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# THE *Preacher's Magazine*



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# *The Preacher's Magazine*

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## The Close of Jubilee

**T**HE JEWISH PEOPLE had a year of Jubilee occurring every fifty years. It was a time looked forward to by the oppressed and the poverty-stricken, for in this year all debts were canceled and all property reverted to its original owners. God outlined the idea in detail and it was carried out more or less consistently through the history of the Hebrew people. As a system of economics it probably had more relevance to that day than to now. However, as a religious celebration and a time when the people acknowledged their heritage and recognized the basic debt they owed to all other men, it does have its counterparts today.

The Church of the Nazarene has been celebrating its jubilee, its Fiftieth Anniversary, during this calendar year 1958. It all began in the watch-night services, December 31, 1957. It has progressed through these months with challenging goals in giving (highlighted by the more than one million dollars in the Easter Offering), in new churches organized, in membership increases in the churches, increases in Sunday schools, youth groups, and missionary societies. The climax of the year came on October 13 when at Pilot Point, Texas, a Fiftieth Anniversary service was held at the site where the denomination officially began in 1908. At that time a monument was unveiled which marks the spot where the Church of the Nazarene was born. This service was only slightly less significant as a history-making event

than was the original meeting half a century before.

But the celebration is over! The banners are coming down; the band is breaking up; the people are going home! There will be little mention of jubilee or anniversary or events historic for a long time to come. The voices that have been raised in well-deserved honor of a young denomination will be silent. The pages which have by colored ink and bold, printed declarations cried, "'Tis a time of jubilee," will now see only black ink and they will speak of mundane things, of births and deaths and perhaps an occasional fire.

There will be no other like celebration in our lifetime, for there will be no occasion short of a Centennial Anniversary, a double jubilee, and that will be fifty years from now (should Jesus tarry). And most of us preaching now will not be on the scene when that time comes.

And so your editor has yielded to the impulse on this last month of this grand year to ask the question, What has this anniversary year taught us? If it has done for us what it should have done, then we need not too long mourn its passing. We shall not have to wait fifty years to feel its benefits, for they will be felt tomorrow and in all of the tomorrows beyond that one. Let us see what we should have learned.

1. We should have learned a bit about the importance of our historical moorings, for history is important to all of us. It would be well for all of

us to take note of the great movements which have been founded and do now live upon certain historical facts. Judaism walks knee-deep in history. Young Jews of today are taught the minute details of data locked in the history of their people. Christianity is a historical religion. It cannot long survive without its facts linked with history. God becoming a part of human history through His Son is a basic tenet of Christianity. And our church also has its roots in history and we really can never get far away from that history. The reason of our beginning as a denomination, the manner of our beginning, the men and women of our beginnings—these are historical facts; and if we attempt to bury them or neglect them, then we will tend to be something else than what we are.

2. Closely related to this is the importance of frequently recalling the significant factors in our history. Deuteronomy is an account of God's dealings with the children of Israel. Moses gave this message toward the close of his leadership in order to remind the younger generation, that group upon whom the plan of God was to be worked out, of the reason for their existence, of the hand of God in their lives, and of the faithfulness of God in seeing them through. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," is a good historical truth for any younger generation to know. Some neglect the past because they are for one reason or another ashamed of it. Others at the other extreme dote on the past as if the mere recalling the memories (or retelling) of days gone by will have some saving virtue today. We should learn to avoid both of these extremes. Such a time of jubilee as we have had may help us find a proper relationship to the past.

3. We should have learned, also, the importance of denominational solidarity. The story of our origin speaks vividly of widely separated forces coming together on a common ground. The West, the East, the South—with no unified leadership these groups were formed. When they came together they came with differences of background, differences in what they felt to be ideal church polity, differences with respect to the place of strict ethical discipline and the like. But all of these men and women were brought together, molded into a common purpose, and dedicated to a common end. Our church today is the result. We need this lesson today. Every now and then there is one who feels that the entire church should come under his particular pattern of life and manner of doing things. He is content as long as he lives among those who do conform to his cut. He has ecclesiastical dyspepsia when he runs into some who do not quite so conform. But our church today is made up of a variety of people. That is why we can be an international church. Instead of being a weakness, this is actually our strength. A movement with freedom in nonessentials but with unit in essentials is stronger than one in which there is a forced uniformity in every detail. Reviewing our history should help us see this point.

