husband's gift was provided.

Not only do we face the problem of small salaries in a time of inflation,

*Pastor's wife, Lincoln, Nebraska.

but also the danger of allowing the pressure of outside church activities to rob our homes and children of a truly happy Christmas. Today I asked my son to tell me frankly if we had let the pressure of outside Christmas activities of school and church destroy the Christmas spirit in our home. He began to tell me of some of the beautiful memories he has of our Christmases together, and I thanked the Lord in my heart.

Every year except one during fourteen years of being a pastor's wife, I have supervised a large children's Christmas program. Many of those same years I directed a Christmas pageant by the choir with practices every night the week before Christmas, but I believe with all my heart we have had as happy a Christmas atmosphere in our home as was possible.

We make a display of all the Christmas cards, set up the same manger scene we bought years ago and pack away each season, trim as large a tree

as we can afford; and may I say, more than once we found a Christmas tree on our front porch from an anonymous friend. The children always make paper chains and trinkets for the tree, even though in recent years we could have bought them ready made. Cookies and candy are made especially for Christmas in which the daughters have a part; and a special centerpiece for the Christmas dinner can be styled by the children if they are guided.

We have records of the famous carols, which are played over and over, and when it comes time to carol on Christmas Eve there is no reluctance. That's all a part of the family Christmas.

I agree the pressures of outside activities in such a busy season might tend to destroy the Christmas spirit in the parsonage, but I don't believe it will in ours or yours if we include our children in everything possible and keep "putting Christ back into Christmas."

My Prayer for You

Our Father, we thank Thee for all Thy loving-kindness and tender mercies toward us, for Thy forbearance with our lack of wisdom and knowledge.

Help us, O Lord, to fight the good fight of faith. May we cling to the ideals of our Christian faith and may we be able to discern the true from the false. As we face duty and responsibility, may we be impelled to accept them and carry through with them, however difficult the condition our ideals impose upon us.

Help us to think of ideals in terms of integrity, courage, and a high sense of responsibility, not as something vague or fantastic. May we realize that we must not be submissive to evil, or passive toward it, but that we must be positive, willing to sacrifice and to suffer.

Help us, O Lord, in all our relationships, that we may find the way to please Thee and to do Thy holy will. Teach us how to achieve a proper balance in all our activities, that we may produce the best possible results in bringing our lives into the full measure of strength, power, joy, and peace promised to Thy children. Amen.

Mrs. R .T. Williams, Sr.

Bethany, Oklahoma

Positive and Negative Preaching

By Bernie Smith*

MANY AREAS of the Pauline Epistles are marked by a positive note. They are not the theories of an idle theologian. As you read them, they seem to burn with unquenchable fire.

As you read the writings of the fiery missionary, you hear the beating of a heart filled with praise, feel the stirring of a soul totally abandoned to God, see a life burned out for Christ, and sense a voice of revealed authority crying with the weeping prophet, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones . . ." (Jer. 20:9).

Paul preached with the authority of a positive revelation. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which is preached of me is not after man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

THE POWER OF POSITIVE PREACHING

Positive preaching has great persuasive power. It affords no room for halfheartedness or lukewarm uncertainties. Positive preaching cries out with Sinai certainty proclaiming the message of Christ to persuade men.

The Pauline pattern of positive preaching was persuasive. Paul had no "cunningly devised fables," no messages for "itching ears." With positive assurance, he constantly preached the Cross, the risen Christ, and His transforming power.

Positive preaching has magnetic power. It draws rather than drives. It emphasizes the plus side of the

gospel and creates a hunger for the exalted Christ.

I was preaching in a certain city-wide campaign. One night after service, one of the co-operating ministers asked to visit me the following day. He apparently had been hesitant to join the union crusade, but eleven other churches of his denomination were co-operating, so he joined them. He confessed that he had not been preaching against the background of a personal experience of grace. "Your preaching troubles me," he said. "You speak with such certainty about a definite experience of salvation. That is something I never had—but I want it." I read and reasoned and prayed with him, and I believe God came to the rescue of that hungry heart. A positive message, reinforced by positive witnessing, had brought him to the foot of the Cross.

Paul's positive preaching was magnetic. Men of high and low estate heard him. They could cast aside his culture and eloquence, but not that unrelenting inner spiritual drive, that positive message of the resurrected Lord.

