

THE
**Preacher's
Magazine**

NOVEMBER '77

**PREACHING
CHRISTIAN
HOLINESS**

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The Seasonal Sermon



SOME PASTORS TAKE THEM IN STRIDE, with never a hint of pressure. Some fret and chafe under them, wishing they would go away. Some are slaves to the custom, following it in minute detail as though driven by an overwhelming compulsion. Others are “free,” even to the point of ignoring them completely. We refer here to the “special days” in the church year, the “seasons” during which the pastor is expected to produce a masterpiece which is directly related to the occasion.

At the top of the list is Easter, and this could include the entire Lenten season. Christmas stands also at the top in importance. Some might argue that Pentecost should head the list. Regardless of their order of importance, the list of special days is long. There is the New Year, Reformation Sunday, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Promotion Day, and Laymen’s Sunday, to name only a few.

The ideal is for the pastor to USE these special occasions, but not let them make him a slave to their demands. We offer here a few suggestions and one example.

The seasonal sermon does have its advantages. It affords the preacher the opportunity to capture the imagination of his congregation at the point of their interest. It makes the message fresh and appropriate. It gives a congregation the feeling that the pastor is aware of what is happening, sensitive to needs and interests, and living life as his people live it.

Thanksgiving is one such season. In Canada it comes in October, and in the United States in November. Some other countries celebrate it as well. The pastor cannot afford to preach essentially the same sermon every year on “thanksgiving”! Nor can he find enough variations to narrow the subject to “The Meaning of Thanksgiving” or similar topics.

This writer found an answer which may be the solution you have been seeking. It comes through *letting* (not forcing) the Scriptures to speak on these various themes. Topics suggest themselves in regular devotional readings of the Bible (this is very important) as contrasted

with “text-hunting” in the Word. As a topic suggests itself to the mind during Scripture study, it is jotted down in a notebook used for this purpose—a collection of sermon ideas for future use.

Such a topic was suggested several months ago in a study of First Corinthians. One of the key verses in the first chapter reads: “I thank my God always in your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus” (v. 4). Thanksgiving! But thanksgiving with a difference, when you consider the occasion. This letter was addressed to the most problem-ridden church St. Paul ever founded. Its members lived in a wicked city, and this was having its effect upon their lives. They were divided and contentious (1:11 ff.), immature (3:2), carnal (3:3), and tolerant toward sexual immorality of the basest sort (5:1-2). A church with problems.

So one might quickly conclude, Here is a message to use during some future thanksgiving season: “Thanksgiving for a Church with Problems.” And indeed you may wish to use it in this way.

The application, however, is not only for a church. It is also for a family, a nation, or an individual. The theme may begin to emerge, “Thanksgiving in Times of Crisis.” The church at Corinth was in crisis. And so are we at times as churches, as nations, as families, as business organizations, or as individuals.

Such a sermon could be introduced with the reminder that anyone can be thankful when things are going well, when health is good, money is in the bank, and life’s problems are all solved. But it is a different kind of person who gives thanks to God when things are not going well. Perhaps health is gone, or material needs are not being met, loneliness has replaced companionship, and life’s problems are multiplying. Anyone can give thanks in times of prosperity. God can help us to be thankful in times of crisis.

Notice how this chapter supports this theme.

1. *There is thanksgiving for the promise of God* (v. 6). “. . . even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.”

His testimony is now confirmed. What Christ said is true, and what He promised is fulfilled. Like the church at Corinth, we tend to forget this. Let us be thankful for God’s promise, and its fulfillment.

2. *There is thanksgiving for the gift of God* (v. 7). “So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here the word *charisma* is used, and it means a gift freely given, a gift not deserved, a gift which cannot be earned. The gift is God’s only begotten Son, the price of our redemption. Salvation is God’s gift to us, and for that we should be thankful.

3. *There is thanksgiving for the hope of God* (v. 8). “Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have hope for the future. Judgment day causes no panic in the heart of the Christian whose hope is in Christ. Even in times of crisis, we can be thankful for our hope.

Here, then, is an example of a sermon idea which germinated and grew. You may find it helpful to “let” this happen to you.

It makes any sermon—and especially the seasonal sermon—more rewarding and less threatening.

Faith in **ACTION**

The Cycle of Financial Victory

By James S. Spruce*

WE WERE UP AGAINST IT. Our church owed \$76,000 in 10 months, and over the past 12 years we had reduced the mortgage only \$25,000. We were raising \$60,000 annually. The banker was not overly anxious to renew our financial relationship. The people were fearful, some even expressing private hopes to me that I not mention the "depressing debt" too much in my preaching ministry.

The debt, by many standards, was not much at all. But over a period of years it had become a millstone, a weight around our necks that had strapped our people to fear and negative reasoning. Suddenly the gravity of realizing that the mortgage would come due during *my* ministry really hit me. And the more I studied the picture and preached on obedience in tithing and self-denial, the more concerned I became. And I saw that if the problem were to be solved, God would need to employ me as an agent of change. My calling to my church demanded that I instill sufficient faith in those around me. And yet, if former pastors had not convinced the people, how could I?

Then our miracle began. It happened quietly, slowly. The Holy Spirit was to be the Convincer—not me. And when I learned *that lesson*, the pressure left me! I was responsi-

ble, still, for creating an atmosphere of genuine expectancy, but the task of individual conviction to the debt was in God's hands. Our church board, first of all, experienced spiritual renewal. Then the board pledged themselves to specific financial "gift commitments." Through the combined faith of several key laymen we purposefully spread the interest and enthusiasm to our congregation. By this time we were down to within six months of the due date. But during those closing Sundays we received \$43,000 in cash! The barrier, at least, had been broken.

Our problem was largely attitudinal. We had spun around in a "Cycle of Financial Defeat" as shown below:



Every time we recognized our need we hit the "doubt button," much like the conditioned reflex of Pavlov's dog. Doubt produced delay, which bred failure. Failure led to guilt and frustration. By the time we saw our need again, we fell into doubt. For us this was true because the GOAL was central and WE were peripheral! The goal was simply not part of our cycle! We had been more

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interested in goal-meeting than in getting started.

I finally arrived at a time when my personal objective was to devise practical, specific ways to reduce the debt little by little. And we began to conceptualize a framework in which people could see their own involvement in debt reduction as a necessary part of God's will for financial victory.

Our barrier was psychological, not financial. I saw that a wholesome approach in my preaching toward accepting the debt rather than mentally rejecting it was needed. We had to break the cycle at the doubt level. Small faith usually led into other perils and continued us on our defeat treadmill.

So we embarked upon a "Cycle of Financial Victory" which made goal-attainment a part of the natural course of events. We established, first in the board, the policy of announcing amounts pledged without revealing the giver's name. This of course, inspired the congregation. Actually, more than \$60,000 was pledged. It is just a matter of time now before all the money comes in. You can see from the new cycle that we took our GOAL off its high and mighty pedestal and made it a part of our workable, reachable structure.



In this new relationship to our goal of debt reduction, we are able to be constantly "need-sensitive" whether or not a goal is reached. Since faith builds the foundation for goal-setting, our purpose was dramatically altered. Our goal became not the

total reduction of our debt, but the desire to be sensitive to our need. Along the way, of course, we are finding that indeed financial goals *are* being met. And, interestingly, we have found that *individuals* have gained satisfaction in personal goal attainment even though the collective job of total debt reduction is not finished.

When I unfolded what happened to our bank president, he just shook his head. (I'm glad it was in the right direction!) I was able to relate to him that much of our problem did center around the attitudes we had toward our own money. He understood that. But I was also able to tell him that God came to our church. That we found a few new tithers. That we found a few who began practicing self-denial. That some people borrowed large sums of money in their own names from their own banks. That others sold personal property, or dipped into precious lifetime savings funds. He seemed to understand that too.

Needless to mention, but worthy of your attention, a revival spirit broke upon our fellowship. Prayer, not money, became our primary concern. When our regularly scheduled revival arrived, one young man settled his call to preach and left a promising managerial career to attend our seminary. A man with a broken fellowship with God found complete spiritual transformation. And many other people found that their needs were rooted in a kind of spiritual depression as well as in their attitude toward the church debt.

I cannot call this a "success story" because we simply did not meet our goal on time. But I can tell you that when people become involved in any type of faith enterprise, an explosion is bound to come.

And the fall-out is simply wonderful!

Pastor, May I Play a Tuba Solo This Sunday Morning?

By Ray Welch*

OF COURSE NOT, PETER. The Sunday morning service is a worship service, and it is necessary for us to establish a mood of reverence with the music. I cannot see how a tuba solo can contribute to an atmosphere of worship or praise. And besides, the congregation will not be able to identify with the music unless you are planning to play a hymn or a gospel song that they know.

These arguments do sound valid, don't they? Music is very important to the corporate worship. The outstanding churches of our day have outstanding music programs. The nature of the music that precedes the message can often determine the degree of reception of the message. If the congregation receives the music, it is apt to receive the message as well. No pastor can afford to neglect what is happening musically in his church and focus on his preaching ministry only.

Where does music by instruments belong in this ministry? An understanding of corporate worship may help. Unlike many other group gatherings, corporate worship is a community experience. The person in the pew is participating in the

activities in some manner, although the participation may be in some subliminal level. The only evidence of this participation may be his rapt attention, an occasional nod of approval, or perhaps the presence of a tear. Nevertheless, the worshiper has really come to church expecting this participation.