4. We should have learned, furthermore, the startling fact that history is not made when the historians compile the data in years to come but rather it is made in the now. Our leaders of half a century ago made history. We are making history today! Your editor was looking at the record of the pastors of Kansas City First Church in the *Bible School Journal* in July. There were the names of the men who had served the church and the years they had

served. On the cold record we could see that some stayed one year, some two, some four, one nine, one twelve years. But each man in the year or years he served as pastor was writing a part of the history of the famous church. And so it is in each spot that each of us may be today. It may seem like so much drudgery or so much fun or so much building or so much promotion. We tend to lose ourselves in the day-by-day duties and forget that we are grinding out history every hour and every day that we serve. This fact should not paralyze us but rather cause us to come awake to our responsibility as leaders of a church.

5. We should have learned the relative importance of lessons good and bad. It comes easy for some to talk easily of the "good old days" and call to our minds the "good" things out of the past which should shame us today. And it is very true, there are many things out of the past which we should capture and measure ourselves by today. However, the true student of history will see that the past was not all good. In fact, with just as much authority we could very well label the days past as the "bad old days." In some instances certainly this would apply. But with these facts before us we want to forget that some things ever happened and certainly so conduct ourselves today that they will never be repeated. The lesson of history should show us that the past days are best labeled, "The good *and* bad old days." We learn to lift up the good and drop off the bad. Only in this way can we discover the best that we can do today.

6. We should have today a renewed conviction of the principles which brought our denomination into existence. We are a "holiness" de-

nomination, properly understood. We are not as another who had real internal conflict and controversy throughout its history with respect to Wesley's teachings. The Church of the Nazarene was committed to a Wesleyan position when it came into being; it is committed to that position today. It is not that we hold that anybody who does not hold that position is damned. It simply means that we believe this to be the sound teaching of the Scriptures, sound logic of a redeeming God, and the sound testimony of human experience. We are not looking for a deliverer who will lead us out, or tell us that we really did not intend to believe this way through the years. And a study of our history has more firmly fixed our intention that so long as there will be a need for the Church in this gospel age the Church of the Nazarene will be purposefully and intentionally a second-blessing holiness denomination.

7. Need we call to mind that we should have learned the value of some goals which stretch us to do that which we would possibly not have attempted unless we had an occasion to stretch ourselves? There are values in goals. At a time like this we see that we can actually do more than we are doing most of the time. It helps us face a task that is too big for us, so we call on God and give our best and we discover that this is the sort of endeavor we should have been doing for God all of the time.

And so our Golden Anniversary has been helpful. We did not intend to make a fetish out of it anyway. And in your editor's opinion every phase of it has made an impact for good upon the church.

# The Preaching of Floyd William Nease

By Bertha Munro\*

A MAN OF PAULINE MOLD," an Eastern Nazarene College annual early in his presidency called him: "He never evades a difficult situation, but with the joy of holy conquest attacks each problem. In truth, all things to all men, he has won many." "Evangelist, philosopher, theologian," his faculty colleagues saw him—that too was Paul.

When invited to contribute to a book of sermons (by outstanding preachers of the Boston area) a message representative of his faith, he chose as text Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—Paul's own text, climax and conclusion of his personal testimony.

A later annual wrote of him: "In labors abundant, in journeyings often . . . by knowledge, by longsuffering . . . by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, he shows himself in all things to be the minister of God." Still Pauline. Yet those who knew him best recognized in his personality a native shyness and reserve, with a touch of tenderness, which told us this aggressive energy was the Spirit of God working in him.