It would seem safe to declare that the positive preaching of Paul not only determined individual destinies, but affected the course of human history. Without it, the Christian Church could have become another small sect, buried in oblivion, confined to a small geographical area. Paul spread the message of Christ more than any other apostle, and apparently was the only one to establish churches to preserve the work.

*Evangelist.

THE NEED FOR NEGATIVE PREACHING

No thinking person could deny the need for negative preaching. The ministry of Christ, as well as Paul's, would corroborate that fact. God's prophet is to cry out against the sins of the day. He must warn men against taking excursions into forbidden areas of life. Not only must he denounce the so-called "popular sins"; he should denounce the so-called "small sins" of jealousy, place-seeking, and gossip. He should warn men against becoming walking repositories of gossip who specialize in rumors when they run short of facts. These sins are just as odious to the nostrils of God.

The ministry should remind men that they can't laugh sin out of their lives, for sin is no laughing matter; they can't hide sin behind culture or finery; they can't run from it, for it will haunt them to the end; they can't belittle or excuse it, saying it is all right in their instance; for sin is wrong—and there is no right way to do a wrong thing. Only Christ can meet the need. Only He can save and cleanse.

While negative preaching is needed, it can become dangerous if the method is abused. Negative preaching, like positive preaching, must be saturated in prayer and clothed with a right spirit. Abused negative preaching can lead men to a wrong concept of God, and that can lead to spiritual hypochondria. We who love souls must be interested in helping men find spiritual stability rather than spiritual frustration. Our ultimate purpose is not to get individuals to an altar for no other reason save to have a host of uncertain seekers; our ultimate purpose, our high goal must be to win souls to Christ.

We must guard against forming a preaching pattern which follows closely the weave of the Talmud. We

must guard against unconsciously becoming religious dictators, declaring as it were how many sticks one may pick up in a given day. Such a ministry is unbalanced and overweight—unbalanced by well-meaning but distorted ideas, and overweight with the negative approach. Some may try to justify such preaching by saying that most of the commandments are negative. If all negative preaching were restricted within the pale of divine negations, no one would challenge its authenticity. But if one should build a fence around a forest of untenable notions and post signs of warning declaring they are applicable to universal Christian experience—what then? There is a danger for one to take this attitude and declare that he has the final word and all else is heresy. There is a danger in taking the attitude that no one can get on his ground unless he agrees; to him to disagree is to trespass, and to trespass is to transgress.

This very attitude reveals the inherent weakness. Truth is truth and does not need to be surrounded by a fence of fear. Truth rests on its own foundation, and it will not crumble before the theories of men.

CONCLUSION

God has seen fit to win men through preaching. Thus He has called men for this serious task. He has called them to preach the full gospel, with both the positive and the negative approaches. Every called man must answer for his own ministry. Let us strive toward a ministry that will make each a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed"; a ministry that will call men from the things of the world to the foot of the Cross; a ministry that will challenge holy living; a ministry wholly acceptable unto God.

Sermon Subjects for December

From the Editor

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Subjects

1. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT
2. THE LIGHT OF HOPE FOR A DYING WORLD
3. A CHILD OF PROMISE
4. GOD'S SON IS MAN'S HOPE
5. THE KING OF THE KINGDOM
6. THE NAME OF JESUS
7. WONDERFUL
8. COUNSELOR
9. THE MIGHTY GOD
10. THE EVERLASTING FATHER
11. THE PRINCE OF PEACE
12. THE ETERNAL KINGDOM
13. POWER TO PERFORM THE PROMISE

Scriptures

1. v. 2, *The people . . . have seen a great light.*
2. v. 2, *They that dwell in . . . the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*
3. v. 6, *For unto us a child is born*
* * *
4. v. 6, *Unto us a son is given.*
5. v. 6, *And the government shall be upon his shoulder: . . .*
6. v. 6, *And his name shall be called*
* * *
7. v. 6, . . . *Wonderful*
8. v. 6, . . . *Counsellor*
9. v. 6, . . . *The mighty God*
10. v. 6, . . . *The everlasting Father*
11. v. 6, . . . *The Prince of Peace*
12. v. 7, *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.*
13. v. 7, *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

POWER OF THE BIBLE

One soldier confessed that when cigarette paper was scarce he used pages from his New Testament. He said he smoked through Galatians, but beyond that point found enough of the "lively oracles of God" to save him.