The musician can sometimes forget this fact and assume that he himself is all that he needs to be concerned with, since he is the obvious leader of worship at the moment. Thus he sometimes says, "If I can worship with this piece of music, that is all that matters." What a tragic mistake he is making. As a result, the worshiper often leaves the service saying, "My, that was dead." It is because he hasn't participated.

What about instruments then?

Since participation is important to the worshiper, how can this be achieved? With choral music, the problem is less serious. Choral music has a text that may provide a point of common reference. Also, since the church has a long history of including choral music in its worship, familiarity may provide the link. But music written for an instrument may not have either of these links.

All is not lost, however. All instru-

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mental music generally represents some overriding mood. It may be light and fast moving. It may be ponderous. It may be lyrical and awe-inspiring. It may be a shout. These different moods can be very conducive to worship. All we have to do is to identify and label the mood and tie it into our worship. You, as the pastor or musician, may not associate the same mood to the same piece of music, but that doesn't matter. An acceptable mood can be named; therefore, name it and use it for worship.

For instance, being a French horn player, I was recently asked to play my horn for a city-wide Good Friday service. Knowing that the mood of the service would be one of quiet meditation and challenge concerning the seven sayings of the Cross, I chose to play an excerpt from Mendelsohn's Fifth Symphony that I felt was in the same established mood. I didn't feel that in this case it was necessary to explain a thing to the congregation. I didn't feel that I was there to educate them on the lofty ideals of serious music for worship. I would not have felt that I was condescending to any lower level of musical standards had I played "The Old Rugged Cross," but for this particular occasion I felt that the moods of the service and my solo were matched, and so I simply played the solo. As a result, I felt I had given my best, and according to the response I received from those in the congregation, the music was received and so we worshiped.

On another occasion I may read a portion of scripture that identifies

the mood I feel the music represents and provide the link that way. Other times a familiar gospel song provides the needed link. Again, a verbal testimony describing the joy I see in the music, or the pathos I see in it provides the basis for worship. Simple, isn't it?

Certainly with the amount of instrumental music activity all around us, and with the emphasis of many public schools on instrumental music, we as church musicians and clergymen should give this medium of worship its due consideration.

Instrumental music does not need to be limited to a familiar gospel song or hymn before it is appropriate for worship. Neither does it need to be limited to something slow and ponderous. The Bible is full of moods—joy, sadness, rejection, reproof, quietness, peace, boldness, challenge, awesomeness, and on and on. Instrumental music can represent any of these moods. Let's tap all of our resources for corporate worship. In the case of instrumental music, simply identify the mood, support the mood with scripture, or explain it if necessary.

Yes, Peter, since your solo strongly supports the spirit of awesomeness and somberness that we hope to establish this Sunday, your sustained Bach chorale would be very appropriate this Sunday morning. Let's see, we'll place it right after the scripture where the pastor reads the portion about, "Holy is the name of the Lord." That lyrical tuba sound you have will sound great in the reverberant, high-ceilinged sanctuary at our church. God bless you.

Christ will be Lord of ALL your life—however much or little that may be, depending upon your degree of light—or He will not be Lord of ANY of your life.

—John A. Knight

The "preliminaries," the prayer, the worship, the sermon—all are necessary parts of the complete pastoral function

The Priestly Pastor

IT IS THE RESPONSIBLE privilege of the prophet to interpret God to man, and the privileged responsibility of the priest to interpret man to God. In Christian ministry they are complementary aspects of the one pastoral calling: they belong as faith and works.

Catholicism tends to exalt the priest and assign preaching to a secondary place, while Protestantism in the main reverses the process. Psychological and secular pressures have alerted both to the importance of the dual role in ministry. Preaching is accentuated in the modern Catholic priesthood. Group counseling and individual interviews involving "confession" and soul-therapy increase in the Protestant pastor's schedule and office.

Invariably, when any aspect of ministry is reemphasized, specialization and specialists appear in that area. The majority of pastors, in lesser or greater degree—by virtue of their love for God and people, the sensitive intuition of sanctified com-

mon sense, and a psychological illumination gained in the school of life and experience—combine the roles of prophet and priest, training apart. Untrained by the standards of earthly schools, "Jesus knew what was in men," their hidden depths, questions, and possibilities, as He knew the hunger and reservation of Nicodemus—John's proof-example of a divine, supreme psychologist.

There are pastors who excel in preaching and counseling, Pulpit ministry gives people confidence to approach and unburden in pastoral calling or requested conference. This in turn quickens congregational attendance and receptivity to the preached Word. Some ministers have felt impelled to major upon counseling, relinquishing the full-time pastorate to do this. A minority of churches with scope and resources are appointing an associate pastor or family counsellor to assist in or enlarge this aspect of ministry. Pastoral book shelves, the space of paperback "problem-solvers" and "experiential-formulas" for success, and the number of training courses and sessions available indicate this rethinking and re-slanting of ministry.

Valuable as specialization and case-training are, there is a time and place a true pastor is inherently and intuitively a priest in calling and privilege—in the Sunday morning service particularly.

The *preliminaries* is the usual



by
Albert J. Lown

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term for singing, praying, scripture reading, voluntaries, special items, and offering that precede the sermon. This is an unacceptable term if it implies, as it could sometimes seem, "unessentials" to be shortened or omitted as if in comparison with preaching they count but little.

It is here, if anywhere, the pastor is priest, exemplifying and inspiring the worship of his people, and presenting their hearts and lives before God in the fresh focus of the pastoral-family prayer. Well-chosen hymns of adoration, confidence, fellowship, supplication, theology, and testimony combining in poetry and praise will give release and atmosphere for the opening invocation, special music, and clear, impressive reading of God's Word. A people who have *expressed* themselves worthily, thoughtfully, and emotionally in renewing worship are most open to be *impressed* by the sermon-message.

It is a slight against God and man for the "preliminaries" to be insipid or impoverished. They are of right and necessity worship indeed—so much so that the term is etymologically correct in usage, but almost a *misnomer* in parlance and practice. They are not grace before meat; a courtesy before a prepared meal; a calling card laid aside upon the arrival of an important personage; a short drive to a large house or a long address. They are a major part of the spiritual menu and meal; the warmth and welcome of a Presence in preparation for a message; the vestibule and tour of a beautiful mansion before the privilege of a heart-to-heart talk with the Owner.

Only in order of service are preliminaries preliminaries. The pastor-priest has neither part nor place in bygone or unchristian systems of sacrifice: selection of substitutionary victims, bloodshedding, atoning penances, indulgences, or formal

absolutions. He does not convey magical merit or inspire mindless chants of Baal or Krishna. Christ has died once for all. He is the risen Lord reigning in the midst of an eternal throne and resident in His Church through the Holy Spirit. He alone is to be loved, honored, and adored in the church; the one Mediator between God and man, as faith is the one medium by which salvation and sacramental grace are appropriated.

As prophet, the pastor declares this saving word of full salvation to men. As priest he gathers the needs of his people to and upon his heart, and bears them—and bares them—before the throne of grace as Aaron carried the names of Israel's tribes upon his breastplate. Never more so than in a pastoral-family prayer that is the unifying and unburdening of a congregation's soul in the Father's house on their Lord's day. He, Jesus, is in the midst of the Church and in every phase of its corporate, common life. Through Him the Christian's sacrifice, altar, and priest, the pastor leads his people into the holy of holies of communion, confession, and cleansing.

His prayer, preferably extempore, is the language of love's involvement and intercession: joy, sympathy, sorrow, penitence, confidence, gratitude, hope, mystery, agony, and faith are blended. His faith and concern touch all ages and every area of life.

Children, teens, singles, and married young adults; parents, grandparents, all ages and stages of life assemble in his petitioning. Hearts, homes, families, friendships, responsibilities, privileges, memories, and hopes touch him deeply. The world of denial and handicap is his: loneliness in all its forms; bereavement; affliction of body, mind, and spirit; limitation of sight, hearing, speech, or movement. The glad and beautiful things of life find happy

expression too: educational achievement, safe travel, legitimate pride in the success of loved ones, invested unselfish talent, good books with humor, wise stewardship, and warm hospitality. The world of nature is not neglected in the shepherd soul's outpouring: its laws; rhythm of birth, life, and death; myriad forms of life;

marvels of design and color; mysteries of bounty and barrenness inspire awe and wonder.

"Thank you for your message, Pastor," is a heartening tribute as services close. "If I did not come to hear you preach, I would come to hear you pray," is the greatest tribute a pastoral heart could covet.

Wesleyana



Methodist Class Meetings: The Genius of Christian Intimacy

By Larry Shelton*

MUCH ATTENTION has been given to John Wesley's ecclesiastical organization. His purpose was not to found a new structure for schismatics, but to care for souls. He was task-oriented, not program-oriented. His organization was always for the pastoral purpose of nurturing the converts who had come to Christ through his preaching. In establishing the Methodist societies, he faced the criticism that he was causing a schism in the church and destroying existing fellowship (A. S. Wood, *John Wesley: The Burning Heart*,

p. 189). Wesley's answer is classic:

I answer, That which never existed, cannot be destroyed . . . Who watched over them [converts] in love? Who marked their growth in grace? Who advised and exhorted them from time to time? Who prayed with them and for them, as they had need? This, and this alone, is Christian fellowship. But, alas! Where is it to be found? Look east or west, north or south; name what parish you please: is this Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connection is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other's souls? What bearing of one another's burdens? . . . We introduce Christian fel-

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lowship where it was utterly destroyed. And the fruits of it have been peace, joy, love, and zeal for every good word and work" (*Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 251 f.; brackets mine).