Two general impressions emerge from a view of this man's life. First, the tremendous concentration of power in a very few years. At the age of a Timothy you find a Paul, able, responsible, intense. Second, the quality of his consecration. Not to a specific job, but to the will of God:

the form changing, the calling and the consecration constant.

The life story is brief, but full. Floyd William Nease was born at Vassar, Michigan, December 21, 1893; he died in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 26, 1930. Second son of Rev. and Mrs. William O. Nease, he was reared in a godly home of plain living and high thinking—and intense evangelism. Definitely converted at sixteen, soon after sanctified wholly, called and licensed to preach while yet in his teens, he joined the Church of the Nazarene and was ordained in 1918.

Convinced early of the need of thorough preparation for the ministry, he exemplified one of his own (later) sermons: "Sell your cloak (of ease) and buy a sword (of education)": Owosso Holiness Seminary, Pasadena College, University of Southern California (A.B. and A.M.), Pasadena College (B.D.), Boston University (S.T.M.), Drew University (close to the Ph.D.).

A succession of offices and responsibilities: in 1919, professor of philosophy and theology at Eastern Nazarene College; in 1923, acting president; 1924-30, president; 1929, elected New England District superintendent (resigned in favor of his work at the college); chairman of the General Board of Education, Church of the Nazarene.

All these years he was in constant demand as evangelist in camp meetings and church revival campaigns and held high rank among the preachers of his day. He never lost

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the urgency of his evangelist's calling; but he had a clear, wide-range, and long-range view of evangelism and a flexibility in following the Spirit's leading. He believed that for the time his special work was to train younger men to spread the gospel. He often said that he considered ten years spent on the faculty of Eastern Nazarene College equivalent in influence to an ordinary evangelist's lifetime. He was given eleven. The length of a life is not to be measured in years.

Three pictures stand out in memory. (1) President Nease in faculty prayer meeting a few months before his death, voicing a memorable prayer for Eastern Nazarene College, from need through crisis to victory (and that last year of his life, 1930, proved to be the *annus mirabilis* of the college: Massachusetts degree-granting power, the fine administration building, and the great revival). (2) Our president standing that commencement Sunday with hand upraised as seekers melted to the altar. His baccalaureate sermon would not be delivered; the tide of revival power was rolling on. President Nease was evangelist first. (3) That Sunday afternoon when word had come that his life was in the balance, faculty and students kneeling in chapel in anguished prayer—but "Thy will be done." In his selfless outpouring of physical strength through those last months of increasing strain, it seemed to many that he literally gave his life for the cause he loved. There is no question of the lasting, powerful impact of his thirty-seven years. Such giving blossoms eternally.

The impact of his life is felt in his family: in the devoted, consistent, overflowingly rich service given by his widow, Mrs. Madeline Nease, as registrar of Eastern Nazarene College, and as a faithful mother; in the in-

fluence of his memory on his two children, aged five and one respectively at his death, today Rev. Stephen Wesley Nease and Mrs. Robert Bradley (pastor's wife), both positive Christians committed to the spread of the gospel of holiness.

The impact of his life is felt in the college for which he gave his life. The Nease Memorial Library, dedicated in 1953, is an eminently fitting symbol of his conception of the relation of scholarship to Christian service. His vision was of the entire consecrated personality developed to its maximum potential, still committed to God's will and God's use. "Will you offer the Lord 75 per cent of the man you could be?" "If you keep consecrated you will not miss God's plan for your life." His portrait on the wall, his name over the entrance, still urge, "Your best—consecrated."

The impact of his life? It is felt on our church today in the intellectual and spiritual strength of alumni holding responsible positions of leadership, lay and ministerial—among them a general superintendent, three college presidents, at least one district superintendent.

One of these alumni college presidents wrote of him as teacher and preacher: "Floyd Nease was simple, but never at the expense of depth. He would lead one's thinking so that one would not say, 'I have it; that's easy'; rather, 'That's profound, but I have it.' And one would travel for days under the thrill of a great truth.