BIBLE—MISUSE OF

In Haiti there has been found a strange combination of voodoo and Christianity. The natives take a portion of scripture which speaks of Jesus healing blindness—tear out that page and bind it over afflicted eyes. Or they brew tea from shredded pages of the Scriptures and drink the potion for a stomach-ache.

SERMON WORKSHOP

Contributed by Nelson G. Mink*

THOUGHTS FOR UNIVERSAL BIBLE SUNDAY

"The only objection against the Bible is a bad life."—Wilmont, an infidel, dying.

"England has two books, the Bible and Shakespeare. England made Shakespeare, but the Bible made England."

—VICTOR HUGO

"Here is a Book, the Bible, worth more than all others that were ever printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have found time to read it."—PATRICK HENRY, near death.

"The Bible is the sheet-anchor of our liberties. Write its principles upon your hearts and practice them in your lives."

—U. S. GRANT.

General Marshall: "If I were to have my way, I would take the torch out of the hand of the Statue of Liberty and in its stead place an open Bible" (Selected).

ALL OF THIS IN ONE SMALL PACKAGE:

A young Christian packing his bag for a journey said to a friend, "I have nearly finished packing. All I have to put in are: a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies, a package of old letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of books I have been studying."

"But you cannot put all that into your bag," objected the friend.

"Oh, yes," said the Christian. "Here it is." And he placed his Bible in the corner of the suitcase and closed the lid.

—*Bible Society Record*

*Pastor, Oxford, Pennsylvania.

CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS

The Calendar of God: "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4).

Foregleams of Christmas: "I shall see him, but not now . . ." (Num. 24:17).

The Bethlehem of the Heart: "Until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

GOD'S GREAT GIFT

A man once, on a wager, stood on London Bridge for a whole day trying to give away golden sovereigns, and only two persons would accept them. Equally foolish is the world in refusing the greatest Gift of all—God's Christmas Gift (Selected).

Queen Victoria: "Oh, that Jesus would come while I am in life, so that I could with my own hands present Him with the crown of England and the Empire of India."

FOR THE BULLETIN BOARD

"Dignity is one thing that can't be preserved in alcohol."

"The man who cannot be angry at evil lacks enthusiasm for good."

"It lightens the stroke to draw near to Him who handles the rod."

"Be more desirous of meeting God in your troubles than of getting out of them."

"Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but the circumstances were quite different" (Anon).

Clarence Darrow: "I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with a lot of pleasure."

Illustrations

I AM THE BIBLE

I speak every language and enter every corner of the earth.

I bring information, inspiration, and recreation to all who heed my words.

I treat all persons alike, regardless of race, color, creed, or condition.

I have power to stretch man's vision, to deepen his feeling, and to enrich his life.

I am a true friend, a wise counselor, and faithful guide.

I am the Bread of Life with the message of salvation for every lost soul.

I am the Bible.

—SELECTED

THE HARVEST IS RIPE

It was a beautiful day in July with the sun shining brightly. As we were driving along the road we were commenting on the crops which were ready for harvest. We noticed a man busy shining his car in the shade of a large tree in the barnyard. Across the fence, not thirty feet away, was his field of wheat, ready for cutting. He should have been busy harvesting and not busy shining his car. We looked to the south and saw the storm clouds rolling. He had waited too long to do the most important. Are we busy shining our cars while the day of harvest passes?

—By Albert O. Loeber, Pastor
Raleigh, N.C.

AN IMPOSSIBLE CHOICE

A teacher had just related to the class of boys the story of the rich man and Lazarus; then he asked, "Now, which would you rather be, boys—the rich man or Lazarus?"

One boy replied: "I'd like to be the rich man while I'm living and Lazarus when I die."—*Way of Holiness.*

CRYING AND TEARS

Sir Alexander Fleming, the English scientist, has proved that human tears are efficient microbe killers. One teaspoonful of tears would give enough antiseptic power to 100 gallons of water. Many a distinguished physician has given it as his opinion that all of us should cry occasionally for our health's sake (Selected).

Sentences That Sing

Contributed by Shelburne Brown*

" . . . he walks up the stairs of his concepts into a wonder-world of thought."—J. WALLACE HAMILTON.