The key to the effectiveness of his societies was the class meeting. Organized under a system of under-shepherds, the class was the disciplinary and pastoral unit of the society. Each under-shepherd visited each member of his flock once each week to inquire of his spiritual condition and to give comfort or reproof, as the occasion required (*Works, Ibid*, p. 253). In the class the new convert found the kind of disciplined fellowship he needed, and the mortality rate of babes in Christ was greatly reduced. It was an ideal system of pastoral care, especially for the newly-converted.

The value of the class meeting for the Wesleyan Revival is incalculable. They gave coherence to the results of the revival and continued its vitality. The new convert found himself in fellowship with others who shared common emotions—the joy of sins forgiven, a passion for the salvation of others, and a desire for growth in Christian experience. He was sheltered from his former vices and edified and disciplined in the faith. Believers learned to bear one another's burdens and care for one another in practical, as well as spiritual ways. They learned to overcome shyness in spiritual things. In short, "Wesley erected fellowship into a permanent feature of church life," which closely resembled the *Unitas Fratrum* of the apostolic church (W. A. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, p. 221; cf. 222 ff.).

It seems that Wesley realized the importance of spiritual fellowship from his earliest years. Susanna's weekly kitchen meetings convinced him that fellowship was essential to the Christian, and this may have led,

at least indirectly, to the formation of the Holy Club, and later to the class meetings (Wood, *Burning Heart*, p. 31).

Although we in the Wesleyan tradition should realize that there can be no such thing as a solitary religion, we often allow just this in our churches, at least in practice. Whereas the class meetings were laboratories for learning to live out the gospel, we substitute a mass production machine which allows little or no Christian intimacy. How can we expect deep personal sharing when our people see each other once or twice a week, and then for only a few minutes with no real personal interaction? People can sit in adjacent pews for years without ever shedding a "sympathizing tear" (Charles W. Keysor, *Our Methodist Heritage*, p. 105 f.).

Rather than encouraging the growth of "sharing groups," or other forms of growth which involve intimacy within groups, we hold such groups under suspicion. They can so easily develop into "cliques," can they not? We follow a utilitarian policy of focusing our attention on accomplishing our program objectives, when we need to realize that when the Church tarries until it is filled with the dynamic of the Holy Spirit, it will naturally fulfill the ministry God has given it.

We are sometimes so concerned with getting our people to "fit in" or "carry the load" of our prefabricated institutional programs that we overlook the need for the nurturing closeness which Wesley saw to be so essential for spiritual vitality. As pastors, therefore, we are not entirely inculpable if our parishioners become "mere ropes of sand." Let us note with Wesley that the fruit of the Spirit and "every good word and work" follow from the New Testament form of fellowship.



The Cry of the Forgotten

By Clayton P. Wilson*

RECENTLY my 85-year-old mother was visiting me. This is always an enjoyable time because she is so alive. Her spirit and attitude are an encouragement to everyone around her. But on this particular day she was very quiet. Then as I looked at her, I noticed that tears were rolling down her cheeks and her chin was quivering. I asked her if something was bothering her, and this was her reply.

"I guess I'm not much good anymore. I can't do much in the church like I used to [she taught a Sunday school class for years]. Now I'm just a part of the forgotten group. I can't give like I used to [she's on Social Security], but I am faithful in paying my tithe and I give over and above to Faith Promise giving in our church. I was never one who demanded much of the pastor's time because I knew he was a busy man. To lighten his load, we used to keep the evangelist during revival time. That was back when revival meetings went for two or three weeks. But now I'm older and can't do those things. It has been three years or better since a pastor has called on me. [For one of her friends it has been five years.] I get out to church as often as I can find a way, but I can't get out as much as I

used to. In the church calling program, not even the younger laymen remember those who are past the age of usefulness. [Mom still carries a tremendous burden for her church and the lost, and prays many hours a day for them.]

"I have an unsaved daughter and son-in-law that I wish someone would take an interest in. One time when I was going to be away, I called my pastor and told him my tithe was at my daughter's and he could pick it up there. I did this on purpose to give the pastor an excuse for coming to their home. But when I returned three weeks later, the tithe had never been picked up. Several other times I've made ways for someone to call on them, but so far no one has."

She said more to me that day, but it was along the same line. Then she grew quiet and picked up her favorite book—the Bible—and a calmness came over her as she read.

I sat there and never said a word. But I was doing a lot of thinking. I was, and still am, asking myself if I have been guilty of neglecting and forgetting the older people in my church. And, in all honesty, I have to say that I haven't remembered them as often as I should. But thanks to a mother who has opened my eyes to a great need in our church—remembering the forgotten.

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Some Christians are not yet married, some will never marry. There is a need for a caring community of believers who accept them and will involve them in the life of the church

From Survival to Belonging

I SAT AT LUNCH with two dozen young adults. They were planning a “singles” retreat for their district. I had been invited to be their speaker, and since I just happened to be in the area at the right time, they included me in the planning session.

The first topic for discussion was to adopt a theme for the retreat. From somewhere down at the other end of the table, a young lady said, “Let’s call it something but a ‘Singles’s Retreat.’”

“Yeah!” everybody agreed.

The first speaker continued, “Let’s give it a name that tells where we are, and what we want to get from the retreat. We ought to call it, ‘From Survival to Belonging.’”

“Yeah!” they gave unanimous approval.

The discussion continued as we destroyed that mound of Chinese

food. Somewhere along the line a committee was appointed to make a final decision about theme and program, with instructions to keep in mind the suggestion, “From Survival to Belonging.”

By that time I had made a number of new friends, especially the young lady with whom I was sharing a plate of sweet-and-sour ribs. So I asked her, “Why did the group react so positively when the suggestion was made that the theme be ‘From Survival to Belonging?’”

“Because,” she said quietly and without bitterness, “most of us singles are just barely surviving in the church.”

I sat there stunned. I was totally unprepared for her honest reply. Here were two dozen of the most involved single young adults from the churches of that area saying, “We don’t feel like we belong!” My 23 years in the pastorate had not been conspicuous for a major ministry to single young adults, but I had not ignored them, and thought I understood them pretty well. But I was unprepared for this.

For several months now, I have been listening to single young adults. Just listening—just trying to hear what they are saying—trying to feel what they are feeling—to learn where



by
Gene Van Note

Director of
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they hurt and what makes them laugh.

They have talked with me like I had never heard single young adults talk before. Perhaps it was because I was no longer a pastor. More likely, it was the first time I had stopped long enough to listen to what they had to say. I found them open, eloquent, and forthright in what they thought about the church.

I asked one young lady who is completely committed to follow Jesus Christ and deeply involved in the life of the church, "Is it easier to be a single inside or outside the church?"

"It is easier to be a single outside the church," she replied, "because outside the church no one questions the validity of my singleness."

There exists no Christian imperative to get married. Every pastor has spent many weary hours counseling with those who should have temporarily or permanently postponed marriage. Obviously, marriage is not the answer to the problems of the world. One newly-married, former "career" single put it this way, "I'm happily married, and I'm happy married, but it wasn't marriage that made me happy."

But the fact of "singleness" has made many young people very unhappy. In this country people walk in pairs. Our culture strongly encourages a woman to find her identity in relation to a man, and questions the sexual orientation of a man who

chooses not to marry. The church adds its voice to this common idea by affirming that marriage is the noblest way to personal fulfillment.

But some are not yet married, some will never marry, and some will not marry again. For these, there is a need for a caring community of believers who will accept "singleness" as an acceptable life-style; who will attempt to minister to their needs; who will involve them completely in the life of the church.

Our family orientation in the church makes us uncomfortable with the trends in our society toward singleness. Our traditions make it easier for us to minister to two-parent families than to single young adults and to one-parent families.

However, the church that will accept "singleness" as a valid option for adults will find an exciting new field for evangelism and ministry. To do that we will have to accept these people as "whole" people, not one half looking for the other half. We will have to change our thinking to include them in the fabric of the church—right now, just as they are, not at some future date when they are a part of a couple which fits more neatly into our cultural framework. But, most of all, each of us must involve ourselves in a loving way with these young people—this great army that is marching to a different beat, and most of them marching outside the influence of the church.

A SANCTIFIED SPIRIT

A sanctified spirit is a pure, tender, Christlike spirit, one that is free from anger, malice, flattery, self-praise, self-seeking, and pride in every form. Sin not only corrupts the soul, but it also hardens and encrusts the affections with an icy coldness, puts a stiffness into the voice and manners, and dries up the fountain of tenderness . . . which is the very heart of Jesus.

—J. M. Hames

Perfect! Not in talents or thought patterns, but in love and loyalty to Christ. This is His will for us.

Christian Perfection— What Is Meant by It?

By J. Grant Swank, Jr.*

THE BIBLE STATES CLEARLY that the people of God are to be perfect. This is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Gen. 6:9 there are these complimentary words about Noah: "Noah was a just man and *perfect* in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

In Gen. 17:1, we read concerning Abram: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou *perfect*."

The familiar passages concerning Job read: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was *perfect* and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil . . . And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast Thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a *perfect* and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3).

In Ps. 37:37, there is the reward of the perfect man: "Mark the *perfect*

man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."

Studying these verses alone we can conclude that the biblical definition of "perfection" has to do with being just and upright, hating evil, and walking with God, all of which reaps God's peace. Consequently, God's call to perfection is not a physical perfection. It is not even an emotional or mental perfection. Nor is it a perfection of abilities and talents. Instead, it is a perfection of the soul—a perfect walk!