"In graduate study I found myself neither unacquainted with philosophy as taught elsewhere nor stirred from my creedal fundamentals, but rather more firmly fixed intellectually and emotionally. His lesson was, 'Even though you meet, bitter, crushing things—and you are sure to, remem-

ber that life is infinitely more beautiful and worthwhile than you can ever dream. For God is!

"He was a preacher. It might well be said, 'You never knew Floyd Nease if you did not hear him preach.' He was called to preach, he loved to preach, and he came to teach only because he believed he could thus multiply his preaching through the lips of others. His grasp of philosophic truth was fired by his consummate love for Jesus Christ and was simplified by the direct gospel appeal. The weight of his thought conspired with the fire of his soul and the rush of his spirit to make him a moving, masterful preacher. The supreme passion of his life was to preach salvation to a dying world."

In the sermon outlines which President Nease left, one feature is symbolic. Every so often one comes across a tiny crosslined square. It is a window; it marks an illustration. His basic concern was to grip his hearers; they must see and understand practically and respond to the truth he was presenting. (Sometimes he was over-detailed in his earnestness.) For example, the danger of playing with one's soul was made unforgettable by the story of the man standing at the rail of an ocean liner carelessly tossing up and catching a priceless jewel. You held your breath in suspense, until finally the jewel fell overboard and was lost.

All his sermons were mature truth, though preached by a young man: original, but once heard, inevitable. Several were published by his brother, the late Dr. Orval J. Nease, as *Symphonies of Praise*. Subjects and texts indicate something of their freshness and variety. The title sermon, "The Symphony of Praise": "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy

name" (Psalms 103:1). "The Presence Dynamic"; "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not" (Revelation 1:17). "The Surrender of the Christ": "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them; for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25). "The Lawgiver Outlawed": "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die" (secularism versus Christian faith) (John 19:7). "The Satisfaction of Christ": "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand" (Psalms 84:10). "The Ultimate Basis of the Doctrine of Holiness": "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16). "The Rainbow of God's Covenant": "There was a rainbow round about the throne" (Revelation 4:3).

Sermons doctrinal, devotional, inspirational, warning, encouraging—but in and through all his spirit—stern, uncompromising, tender, earnest, loving, faithful.

For clear thinking: "Any other gospel?" If the gospel is to be a vital force for us, we must have Paul's assurance of its exclusive rightness. Don't make your line of battle too long to defend. But stand for the strategic points of the enemy's attack, regardless of cost. Guard the heart of the gospel as the Spartans guarded the narrow pass at Thermopylae, the entrance to all Greece."

For pure eloquence: "Lagging behind in your Christian life? Waste no time in regret, but quicken your pace, to finish on schedule time. For, the plan for earth completed, the plan for heaven entered upon, the traveler of the universe sets out on his far journey . . . On and out his vessel takes its course, past Mars, past Jupiter and Neptune, past the Pleiades, out to the farthest reaches of the infinite thought of God. It shall be ours



throughout eternity to explore the endless riches for which we were apprehended by Christ Jesus."

That (now) general superintendent

spoke for many: "Floyd Nease was a faithful steward of his life; he invested it in the lives of others. He gave of his life to me."

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## "Conceived of the Holy Ghost"

By Kenneth Vogt\*

TEXT—*Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost* (Matthew 1:20).

There will be tens of thousands of people celebrating Christmas this year who will not know, or will not stop to think, what Christmas really means. The more noble of these will think of Christmas as the spirit of good will and peace. Did not the angels sing, "On earth, peace, good will toward men"?

Others will think of Christmas as the spirit of generosity and kindness and vainly wish the people of the world could go on loving each other as they seem to do at Christmas time. Those of a baser sort will lock office and shop, or put their tools away, and go to a Christmas liquor party.