" . . . something began happening in the back streets of the cities that ultimately shook the mighty Roman Empire.—J. WALLACE HAMILTON.

"Unbelief accused God of uttering counterfeit coin in the moral currency of the universe."—W. E. SANGSTER.

" . . . answerable to no man at sunset." " . . . a Pharisee with built-in selfishness."—C. GORDON BAYLESS.

"The cross has become God's official bulletin board."—THEODORE HUGGENVIK.

" . . . too much of the gentleman to be a man, too sophisticated to be sensible, too learned to be wise."

"Some remain young. Every glare of red in the sky is a fire, and they are off to find it."—A. J. GOSSIP.

"Pessimism—that knows the reins have broken in God's hands."

"Faith is not a camp-follower of the lumbering army of science. It is the reconnaissance plane. It goes ahead. It sees in wholeness."—W. E. SANGSTER.

Carlyle, concerning his wife. "She was the rainbow to my dripping years."

Sarcasm of the month. "A word of advice to parents: If your boy comes home from school using bad words, don't punish him; develop the talent in him. He may make a fortune someday as a successful writer of "realistic" literature."—J. WALLACE HAMILTON.

*District Superintendent, Los Angeles District.

December 4, 1955

Morning Subject: DIVINE CONDESCENSION

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 8:1-9; TEXT: Job 7:17

INTRODUCTION: The text is a question that is both answerable and unanswerable.

I. THE SCRIPTURAL ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

A. Man—a creature

- (1) Modified dust (Gen. 2:7). (2) He is grass (Isa. 40:6-7).
- (3) A drop of the bucket (Isa. 40:15). (4) Vanity (Job 7:16; Isa. 40:17).

B. Man—a fallen creature

- (1) Guilty (Rom. 3:23). (2) Ignorant (Isa. 1:3). (3) Condemned (John 3:18-19). (4) Polluted (Job 15:16; Isa. 1:16).
- (5) Rebellious (Num. 20:13; Isa. 1:2).

II. IN WHAT RESPECTS THE LORD MAGNIFIETH MAN

A. In creation

1. In the image of God—the moral image.
 - (a) Power of reflection; (b) power of choice; (c) given dominion over all lower creation.
2. In divine providence.

B. In redemption

1. The Redeemer became man.
 - a. Dignified the human body, human nature, human relationships.
 - b. Gave meaning to human suffering.
2. God redeemed the whole man.
 - a. The soul, the body.

—FRED REEDY

Evening Subject: HE GATHERED SINNERS

SCRIPTURE: Luke 19:1-10; TEXT: Verses 5 & 10

INTRODUCTION:

A. Jesus, the Iconoclast—Breaker of traditions.

- (1) Sought sinners; (2) Ate with sinners.

B. Jesus—Lover of souls, Hater of sin.

I. JESUS SAW MEN'S POSSIBILITIES, NOT THEIR PREDICAMENTS.

A. (1) Zacchaeus, (2) Matthew, (3) Mary Magdalene, (4) and even Judas.

B. Jesus was never influenced by racial, political, economic, or religious differences; every man of intrinsic worth to Him.

II. FOR JESUS—NO MAN WAS TOO FAR GONE.

A. Judas at the Last Supper.

B. The thief on the cross.

C. Peter denying Him.

CONCLUSION: A loving God, a seeking Saviour, an adequate redemption all speak eloquently and finally of the worth of a soul, the need of sinful man, the price of salvation, the mission of the Church, the justice of hell, and the joys of heaven.

—FRED REEDY

December 11, 1955

Morning Subject: THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26; TEXT: Verse 26

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The word "strange" in the text literally means contrary to opinion, or expectation, and almost to belief.
- B. The whole event very unique.
- I. THE UNIQUENESS OR UNEXPECTEDNESS OF HIS BIRTH
 - A. The birth of a King to peasant parents.
 - B. The place of His birth.
 - C. The Messiah was expected to come as a man.
- II. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS LIFE FOR THIRTY YEARS
 - A. In an obscure village.
 - B. Engaged in a humble occupation.
 - C. Waited till He was thirty to assert His mission.
- III. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS TEACHING
 - A. He shocked His hearers by His style.
 - B. His wisdom, His insight into human nature, and His philosophy of righteousness beyond comprehension.
- IV. HIS UNIQUE MINISTRY
 - A. His choice of disciples.
 - B. The choice of His audiences and the places in which He preached.