That perfect walk stays in step with God. It does not run ahead impulsively, nor does it lag behind in spiritual sloppiness. That walk keeps pace with the Almighty in total commitment. A step-by-step consecration with the Lord yields its own upright life which hates that which is evil, and this in itself brings the soul peace of Ps. 37:37.

Continuing into the New Testament, 1 Cor. 2:6 gives the words of Paul: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought." "Them that are perfect" are those who are in perfect step with God—a total commitment to His will.

*Pastor, Church of the Nazarene, Fishkill, N. Y.

2 Cor. 13:11 reads: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be *perfect*, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Again, the challenge of Paul is for the Christians to have a total commitment to God which yields a unity in peace throughout the congregation, thus bringing the love of God in power in their midst.

We find in Eph. 4:11-13, "And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a *perfect* man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Col. 1:28 states: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus." Paul yearns that his ministry will yield people who are completely consecrated to God—perfect in their commitment.

In 2 Tim. 3:16-17, Paul talks to his preacher-friend: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be *perfect*, throughly furnished unto all good works." The Bible is to form the perfect man, that one who is spiritually perfect in knowing that he has done all he can do. He has given his all upon the altar of God for His blessing (Rom. 12:1-2). He has measured up to the divine challenge of the Scriptures and therefore has found the sanctifying presence of the Lord.

Heb. 6:1-2 states: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto *perfection*; not laying again the foundation of

repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Heb. 12:23 reads: "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made *perfect*."

And Heb. 13:20-21 concludes the epistle with: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you *perfect* in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

James 1:4 states: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be *perfect* and entire, wanting nothing."

1 Pet. 5:10 reads: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

The words of Jesus in Matt. 5:48 are: "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Certainly one of the main thrusts of these words in the Sermon on the Mount is the thought that just as the Father has given His all, we who are disciples are to give our all back to Him. He has given His perfect plan to us, if we will it. Therefore we respond with giving our perfect commitment to Him. In this way, perfection (divine) meets perfection (human) in peace and love.

In Matt. 19:21, we read of Jesus once again referring to "perfect." He is confronting the rich, young ruler. Jesus asks of him his all: "If thou wilt be *perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come

and follow me.” The man was called to give his all, to make that complete consecration, that total commitment. If he would do this, Jesus could call him “perfect,” for his allegiance would be just that—perfect.

Jesus asks that of every disciple. He does not ask for physical perfection in flesh and bones. He does not ask for perfection in thought patterns and emotional structure. He does not ask for perfection in talents or capabilities. But He does ask for perfection in loyalty, in the disciple climbing up onto the altar of God to present his very self as a living sac-

rifice, holy, ready for the Lord’s use.

Perfection in the Bible points to a perfect “all-ness.” When the disciple has given his all—moment by moment—then God can ask for no more. “All” is all. When the disciple has presented everything, there is nothing more to present, except the everything of the next moment, and the next moment, and the next moment—that perfect walk that Noah, Abram, and Job experienced. When the all is given—the everything—then God can look upon His disciple and call him “perfect.” The commitment is perfect—100 percent.



Practical Points *that make a difference*

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Dear Son:

Your pastor made the tactical mistake last week of dispensing funds without board action. The board was kind and confirmed his action after the fact, but I expect that it taught him a lesson he needed to learn. The *discipline* is very explicit at this point. No pastor or treasurer has the legitimate right to dispense funds apart from the direction of the church board. The pastor was chagrined, the board amused—but I “hurt” for my leader. Evidently he was impetuous or had just not read his *discipline* as seriously as he should have read it.

And then I began to think of your career and how important it is that

since you have taken “orders” in the church you must work within its framework. There is a crisis of authority in the world, and the church has not escaped. When you stood before your leaders and accepted “elder’s orders,” you also accepted the responsibility of working within the framework of the organized church. It may “gall” you sometimes, but it is the only way that a church can fulfill its purpose. There will be a day when you will be glad for the counsel.

District assembly is next week, and you will stand before the leaders and make an accounting for your year’s work. You have nothing to be ashamed of. It has been a better year than last. The week will take your time, overwhelm you with program, and probably result in raising all your local apportionments. But that is all right too! The church in the world needs your help where you are. And 10,000 churches working together make a tremendous difference!

Love,
Dad

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Compiled by the General Stewardship Commission

EARL C. WOLF, Executive Director
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Church Growth – The Good Achievement

THE BIBLE tells us that “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” This is essentially the requirement we have in our *Manual* on page 58. We break into the full membership statement by quoting in part, “after having declared their experience of salvation, and their belief in the doctrines of the Church of the Nazarene, and their willingness to submit to its government . . .”

It is our belief that the doctrines are scriptural and helpful for the faith of the Christian. We believe that the government of the church is good for the corporate witness of Christianity and for the pursuit of the Christian in living for Christ. These are basic truths and practices we must not forget.

There is a lot of emphasis on promotion and growth today. Both are good and helpful to the building of the kingdom of God. The lack of growth is abnormal and results in deformity. Growth, however, is more than getting larger. It must proceed as a result of health and activity.

A church is a spiritual organism. As such, a spiritual dimension must be paramount in the organization. When a pastor lays plans for outreach and church growth, he must give attention to the basic doctrinal, biblical preaching that must accompany the growth pattern. Plans for significant growth in members then must include extensive preaching of the redemptive doctrines of the Bible.

Looking back at the above quote from the *Manual*, we also must emphasize the distinctive beliefs of our church and its

government. This is good and profitable to the new Christian, for it gives him a “set” of beliefs that he can substantiate in his Bible reading. It enables him to bring his life to a Christian standard and causes him to feel a sense of belonging to his new church environment.

Also, since he needs to take his place as a part of the continuing growth, he must be a constructive part of the government of the church. The new people must join the church. The church must not “join” them.

Numerical growth can be abnormal. When this is so, while seeming to be right, it is in reality the beginning of death. I know of a church that has nearly 4,000 members and has a weekly attendance between 7 and 40 at its services. How dead, in reality, a church can be when it no longer has spiritual vitality. That church has four pastors. They keep birth records and death statistics. How tragic: how useless—members on a roll; no life.

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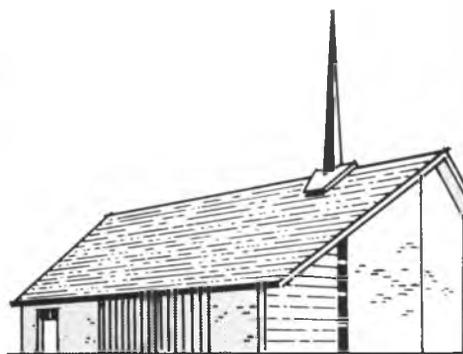
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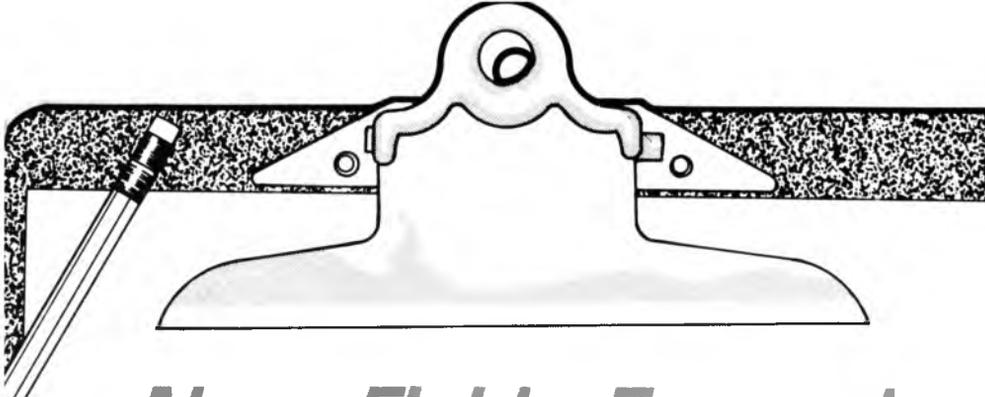
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The Power of Appreciation

AT A MOTHER-DAUGHTER BANQUET the question was asked, "What was one of the most important bits of advice your mother gave you?" In my case it didn't take long to come up with one. Mother "preached many sermons" on expressing appreciation.

"Never fail to say 'Thank you' to others. Always pay a compliment to another. It costs so little and means so much. Be sure to pay special attention to older people. They need it lots."

I can still hear Mother's sermons. When I was in my teens she said, "Never walk by an older person without speaking. They love to know youth notice them and care that they are there."

I guess Mother's sermons were being etched on my subconscious mind because I tell my children the same thing. Today our children think appreciation is law and gospel.

I had stopped my car in front of a friend's home and let her out. I asked her what I should speak about on the radio because I was just getting my thoughts together. I said, "I'm thinking about writing on the power of appreciation." She threw up her hands

and said, "That's something I can't do. I admire someone, and after I am gone from them I wonder why I didn't say something nice about them."

I asked her if she grew up with appreciation. She said, "My land, no! I was the last of seven, and I took the food out of the others' mouths, so I wasn't appreciated." She went on, "I think they loved me in an odd way. I don't remember ever being shown, though. I worked real hard. I recall working all day helping Mom, and my dad came in and kicked me several feet forward while I was stooped over sweeping dust into a pan. He reprimanded me because I didn't work more."

Little wonder her words stuck in her mouth and expressing appreciation was painful.