—FRED REEDY

**Evening Subject: MAN HIS OWN DESTROYER, AND
CHRIST HIS ONLY HELP**

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 23:29-39; TEXT: Hosea 13:9

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The strange power of sin over the human nature:
 - (1) Sin charms, (2) entices, (3) entangles, (4) inhabits, and then destroys.
- I. SIN CHARMS THE AFFECTIONS.
 - A. Causes man to love that which destroys.
 - B. Causes man to hate that which will help him.
- II. SIN ENTICES THE WILL.
 - A. Causes judgments to be faulty.
 - B. Causes wrong choices.
- III. SIN ENTANGLES THE LIFE.
 - A. Causes actions which are irreparable.
 - B. Blames the enticed will for the damage.
- IV. FINALLY, SIN OCCUPIES THE WHOLE MAN: Spirit, Soul, and Body; Then Moves In for the Kill.

CONCLUSION: Christ, the Answer—Christ, the Destroyer of sin—the only Solution. "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound."

—FRED REEDY

THE GLORIOUS MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

TEXT: *Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us* (Luke 2:15).

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION: There is always an underlying purpose and plan to all the universe. Therefore there must be divine purpose in Christ's redemptive scheme from the manger to Calvary.

I. To God

A. To God the Father it meant the giving of His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

1. As Abraham offered his Isaac.

B. To Christ, the Son, it meant leaving heaven's glory to suffer, sacrifice, and die on an old rugged cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

II. To THE WORLD

A. To the world it meant that God had provided a Saviour (Matt. 1:21; Isa. 53:6).

B. Imagine our world without Christ.

1. Before Christ came.

2. Untouched portions or areas of the world today where Christ is unknown.

3. The so-called impotency of world religions: Confucianism,

Evening Subject: THE DEATHBED QUESTION

SCRIPTURE: Ezekiel 18:20-32; TEXT: Verse 31

INTRODUCTION:

A. The power of a question—(1) commands attention; (2) requires an answer.

I. GOD'S METHOD WITH MAN IS INTERROGATIVE. (1) Adam, (2) Moses, (3) Israel.

A. Recognizes man's moral freedom.

B. Makes place for the exercise of man's own moral judgment.

C. Places responsibility for choices upon man.

II. GOD WAITS PATIENTLY FOR MAN'S REPLY.

Centuries of mercy upon backsliding Israel testify to the patience of God.

III. GOD'S QUESTIONS ALWAYS MAKE CLEAR THE ALTERNATIVE TO OBEDIENCE. ("Why will ye die?")

A. No obscure implications—either obey and live or disobey and die.

B. A faithful warning against sin and repeated promises of restoration.

—FRED REEDY

December 11, 1955

Morning Subject: THE UNIQUENESS OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE: Luke 5:17-26; TEXT: Verse 26

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The word "strange" in the text literally means contrary to opinion, or expectation, and almost to belief.
- B. The whole event very unique.
- I. THE UNIQUENESS OR UNEXPECTEDNESS OF HIS BIRTH
 - A. The birth of a King to peasant parents.
 - B. The place of His birth.
 - C. The Messiah was expected to come as a man.
- II. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS LIFE FOR THIRTY YEARS
 - A. In an obscure village.
 - B. Engaged in a humble occupation.
 - C. Waited till He was thirty to assert His mission.
- III. THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS TEACHING
 - A. He shocked His hearers by His style.
 - B. His wisdom, His insight into human nature, and His philosophy of righteousness beyond comprehension.
- IV. HIS UNIQUE MINISTRY
 - A. His choice of disciples.
 - B. The choice of His audiences and the places in which He preached.

—FRED REEDY

Evening Subject: IF CHRIST HAD NOT COME

SCRIPTURE: I Cor. 15:12, 19; TEXT: Verse 19

INTRODUCTION:

Strictly speaking, today is Christmas Sunday; but in reality every Sunday is Christmas, and every gospel sermon a Christmas message.

- I. JESUS, THE ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END.
The New Year's Character and the chief Person of all thought as the year closes.
- II. THE CORINTHIAN IF REGARDING THE RESURRECTION PREFIXES EVERY FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.
The doubter must establish his doubts, and offer an adequate alternative to faith.
- III. HISTORY SPEAKS CONVERSELY OF THE CHAOS OF THE AGES WITHOUT CHRIST.

—FRED REEDY

Truth, Defending

If the truth that you believe in is of universal value, you will not need to argue it; just announce it.

THE GLORIOUS MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

TEXT: *Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us* (Luke 2:15).

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION: There is always an underlying purpose and plan to all the universe. Therefore there must be divine purpose in Christ's redemptive scheme from the manger to Calvary.

I. TO GOD

A. To God the Father it meant the giving of His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

1. As Abraham offered his Isaac.

B. To Christ, the Son, it meant leaving heaven's glory to suffer, sacrifice, and die on an old rugged cross (Phil. 2:5-8).

II. TO THE WORLD

A. To the world it meant that God had provided a Saviour (Matt. 1:21; Isa. 53:6).

B. Imagine our world without Christ.

1. Before Christ came.

2. Untouched portions or areas of the world today where Christ is unknown.

3. The so-called impotency of world religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism, etc.

C. The inadequacy of mere philosophy, education, law, etc.

III. TO MAN

A. To us it means that God offers eternal life as a free gift (John 1:12; Rom. 6:23).

1. Christ and the woman of Samaria at the well.

2. Bunyan's immortal allegory describes Christian leaving the City of Destruction, his ears plugged by his fingers, crying, "Life, Life, eternal Life!"

B. To the saints in glory it means bliss forevermore (John 14:1-3; II Cor. 5:2; Phil. 1:21-23).

1. With loved ones gone before.

2. With angels in glory.

3. With Christ, our Saviour, yea, and all the holy Trinity.

C. To the Spirit-filled Church it must ever mean passion, perspective, sanctified vision, and undying love.

1. The shepherds told the story.

2. The Early Church proclaimed it.

3. The Christian martyrs died for it.

4. Unless Christ becomes an indwelling Presence, a divine and Christian incarnation, we do not yet know the real meaning of Christmas.

—E. E. WORDSWORTH, *Pastor*
Goldendale, Washington

THE BIRTH OF OUR WONDERFUL LORD

TEXT: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).*

INTRODUCTION: The name stands for person. Christmas marks the birthday of the wonderful, matchless Christ. We mention some of His wonderful characteristics.

I. HIS BIRTH WAS WONDERFUL.

- A. The only birth that every human being had an interest in.
- B. He became human as well as divine, that He might understand our viewpoint, etc.
- C. He was hungry, tired, thirsty, as we are.
- D. He labored, He grieved, He wept as we do.

II. HIS CHARACTER WAS WONDERFUL.

- A. He was pure and faultless. Abraham, Moses, Paul, and others were good, but they had faults.
- B. Jesus had no fault, "neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Pet. 2:22).

III. HIS TEACHINGS WERE WONDERFUL.

- A. The greatest Teacher that ever walked the earth.
- B. "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

IV. HIS MISSION WAS WONDERFUL.

- A. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).
- B. He fully understood the cost of such a mission, but He loved the souls of men.
- C. In His great mission, He made possible the *new birth, sanctification, power to live above sin, glorification*, and eternal happiness and fellowship with Him.

CONCLUSION: Isaiah was right. His name should be called Wonderful.

*Sweetest name on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung,
Jesus, blessed Jesus.*

—C. I. DEBOARD, *Pastor*
First Church, East St. Louis, Ill.

FAMILY ALTAR

True family worship is a vase of perfume that sheds fragrance over all. It softens harshness; it quells anger; it quiets impatience; it settles differences; it subdues evil passions. Hearts that are drawn together at God's feet every day cannot wander far apart. The altar in the midst wonderfully hallows and sweetens the home fellowship. It smooths out the wrinkles of care. It keeps the fire burning on every heart's altar.

—*Selected*

NO ROOM FOR JESUS

TEXT: *No room in the inn* (Luke 2:7).

INTRODUCTION: A wrong choice often robs men of the greatest values of life. Involved in this incident were three things.