The Bible is probably the most appreciative book in the world. God lavishes appreciation on His people. He takes advantage of repentance to do more for His children.

The Apostle Paul started most of his 13 Epistles with words of commendation. To Corinth, "I thank my God always on your behalf." To Phi-

lippi, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." To Thessalonica, "We give thanks to God for you all." To Philemon, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers."

The beloved Apostle John excelled in appreciation. In writing to each of the seven churches, whom he had something about which to correct, he always prefaced his correction with commendation.

I can listen much better to a correction if someone takes the opportunity to love and appreciate me first. It's always good to remember when there's a need for correction that the person is not all bad.

Here's a little test for you. Are you ready with a pencil?

1. Is it hard for you to pay someone a compliment? Why?
2. Is it hard for you to relay to someone a compliment someone else has given them?
3. When is the last time you paid your husband a compliment? What was it?
4. When did you last pay your most difficult child a compliment?
5. When did you last pay a difficult neighbor a compliment?
6. When did you last compliment a person who has wronged you?
7. When did you last compliment someone in your family?
8. When did you last compliment the custodian of your church?
9. When did you last compliment your competitor?

Would you like to change people around you? Most of us would. I want to give you seven secrets to change others in the world around you.

1. Becoming intent on the good in another breaks the continuity of the thought of evil in him, and gives the good a chance to manifest itself.
2. What you accept for another you accept for yourself.

3. You cannot have good for yourself until you recognize it for all the world around you.

4. If you tell a man he's lazy, unspiritual, self-centered, you will no doubt live long enough to eat your own words.

5. If you tell a child he's lazy, mean, ugly, stupid, you will eat your own words.

6. If you speak evil of youth, churches, politics, public officials in general, you become part of the problem.

7. Hypnosis is the power of belief. People who are hypnotized only do surprising things when they are convinced the hypnotist's words are true.

It makes no difference where the idea came from—God, the devil, man, or yourself. If you have accepted an idea and are convinced it is true it has the same power over you as hypnosis, whether or not you have been formally hypnotized. You can have a wrong belief and be willing to die for it. Belief is a tremendous power. How important to believe rightly!

Through appreciation you can be the healing agent for a world around you. If you're having a hard time loving a rather unlovely person, try writing this note to change your attitude:

_____ is really a beautiful person. I observe this one good quality about him: _____

"I relinquish former negative thoughts about him and will check them with good thoughts and words before they leave my mind. I want the very best in life to come to _____ spiritually, physically, in his family, business and church life.

"In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

This has helped to change my inner and outer world.

If a church does not grow, it is because that church is either unable or unwilling to pay the price in growing pains



Growing Pains

NUMEROUS BOOKS on church growth—or the lack of it—are appearing in bookstores and being distributed by the various denominations. Most of them are helpful and encouraging. Church growth is a real possibility in most cases. But when these books are read, as helpful as they are, we are still left with only two reasons for a lack of growth. A church is either incapable or unwilling to grow. The former is self-evident, and the latter sounds like a cruel oversimplification.

Most of the material available deals with the matter of how to overcome the problem of inability. While this is essential, the matter of being unwilling to grow is equally important. Few congregations would be willing to admit that they actually don't want to grow. Most of them bemoan the fact of their smallness. Many have outreach programs, visi-

tation, and extension classes. They talk growth, hope for growth, and actually work for a larger church. But year after year they report about the same numbers in membership and attendance.

The only real solution to this problem must begin with some soul searching. The price to be paid is a painful exercise in self-discipline. It hurts to grow. It hurts the pastor, board members, Sunday school teachers, and others who have been in their position for many years.

There is the pain of lost leadership

An influx of new people means that some of them will take leadership from those now in office. Even sanctified people have difficulty relinquishing the reins to others. To see new people come in and be elected to a job we thought we were doing well can be painful to the biggest souls. It hurts! But if the members are not big enough to see younger (and frequently untried) people take over, real growth is unlikely.

The pain of diminished prominence

The more people we have, the less prominent any one person becomes. When a church of 40 suddenly jumps to 80, competition for the limelight



by
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is doubled. Brother Brown suddenly feels more beige than brown. He is not the man everyone must depend on now. There are others who can do what he has been doing. Even worse, they can do it better. So the loving attention must be shared with these new people.

Another interesting dimension is now introduced. The pastor also begins to feel this loss. Other people can now take over some of his responsibilities. He has been complaining about being overworked for years. Now that others can actually help him he feels a little less vital. While this ought to be a cause for rejoicing, it sometimes produces a reverse reaction. It takes a lot of honesty for a pastor to admit this. Some will never face this unconscious reluctance to growth.

Closely related to the pain of diminished prominence is

The pain of shared success

Everyone wants to feel successful. We all enjoy talking of that day we broke the Sunday school attendance record. We like to tell how we did it—all the details included. Then Brother Tall gets elected Sunday school superintendent. He is a young man with a lot of professional training in sales work. He comes up with a grand idea for the Sunday school, sells it to the teachers, and finally to the whole church. The Sunday school begins to grow rapidly. Everyone is bragging on Brother Tall. Poor Pastor Short is feeling shorter than ever. Growing pains!

Apply this to the song leader, the missionary president, or any other position in the church. The layman also feels this pain. If he harbors resentment and bitterness, it will soon be felt by new people. The new members will either leave your church for a more open field of service or be squelched and become another nomi-

nal church member—like every church has in overabundance.

Of course it hurts to be pushed aside. Unless members have God's Kingdom as top priority, they will find some way to stay in control—usually at the expense of church growth. This is the point where strong pastoral leadership is vital. A pastor must be strong enough to remain *pastor* and firmly in control of his church without deflating lay enthusiasm or stifling strong lay leadership. New people with new ideas and new energy must be channeled for proper growth without destroying creativity and spirit. Older members must be taught to appreciate those whom God has sent their way without resenting their success or feeling neglected when they are praised. The pastor must also find new jobs for displaced members, and at the same time give proper attention to those members who have been faithful to the church. Let them know that they are appreciated and still vitally needed. Keeping *everybody* busy in a place where they are best suited will prove to be a big but very vital job.

The pain of directional uncertainty

This will soon be felt when churches begin to really grow. Where are these new people taking our church? What will they come up with next? Now this is a justifiable concern. The pastor must be alert to the spiritual quality of new leadership. Again, strong pastoral leadership is vital. Growth (which means new people) has its own built-in risk. Not everyone will prove to be as wonderful as we first thought. Some will disappoint us. Others will be all personality. They will sweep in and dazzle every eye for a few weeks. Then they will be gone—sometimes taking others with them. There will be times when we will wet our pillow with tears of regret for trusting Brother

Dazzle or Sister Songbird.

Trust in others is always at the risk of hurt and failure. But unless we plan to have a church which is a one-man operation, we must take that chance. Jesus had a Judas among the apostles, and it is doubtful that we will escape the sorrow He felt. But it was better to have the apostles, even with Judas among them, than to have no apostles.

The pain of an empty purse

Growth will cost money. In fact, it will cost a lot of money in more ways than most think. Many churches are not prepared to pay this price. New buildings come first to mind. This is assumed and usually accepted as a necessary expense. If the present church is overcrowded, few will argue with a building program. Most churches are paying on a mortgage anyway. Buildings that are large and beautiful and comfortable seem worth the expense.

However, the cost of growth goes far beyond a beautiful new building. In a score of ways that are never apparent at the beginning, costs will mount. In equipment, supplies, utilities, literature, the demands placed upon the church from within and without will begin to increase. People will prove to be a costly advantage. When we add to this the unexpected fact that our income does not keep pace with our growth, there will be

times when we begin to wonder if we are going to be able to pay the bills. The plain truth is that not all new people will be tithers the day they arrive. Some never will be. They must be taught about Christian stewardship. During this interim there will be anxious moments for pastor and church board.

Healthy growth that is properly trained and carefully supervised will produce a healthy church that is strong financially. When financial strength and stability does begin to emerge another thrilling thing will be discovered. We will find the overhead shrinking in percentage. The phone bill will be about the same. Utilities will go up, but not in relation to our increased income. In fact, it costs less to heat a church for 250 than for 50. A church that raises \$75,000 does not usually have an overhead three times that of a church raising \$25,000. Of course they have much greater operating expense—but not three times as much. There will be occasional exceptions to this if a church has extended itself beyond its financial capability. But even these are usually better able to cope with their financial problems than the weaker church.

Growing is painful. But for those willing to endure the pain for a while, there is the reward of adulthood. The alternative is to remain a pigmy church and that is even more painful.

If you are not to drift into unconscious hypocrisy, or at least into using great words with little meaning, always a dangerous thing, live close to Jesus Christ.

—Arthur John Gossip

THE STARTING POINT

Some Thoughts on Prayer

Here are some “starting points” from Gordon W. Johnson, editor of *Time to Tell*, on the subject of prayer. I pass them on for your further development.

1. Prayer revives, Acts 4:29-32
2. Prayer restores, Ps. 51:12
3. Prayer removes sin, Isa. 6:6-7
4. Prayer reconciles, Gen. 32:9; 33:4

Justification by Faith

Bible scholar Warren W. Wiersbe, in his book *Be Free*, which is a study of Galatians, points out something that could be developed into a series of sermons on the doctrine of justification by faith. Wiersbe states that Romans explains the meaning of “the just”; Galatians explains “shall live”; and Hebrews explains “by faith” (Victor Books, 1975, p. 53).

A Matter of Priorities

Rev. 2:1-7 records the letter to the church at Ephesus. From the context, let me pass along three “starting points” for your further study.