- I. UNKNOWN VALUE—No Room
 - A. Messiah
 - B. Saviour
 - 1. Can save from guilt of sin.
 - 2. Can save from power of sin.
 - C. Everlasting King
 - 1. All real and existing power in Him.
 - 2. The day of His crowning is coming.
 - II. MISPLACED VALUE—Refused a good place
 - A. Wealth came first.
 - B. Position came first.
 - C. Personal gain came first.
 - III. REJECTED VALUE—Sent to the stable
 - A. This can be neglect.
 - B. It might be deliberate.
 - C. It could be there is no room for Christ.
 - D. This condition means:
 - 1. No guide—you will go wrong without His direction.
 - 2. No hope—He is the Hope of the world.
 - 3. Darkness—He is the Light of the world.
 - 4. No security—He is the Rock of Ages.
 - 5. No salvation—He is the only Saviour.
- Let us make room for Christ this Christmas Day!

PAUL W. LEE, *Pastor*
Mt. Vernon, Illinois

THE PROTECTED CHILD

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 2:13, 20

INTRODUCTION: The news of the birth of the King of the Jews caused Herod:

- A. Immediate trouble and anxiety.
 - B. To inquire diligently what time the star appeared.
 - C. To feign the desire to worship Jesus also.
- I. NOW GOD BEGINS TO PROTECT HIS CHILD.
- A. Why?
 - 1. Because Satan would destroy Him.
 - 2. Because God loved His only begotten Son, and He loved the souls of lost men.
 - 3. Because Jesus was to mean salvation to millions.
 - B. How?
 - 1. By sending the wise men back another way.

2. By sending Joseph, Child, and mother into Egypt.
3. By giving His angels charge over the trio en route, while in Egypt, and on their return.

II. THE CHRISTIAN—A PROTECTED CHILD.

Note Ps. 91:11-12.

A. Protected by the Lord.

“. . . therefore will I deliver him” (Ps. 91:14).

“He . . . shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4).

“The eyes of the Lord run to and fro” (II Cor. 16:9).

“The Lord God is a sun and a shield” (Ps. 84:11).

“The spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard” (Isa. 59:19).

III. THE CHRISTIAN PROTECTS HIMSELF.

A. By declaring his relationship to God.

B. In obeying God’s will for his life—day by day.

C. As he stands for right and against wrong.

—BRUCE B. HALL, *Pastor*
East Point, Georgia

COMMUNION

THE LORD’S SUPPER

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 26:26-30

TEXT: I Cor. 11:23-29 (exposition)

INTRODUCTION: The Lord’s Supper is misunderstood by some. It is an ordinance, a sacrament—solidly scriptural, rich in significance and experience.

I. HIS INSTITUTION (v. 23)

Begun, not by apostles nor by church fathers, but by Jesus himself.

II. HIS INCARNATION (v. 24)

“This is my *body* . . . ”

III. HIS CRUCIFIXION (v. 24)

“My body broken for you . . . my blood.” (I Pet. 1:18-19).

IV. HIS INVITATION (or command) (vv. 24-25)

“This do . . . ”

V. HIS RECOLLECTION (vv. 24-25)

“In remembrance of me.”

VI. HIS PROCLAMATION (v. 26)

“. . . ye do shew the Lord’s death . . . ”

VII. HIS ANTICIPATION (v. 26)

“Till he come.”

CONCLUSION: The Lord’s Supper becomes a supper for us by:

Salvation—must first be saved.

Appropriation—by faith, take, eat.

Assimilation—strength for life and service.

B. W. DOWNING, *Pastor, Central Church*
Meridian, Mississippi

BOOK BRIEFS

Book of the Month Club Selections for December

THE THRESHOLD GRACE

By Percy Ainsworth (Epworth Press, 75c)

ST. PAUL'S HYMN OF LOVE

By Percy Ainsworth (Epworth Press, \$1.00)

Here is a duet of books that will sing in your heart long after you have placed them back on your bookshelf. These are not brand-new; the writer died some years ago. But the books have not had circulation in the United States and so are new to us. And to think that a man only in his thirties could write with such depth of spiritual insight, and with polished and pointed expression—it humbles us all, and rightly it should. Ainsworth knew intimately the grace and the love he wrote about so fluently.

The Threshold Grace is a series of meditations on the Psalms, and I rest assured that you will weep and thrill as you climb new peaks and view fresh vistas.

St. Paul's Hymn of Love—we all know that could be nothing else but the gem of all literature, First Corinthians 13. If you read Drummond's *The Greatest Thing in the World*, you will find this equally warm and penetrating. Ainsworth gives us twelve chapters on love that are beautiful and rich in thought.

A MINISTER LOOKS AT HIS WORLD

By R. Paul Caudill (Broadman, \$1.75)

This book is not a travelogue, but an interpretative analysis of world conditions by a world traveler. A score of nations were visited, leaders conversed with, and men of all ranks, high and low, interviewed. A devout Christian minister sees and feels the world's needs, problems, heartaches, and the threat of communism, and finds the only answer is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. It is both dynamic and informative. Preachers and laymen should read it. (E. E. W.)

EXPOSITORY PREACHING

By F. B. Meyer (Zondervan, \$2.50)

The author has been dead over twenty-five years but here is a book still fresh and refreshing. In fact, Meyer's works gain in popularity rather than dwindle.

From one who was a master of expository preaching comes this study of the composition and delivery of expository sermons. He wrote it after nearly fifty years of practice doing what he talks about. It is not the sudden inspiration of a novice who glimpses the glory of expository preaching, nor a theoretician who spent days learning how but demonstrating nothing. Here is a master at work whose product was then, and still is, in universal demand.

In successive chapters he pleads for, defines, tells the advantages of, and then tells the know-how—all in the interest of expository preaching. One of the high points is the chapter which discusses Christ's use of scripture.

Any minister who delights in digging into the hidden recesses of the Word (which outshines and outblesses casual discussions on passing topics) will find this a splendid addition to his library.

THE ROOT OF THE RIGHTEOUS

By A. W. Tozer (Christian Publications, \$2.50)

The contents of this book were written primarily as editorials for the *Alliance Weekly*. Not merely pious little essays but pungent, heart-searching messages. Almost a treatise in somewhat condensed form. The book comes to grips with life. A deep devotional tone throughout. Messages born in the midst of life. They are very practical, spiritual, and revealing. No serious person can read this book without strict self-examination. A statement here and there reveals the writer's rather forceful aversion to "sinless perfection." Doubtless he is possessed with the common misunderstanding of this term. Heaven is never far away, but the rough world in which God's children live is kept in full view. The reader will want to live holily after reading this book. (E. E. W.)

THE NEW BIBLE: Pro and Con

By William Carey Taylor (Vantage Press, \$3.50)

If all you desire is placid reading, or if your blood pressure is high, then don't plan to read this book. It is controversial with a capital C. Yet, withal, it will profit any preacher who will sit down with the Bible (both King James and Revised Standard) and carefully check the multitude of references that are studied.

The author is frankly critical of the King James Version and you may resent his brutal frankness. And in the first section of the book he begins (diplomatically so) with a very generous appraisal of the values in the R.S.V. But before you are thoroughly an R.S.V. convert he turns to the "con" side of his discussion. From then on he does the most thorough job I have seen anywhere in pointing out the weaknesses of the R.S.V.

Your Book Man wishes the author had faced his writing task with a calm which becomes a minister of the Lord. Instead, irony and biting, maligning insinuations crop out repeatedly. And in writing under such a pressure of bitterness his form of writing suffered deeply. He did not carefully enough pinpoint his scripture references or complete his argument. He was apparently in too much of a hurry to mount his steed and race to the fray in hunt of another foe.

You will be interested in noting how he castigates the R.S.V. for being terribly unfair to the proponents of eternal security and leaning far too much toward the teachers of "free will."

But, let it be said in utter honesty, the R.S.V. still has to answer a lot of charges which this careful scholar of Greek and Hebrew lays at its door. Until those charges are satisfactorily answered, our people will be justly cautious in using it or coming to rely upon its interpretations.

It will be worth a lot to you to get this whole issue of the R.S.V. out in the open for your individual study. The author is a returned missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

All in all, one of the most flavorsome books to come out for the lover of controversial issues.

Listing of a book in BOOK BRIEFS does not constitute endorsement of that book. Our thought is to present such books as may be of interest to our pastors, suggesting their values, pointing out their appeals and frequently their weaknesses—and, occasionally, a book that our readers may know of its demerits.

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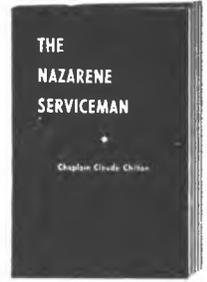


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