1. Notice the *record that is spotless*, v. 2, “I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men” (NASB)*

*From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.



by
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2. Notice the *reality that is shocking*, v. 4, “you have left your first love.”

3. Notice the *remedy that is sure*, v. 5, “Remember . . . and repent.”

A Thought on the Life of Jesus

An interesting study would be the fact that before the Cross everything that Jesus had was borrowed—the stable, lodging, the donkey, the cross in which He was crucified, etc. But after the Cross, He is Lord and lays claim to His place at the side of the Father.

Life after the Cross and the Resurrection, has a new authority—not only for Christ, but for every man.

Know the Will of God

In Elisabeth Elliot’s book *Shadow of the Almighty*, she shares some interesting thoughts on the will of God found in Jim Elliot’s journal. They could be the seedbed for a sermon. Here they are:

“Impressed with Ephesians 5, ‘understanding what the will of the Lord is,’ and Romans 12, ‘proving what is the will of God.’ Every moment I may be conscious and rejoice in the knowledge of God’s will. Obedience to every command puts me on the track and keeps me there. Decisions of course must be made, but as in railroad, so in life—a block signal, a crisis, is lighted only where there is special need. I may not always be in sight of a GO light, but sticking to the tracks will take me where the next one is. Understanding the will of the Lord is believing Him, that He will—in all situations where I have obeyed—make that way His own way, effectual for eternity.”

A Thought on Preaching

Edmund A. Steimle, formerly Brown Professor of Homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, gives us this interesting word concerning preaching, quoted on Thesis Theological Cassettes: “I would hope for the pulpit of the future what I would hope for when I go into any church and listen to a sermon, that my story [preaching] would be reflected in such a way, with such sensitivity and accuracy, that early on in the sermon I could say to the preacher, ‘Yes, yes, that’s where I am. Now let’s go on to-

gether.' In addition, I would like him to expose something of his story [his life], so that I know this fellow is for real. And that he shares my doubts and my agony,

as well as my joys" (Edmund A. Steimle, "Preaching as Story Telling," Thesis Theological Cassettes, Dec. 1976, vol. 7, No. 11).

IN THE STUDY

Seeds for Sermons

During November we continue our "Major Messages from the Minor Prophets." This month, week by week read: Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah. Each man of God has a message from God for us today.

November 6

WALK WITH GOD

TEXT: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8).

INTRODUCTION: Two fussing children came running to Mother, each vehemently telling what the other had done to him. The mother stopped them and said: "I don't want to know what your brother did to

you, but you tell me what you did to your brother." God is that way. He doesn't ask what others did to us, but what we do to others. He shows us what we ought to do.

I. WALK WITH GOD IN A WORKADAY WORLD

As we walk with God we see people who are covetous. They lie awake nights thinking how they can get the best of others (2:1-2). Life is a rat race. A dog-eat-dog dilemma. Seems there are no good men, no honest men, no trustworthy men anymore (7:2-5). How should a godly man live? Why—just keep walking with God and do justly. Treat those above you, beside you, below you, fair and square. He has showed *you* what He requires of *you*.

II. WALK WITH GOD IN A WICKED WORLD

We long for a day of universal peace when men "shall beat their swords into plowshares" (4:3-5). We are sickened by hypocrisy in leadership, especially when it is in religion (3:9-11). For America today verse 11 could well read: "Our national motto is: 'In God We Trust'! none evil can come upon us." Even in a wicked world the Lord hath showed *you* what to do: love mercy, walk with God. Leave judgment and vengeance in God's hands.

III. WALK WITH GOD

As Amos said: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" So in our walk with God we need a oneness with



by
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Him. Micah said: "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" (3:8). He needed this power to keep his own soul alive and to rebuke sin. Walking with Christ we enjoy His presence. Filled with Christ's Spirit we enjoy His power. A humble walk will ever acknowledge God as the guide.

CONCLUSION: Our unchanging Companion on the changing path of life is Jesus. Micah told of His coming (5:2). Jesus walked life's road among covetous and wicked men. He knows the evils of this world firsthand. He has promised to walk with us, never to leave nor forsake us. He daily will show us what to do.

November 13

IS YOUR FAITH A FARCE OR A FORCE?

TEXT: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked" (Nah. 1:3).

INTRODUCTION: Another fitting title for today's message from Nahum could be "The Folly of Following a Faded Faith." We are all aware of Jonah's message to Ninevah and the saving revival the city enjoyed. A century has now passed and that great city is set for destruction.

I. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FARCE—GOD'S VIEW:

One definition of "farce" is "an absurd failure." Thus, a faded faith is a forceless farce. In the opening eight verses of Nahum we find every Hebrew word to indicate the wrath, anger, and vengeance that God feels toward a faith that is a farce. Vengeance (v. 2; cf. Rom. 12:19; 2 Thess. 1:8). Wrath (v. 2; cf. Rom. 1:18; John 3:36). Indignation, fierceness, anger, fury (v. 6) all reveal God's hatred for sin. God's wrath is intense because His love is intense! True love is jealous love (v. 2). Jonathan Edwards, preaching in New England at the time of the Great Awakening, made the wrath of God so vivid and hell so real, people did not need an atlas to know where it was.

II. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FARCE—MAN'S VIEW:

We will accept many things. Some are:

A. We make our own gods. ". . . out of the house of thy gods" (1:14). One has said that in ages to come if someone would dig into the ruins of America and find an autojunk yard and say, "The ancient Americans worshipped these idols," he would be right.

B. We make our own set of standards. Ninevah "is all full of lies and robbery" (3:1).

C. We find immorality acceptable (3:4-5).

III. WHEN OUR FAITH IS A FORCE:

The name *Nahum* means "full of comfort." Our comfort is this: When the wrath, anger, vengeance, and fury of God is released—and it will come; when we ask, Who can stand in that day? (1:6), then what comfort! "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (1:7). He knows if our faith is a farce or a force. He knows!

CONCLUSION: In his Revelation (6:12-17), John saw the sinner fleeing to the rocks, hoping to hide from the wrath of God. Our comfort is not in the rocks but in the Rock of Ages!

November 20

THE WHY OF FAITH, THE WHAT OF FAITH, THE WORSHIP OF FAITH

TEXT: "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it . . . but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:2, 4b).

INTRODUCTION: Having moved week by week through the Minor Prophets, we note that the burden or message of Nahum and Jonah was toward Ninevah; that of Micah toward Samaria and Jerusalem; that of Obadiah toward Edom, etc. Habakkuk's burden, however, is that of a sincere man of God trying to find the answer to his prayer, the solution to his problem, and the rest of faith. His message is most fitting for us this Thanksgiving Sunday.

I. THE "WHY" OF FAITH

"O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! . . . Why? . . ." (2:2-3). Habakkuk is not questioning God but bringing his questions to God. Why do I feel a burden for the wicked about me and You do not punish them? Our "whys" often result from God's timetable being slower than ours. "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet the scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own."

II. THE "WHAT" OF FAITH

"I will . . . watch to see what he will say unto me" (2:1). Bertha Munro once wrote: "You get ahead in your faith when you change the question *Why* to *What* when you are speaking to God." To the sincere heart comes the answer: I will make it plain (2:2); it will come (2:3); the just shall live by his faith (2:4). Disillusioned? Look to yourself, and you will find that you have taken your eyes off God and fixed them on people.

Dr. Earle comments on 2:2 that God's answer will be plain enough to speed us on our way and keep us in the way.

III. THE "WORSHIP" OF FAITH

The first two and last three verses of Habakkuk's prayer (chapter 3) are best known. He had waited before God not just long enough for God to hear him, but for him to hear from God. He had fought through doubt to faith. He ends by saying that even if he doesn't have a good harvest and there are no livestock in the barns, he will still rejoice in the Lord. What a thanksgiving testimony!

CONCLUSION: In the early days of our seminary, President Benner often had faculty and students sing one of his favorite hymns, "Living by Faith." Habakkuk knew the just shall live by his faith. Dr. Benner knew it. And I rejoice for I too know it!

November 27

GUESTS OF THE LORD

TEXT: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at

hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests" (Zeph. 1:7).

INTRODUCTION: We are familiar with the New Testament parable of the wedding feast where the servants are commanded to go into the highways and compel the guests to come to the dinner. Here in Zephaniah is a strange account where the Lord has prepared a sacrifice and bids his guests.

I. STRANGE GUESTS

The Lord is searching (1:12) for his guests. They are:

A. Those who actively worship other gods (1:4-5a).

B. Those who are hypocrites and worship the Lord and "Malcham"—a heathen god—(1:5).

C. The backslider who has turned back from the Lord (1:6).

D. The indifferent—not actively evil, but who have never sought the Lord (1:6).

II. SURPRISED GUESTS

The attitude of these guests was: It makes no difference how we act, God won't do anything about it (1:12). The plan of the Lord is like the time Jehu prepared a great sacrifice for all the followers of Baal. When all the guests were assembled, they were all destroyed without mercy (2 Kings 10:18-28). Dr. Earle has said, "Our religion will be no stronger than our attitude against sin."

III. SAFE GUESTS

These guests are much different from the former. These are those who gather for the great "solemn assembly" (3:18). Those who have sought the Lord; sought meekness and righteousness (2:3). Those who have so trusted the Lord know how to "wait on the Lord" (3:8). For them there is salvation, security, joy, and rest in His love (3:17). On this most beautiful verse in Zephaniah, Dr. Earle has written: "Only in Christ does this gracious promise find its fulfillment. We can never exaggerate how much Christ means to us."

CONCLUSION: Someday we will all stand before the Lord as His guests, either guests destined for grief or guests destined for glory. The choice is ours.

November, 1977

25

By
Ralph Earle

Distinguished Professor
Emeritus, New Testament
Nazarene Theological
Seminary



Gleanings

from the Greek

2 Corinthians 12

“Expedient” or “Profitable”? (12:1)

Sympheron means “profitable” or advantageous.” The word *expedient* hardly communicates that today. The first part of the verse may rather literally be rendered: “Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable” (NASB).¹ The whole verse is well expressed this way: “I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord” (NIV).²

“Thorn” (12:7)

The word *skolops* (only here in NT) means “something pointed.” In classical Greek it meant “a stake.” But in the Septuagint it clearly is used, for the first time, in the sense of “splinter” or “thorn”—never for stake (TDNT, 7:410-11). And this is unquestionably its meaning in the papyrus (VGT, pp. 578-79). “In the flesh” suggests it was a physical affliction, probably chronic malaria or poor eyesight. The idea of pain seems suggested by the context.

“Paradise” (12:4)

This comes directly from the Greek *paradeisos* (here, Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7), which is thought to be of Persian origin. Among the Greeks it was first used by the historian Xenophon in reference to the parks of Persian kings and nobles (A-S,

1. From the *New American Standard Bible*, copyright © The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971.

2. From the *New International Version*, copyright 1973 by New York Bible Society International. Used by permission.

p. 338). He describes it as shady and well watered, and so it came to mean “a garden, pleasure-ground; grove, park.” Here it is used for “an upper region in the heavens” (Thayer, p. 480).

Joachim Jeremias devotes eight pages to a discussion of this word. He asserts that it is “a loan word from old Persian” (TDNT, 5:765), and adds: “Already by the 3rd century B.C. it can then be used generally for a ‘park’” (p. 766). The Persian term was adopted into Hebrew and Aramaic, but only in a secular sense. It was used for the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2.

Jeremias agrees with other writers (e.g., Plummer) in saying that we cannot be sure whether Paul equates “the third heaven” (v. 2) with Paradise (v. 4). It seems to us that he does.

“Buffet” (12:7)

The verb *kolaphizo* comes from the noun *kolaphos*, “the knuckles, the closed fist.” So it literally meant “to strike with the fist” (A-S, p. 252). Since thorns do more than buffet a person, it seems that “torment” (NIV) is justified here.

“Reproaches” or “Insults”? (12:10)

The word *hybris* occurs here and in Acts 27:10 (of physical disaster). Thayer says that it means “insolence, impudence, pride,” and then “a wrong springing from insolence, an injury, affront, insult.” He adds this comment: “in Greek usage the mental injury and wantonness of its infliction being prominent” (p. 633). It seems that “insult” conveys this better than “reproach.”

Four things, or three? (12:12)

The KJV of this verse sounds as if the signs of an apostle were wrought by Paul in four ways: patience, signs, wonders, and mighty deeds. But the Greek clearly does not say this. The correct translation is found in the NASB: “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.” We have noted before that *hypomone*, usually translated “patience” in the KJV, actually means “perseverance.”

“Miracles” (12:12)

Three words are here used for miracles,

as in the Synoptic Gospels. The first is *semeiosis*, "signs." The second is *terasias*, "wonders." The third is *dynamisias*—literally, "powers," or "powerful works"—the term that is usually translated "miracles" in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts, as here in the NASB and NIV.

The miracles of Christ and His apostles were "powerful works." But they were also "signs," signifying a spiritual truth. And they were called "wonders" because they excited wonder in those who saw them.

"Crafty" (12:16)

The adjective *panouragos* (only here in NT) literally means "ready to do anything." In classical Greek it was used mainly in a bad sense. But in the Septuagint it is used frequently in the Book of Proverbs in a good sense—"clever" or "prudent."

What does Paul mean by his use of it here? Arndt and Gingrich (p. 613) suggest: "Paul says, taking up an expression used by his opponents . . . crafty fellow that I am" (see NASB, NIV). This is a logical explanation.

Eight sins (12:20)

The KJV has "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." These hardly convey the correct meaning today.

The first is *eris*, which basically means "strife" (NASB) or "quarreling" (NIV). The second, *zelos*, means "jealousy." The third, *thymoi*, suggests a boiling over. It is better rendered as "angry tempers" (NASB) or "outbursts of anger" (NIV). The fourth, *eritheiai*, suggests "factions" or "disputes." The fifth, *katalaliai*, literally means acts of speaking against. It may be translated "slanders" (NASB). The sixth, *psithyrismoi* (only here in NT) does literally mean "whisperings." Today we would call this "gossip" (NASB, NIV). The seventh, *Physioseis* (only here in NT), in the singular means "a puffing up," and so, "swelling with pride" (A-S, p. 476). Perhaps "arrogance" (NASB, NIV) best expresses it today. The last, *akatastasiai*, literally means "disorders" (cf. NIV) or "disturbances" (NASB).

Paul feared that these were the things he would meet when he returned to Corinth. No wonder he dreaded to go.

Ideas That Worked—

Thanksgiving Project

Umbongo is an African word meaning "a present with which to express thanks."

At Thanksgiving time challenge your church people to bring their "Umbongos" in the form of some type of canned food. These then go to needy families designated by the church board, or to some home mission pastor on the district. This will give your church family an opportunity to become involved with the needs of others. Flyers should be sent out, or reminders put in your church newsletter just prior to the launching of this special Thanksgiving project.

BETTY B. ROBERTSON



Good News from Galatians

By Derl Keefer

No other Gospel

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 1:6-10

- I. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD LEAD US ASTRAY (v. 6)
 - A. The gospel of materialism
 - B. The gospel of socialism
 - C. The gospel of social prestige
 - D. The gospel of "new morality"
 - E. The gospel of "isms"
 - F. The gospel of occult
 - G. The gospel of cults
 - H. The gospel of glossolalia
- II. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD LEAD US INTO CONFUSION (v. 7)
 - A. We should study the true gospel.
 - B. We should know the true gospel.
 - C. We should be aware of the perverted gospel.

III. NO OTHER GOSPEL SHOULD BE ALLOWED INTO THE CHURCH

- A. There should be purity to the true gospel.
- B. There should be singleness to the true gospel.
- C. There should be priority to the true gospel.

IV. NO OTHER GOSPEL IS REALLY GOSPEL (v. 7)

- A. The only true gospel is Jesus.
- B. The only true gospel is about Jesus.
- C. The only true gospel is to be accepted.

* * *

Lessons for the Clergy

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 2:1-21

The clergyman—

- I. Must catch a vision of the gospel (v. 2)
- II. May get discouraged (v. 2)
- III. May be a deceiver (v. 3)
- IV. Must be firm in his stand for the gospel (v. 5)
- V. Must have an inner compulsion for the gospel (v. 6)
- VI. Must be a minister to all people (vv. 7-10)
- VII. Can be wrong (v. 11)
- VIII. Must tell of faith and justification in Christ (vv. 15-16)
- IX. Must live in Christ (v. 19)

* * *

Gospel Faith

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 3:1-14

Gospel faith comes by—

- I. Seeing Jesus (v. 1)
- II. Hearing the Word (v. 2)
- III. Receiving the Spirit (vv. 3, 5)
- IV. Examining the Word (v. 8)
- V. Living righteously (v. 11)
- VI. Observing the law out of love (v. 12)
- VII. Promise of the Living God (v. 14)

Becoming Sons of God

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 3:26—4:7

Becoming a son of God involves—

- I. Faith in Christ (v. 26)
- II. A vital relationship with Christ symbolized by baptism (v. 27)
- III. A knowledge that whosoever will may come (v. 28)
- IV. A covenant contract of long standing (v. 29)
- V. Rights and privileges of sonship (4:5, 7)
- VI. A unique joy of calling God our Father (4:6)

* * *

Freedom in Christ

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 5:1-12

Freedom comes—

- I. In the Person of Christ (v. 1)
- II. To replace slavery (v. 2)
- III. By the grace of God (v. 4)
- IV. By a hope in Christ (v. 5)
- V. By the expression of love (v. 6)
- VI. By running the race of life (v. 7)
- VII. By way of the offensive cross of Christ (v. 12)

* * *

Life by the Spirit

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 5:13-26

- I. Life by the Spirit is bathed in *agape* love (v. 13)
- II. Is evidenced by our love for each other (v. 14)
- III. Is seen by our positive attitude towards each other (v. 15)
- IV. Life *in* the Spirit desires to do right (v. 16)
- V. Despises the wrong (vv. 17-19)
- VI. Develops freedom (v. 18)
- VII. Destines the fruits produced (vv. 22-23)
- VIII. Crucifies the old nature (v. 24)
- IX. Continually follows the Spirit of life (v. 25)
- X. Makes us aware of faults and needs (v. 26)

The Biblical Concept of Interpersonal Relationships

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 6:1-10

Christians should—

- I. Deal with others in gentleness (v. 1)
- II. Deal with others in wisdom (v. 1)
- III. Share each others' burdens (v. 2)
- IV. Compare themselves in the light of Christ and not others (v. 4)
- V. Shoulder responsibility (v. 5)
- VI. Learn from each other (v. 6)
- VII. Plant fertile fields of relationships with others (v. 7)
- VIII. Be active in the family of God (vv. 8-10)
- IX. Be led by the Spirit in dealing with others (v. 8)

* * *

I Became a New Person

SCRIPTURE: Gal. 6:11-18

A new person—

- I. As exemplified in Paul's life (v. 11)
- II. Comes through the cross of Christ (v. 12)
- III. Does not boast in selfish ambitions (v. 13)
- IV. Boasts about Christ (v. 14)
- V. Receives peace and mercy (v. 16)
- VI. Bears the mark of Christ (v. 17)
- VII. Will receive God's grace (v. 18)

HOW TO THANK GOD

(Ps. 116:12-14, RSV)

- I. BY PRAISING THE LORD—"I will lift up the cup of salvation."
- II. BY PRAYING TO THE LORD—"I will call on the name of the Lord."
- III. BY PAYING MY VOWS TO THE LORD—"I will pay my vows to the Lord."

—RON FRY

* * *

LIVE TODAY

(Ps. 118:24, RSV)

- I. LIVE TODAY—"This is the day"
- II. LIVE TODAY WITH FAITH—"The day which the Lord has made."

III. LIVE TODAY WITH GLADNESS—"Let us rejoice and be glad in it."

—RON FRY

When Trouble Comes

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND: 2 Kings 6 and 7

INTRODUCTION: I get alarmed at the number who let their problems get the best of them. It is what we do when we are down that determines whether or not we succeed. Being a Christian does not solve all our problems. Christ is the answer, but this does not mean He has worked all the problems. Illus.: The old math book.

We come now to the moment of great crisis in the lives of four leprous men.

I. CONFRONTED WITH A GREAT PROBLEM—"And there was a great famine in Samaria" (6:25).

- A. Because of where they were
- B. Because of what they were

II. EXERCISED GREAT COURAGE—"And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians" (7:5).

- A. They faced an army.
- B. They had no resources.

III. RECEIVED A GREAT REWARD—"They went into one tent, and did eat and drink" (7:5).

A. The Lord had removed their greatest obstacle.

B. They found what they so desperately needed.

CONCLUSION: I heard Dick Palmer tell his life's story last night, and as he told it I received a new awareness of God's willingness to help us when in our desperation we come to Him.

JAMES F. SPRULL

Most of us live too near the surface of our abilities, dreading to call upon our deeper resources. It is as if a strong man were to do his work with only one finger.



A PRAYER OF THANKS

O Lord, I thank You
For being my Guide
For being with me,
So close to my side.

I thank You, dear Lord,
For giving me light,
And guiding me through
The long winter night.

Lord Jesus, I want
To do Thy blest will.
Take me and use me,
Thy call to fulfill.

And if it takes me
Through valleys so drear,
Lord, I know always
That You will be near.

O Lord, make me holy,
Pure through and through,
That I may do what
You want me to do.

Thank You, dear Lord,
For Thy presence today,
For all You have given,
I gratefully pray.

—Linda Maurice

Nothing is big enough to hurt you unless you are small enough to let it.

* * *

A holy life is perfectly adapted to an earthly sphere. If you cannot be holy where you are, you could not be holy anywhere else (Titus 2:3).

* * *

Men who pray much don't brag much.

* * *

A retentive memory may be a good thing, but the ability to forget is the sure token of greatness.

* * *

The man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back upon the crowd.

Did you hear about the minister who said to his congregation, "Before I preach, I want to say something"?

* * *

A tourist who visited an exquisite garden on one of the lovely estates in Italy gives us the following conversation he had with the caretaker.

"How long have you been here," he asked.

"Twenty-five years."

"And how often has the owner been to see the estate?"

"Four times."

"When did he last come?"

"Twelve years ago."

"He writes to you, I suppose."

"Never."

"From whom do you get your orders?"

"From the steward in Milan."

"Does he come here often?"

"Never."

"Who comes, then, to look after things?"

"I am left pretty much alone."

"Yet you keep the garden so spic and span, one would think you were expecting the owner tomorrow."

"Today, sir, today!"

* * *

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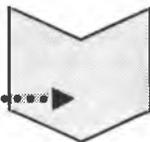
TRUTH.

- To the weary pilgrim, I am a good, strong STAFF.
 - To the one who sits in black gloom, I am the glorious LIGHT.
 - To those who stoop beneath heavy burdens, I am SWEET REST.
 - To him who has lost his way, I am a safe GUIDE.
 - To those who have been hurt by sin, I am healing BALM.
 - To the discouraged, I whisper a glad message of HOPE.
 - To the distressed, I am an ANCHOR.
- "O child of man, to best defend me, just USE ME!"

—Selected



HERE AND THERE



AMONG BOOKS

Conducted by the Editor

All books reviewed may be ordered from
your Publishing House

The Making of a Christian Leader

By Ted W. Engstrom (Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 208 pp., cloth, \$6.95.)

The author is executive vice-president of World Vision International, also serving formerly as book editor of Zondervan Publishers, and as executive director and president of Youth for Christ International. He states, "This book has been written to help the Christian leader get a clearer picture of what he wants to do and be in a church or organization—and how to get there."

The book deals with understanding the principles of management and human relationships, how to develop skills and cultivate the qualities and personal traits according to a person's unique gifts and skills. To this end the author considers examples of leadership in Scripture, gifts of leadership, and priorities. "We do not lack people, but rather a scarcity of people willing to assume significant roles and do the job effectively."

Your Job—

Survival or Satisfaction?

(Christian Discipleship in a Secular Job)

By Jerry and Mary White (Zondervan, 1977. 190 pp., cloth, \$6.95.)

This book has value both for the layman and for the minister. Lorne C. Sanny, president of Navigators, says, "I commend this book to everyone who works for a living—and who doesn't?"

Secular jobs can be frustration or fulfillment. The authors seek to answer the questions of how you fit your job into

the totality of your life. The first part of the book deals with the work ethic, purpose in work and life, changing jobs, etc. Then it applies practical biblical principals to specific kinds of jobs—the hourly employee, the salaried employee, homemaker, working women, military and government employee, salesman, self-employed, etc.

Author Jerry holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, a master's and a Ph.D. in astronautics. He resigned from the air force to become a full-time staff member of the Navigators and is now regional director for them.

Pastor's Annual 1978

By T. T. Crabtree (Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. 367 pp., paper, \$6.95.)

This is the Zondervan annual planned preaching program for next year, containing 52 morning services, 52 evening services, outlines, illustrations, midweek meditations, services for special days, funeral meditations, Communion thoughts, etc.

Is My Head On Straight?

Meditations for Women

By Phyllis C. Michael (Word Books, 1976. 120 pp., paper, \$3.50.)

This is a book of contemporary meditations for women. There are 54 subjects dealt with, including attitudes toward ourselves and others, and God. There are catchy, short meditations on affliction, confusion, courtesy, excuses, procrastination, etc. The author is a retired school-

teacher who at one time was unable to walk unaided due to Miniere's disease, but she found courage through faith in God and is able to encourage others to do the same.

Preachers' Exchange



WANTED: By missionary in S. America: *Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism*, abridged by Peter Wiseman (Beacon Hill Press, 1953). Dorothea Wolcott, 2823 Berry Ln., Independence, Mo. 64057.

WANTED: *Is This Really the End?* by George C. Maladin. Major Houston Ellis, 1073 Lanier Blvd. N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30306.

WANTED: By Nazarene Bible College Library, the following volumes of *Preach-*

er's Magazine: 1934, Vol. 9: 2, 3, 4, 10. 1935, Vol. 10: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. 1939, Vol. 14: 12. Roger M. Williams, Nazarene Bible College, P.O. Box 4746, Knob Hill Station, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80930.

WANTED: *The Secret Is Out*, by Charles D. Masher, and any other publications on oath-bound secret orders. Rev. Bob McKenzie, P.O. Box 376, Barnesville, Ga. 30204.

FOR SALE: 45 volumes of 50-vol. set of John Wesley's Christian Library published by Mr. Flavel of Bristol, England, in 1755. They bear the date MDCCLV (1755), written in old English, leather bound, books of antiquity. Rev. Wilfrid E. Mouteux, P.O. Box 8102, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2K 2B6.

Items for this Exchange may be either WANTED or FOR SALE, but must be confined to old periodicals and out-of-print books. All response should be directly with the advertiser and not with this office or the Nazarene Publishing House. We are glad to render this free service on these terms. This service not available to bookstores or laymen.



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The most certain thing about life is change, and we are changing.

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The pastor looks at the disagreement between an elder brother and his father, and draws a conclusion for today's Christians.

● **How to Live on a Pastor's Salary with Joy**

The first part of the title is important, but the last two words are the clincher.

● **Skill Is Not Enough**

It doesn't matter *who* you know; it matters only slightly *what* you know. What really matters most is *what you are*.



AMONG OURSELVES

Pastors who have solved the financial problem in the administration of a church organization have all learned one thing in common—it cannot be coerced, but it can happen. It happens when we Christians see our stewardship of money for what it is—a way of worshipping God. There just isn't any other way to put it in perspective. The church *needs* our help? The bills are crying to be paid? The budget is dropping farther behind? The church is watching your giving, and you will not escape the pressure? All this pales into irrelevancy when we consider that what we do is for the love of Christ! Even the argument, "You really should give liberally, then God will return liberal financial blessing to you" almost brings a blush, for if He didn't we *STILL* would give joyfully because we love Him. So thanks to a young pastor who finds this secret never fails (p. 3). Praise God. We might even want to play a tuba solo in celebration (p. 5); who knows?

Yours for souls,

LIGHT of Christmas



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