Others will celebrate Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, yet never stop to think how the birth of Christ was different from the birth of any other person ever born. The Bible teaches the birth of Christ was a divine miracle wrought in Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. This is called the Virgin Birth. The creeds of the Christian churches say: "I believe in Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the

Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."

What do we mean by the Virgin Birth, which Christmas celebrates? We mean that the holy, infant Jesus was fashioned in the womb of Mary by the power and will of the Holy Ghost and not by the act of an earthly father. This supernatural event immediately posed serious problems for Mary, for Joseph, for Mary's God-fearing parents, and for the whole community. Let us see how that was.

When Mary was told by the angel Gabriel she was the chosen vessel to usher into the world the infant Jesus, she said, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" By this surprised question Mary testified to her own purity and goodness. There had been no indiscretion, no moment of weakness (as some try to gloss over premarital relations), no act of sin to mar the courtship of Joseph and Mary.

When Joseph found out his beloved sweetheart was to have a baby, he knew it could not be his own. What was he to think? The only human thought he could have was that Mary, while engaged to him and professing love for him, had had an illicit affair and was with child of an unnamed father. Is it any wonder that the scripture records that "Joseph . . .

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being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily." In Joseph's agony of mind and heart an angel came to his rescue in the words of the text: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Then there were Mary's parents. Certainly they were shocked and brokenhearted that their unwed daughter should have a child. Whether or not she ever convinced them of her innocence we are not told.

There was also the gossiping community, then as now. Many shunned her as the fallen girl whose baby was made legal by the bigheartedness of that fine man Joseph. Even when Jesus became a man some, who were caught in convictions concerning their own sins, were not above insinuations regarding his mysterious birth. One day when Jesus was speaking of His Father, meaning His Heavenly Father, a crank in the crowd stood up and said sneeringly, "Who is Thy Father?" Often the critics used the insinuation, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" reminding the people of the rumors concerning His birth.

What a heavy cross of reproach Mary carried all her life! Especially when Jesus became popular and also made strong enemies was this so. Her strength to bear it must have been in the certain knowledge of her innocence. She knew she had not committed an act of sin. Is it any wonder that the Scriptures say, "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

What a noble woman Mary was, and what a heavy cross she carried! But let us be careful lest we fall into error here and deify Mary, as many do, and pray to her, and expect her to seek forgiveness for our sins. This error of deifying Mary was done in 1854. In that year Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception a dogma of the Roman Catholic church. The Catholics could no longer justify their prayers to Mary without declaring her divine, sinless. By so doing they rob Jesus of His uniqueness of being God's only sinless One. The Scriptures deny the mediatorial assignment given to Mary. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

To give credence and logic to this error the present pope declared another dogma. This is called the Divine Assumption, in which they say Mary's body does not rest in the grave to await resurrection with other mortals, but that her body was divinely transported into heaven, where, of course, she is engaged in intercession. And so they are taught to pray, "Hail, Mary, mother of God, full of grace and truth, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." Oh, that we might be steadfast in the knowledge of the truth as declared in the Holy Scriptures.

At this point the reader may be saying, "Let's quit the double talk. First you say Mary did not commit an act of sin. Now you take exception with those who say she is sinless. What is the difference?" There is a vast difference!

First I stated, Mary did not commit an act of sin, thus bringing a baby into the world by an unnamed father. That which was conceived in her was a divine miracle begotten by the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the triune Godhead, the effective Agent of the

Godhead in the world still today—the same Holy Ghost who moved over the face of the deep in creation; who ceased to strive with men and the Flood came; who moved holy men of old to write the Scriptures; who descended upon Jesus at His baptism and succored Him in His temptation; who invaded the lives of fearful disciples, cringing behind closed doors, and empowered them to take their gospel to the streets; who enabled them to be miracle workers. The same Holy Ghost who wrought this divine miracle in Mary comes into a believer's heart today, cleansing him from sin and empowering him for service.

On the other hand, Mary was a member of the human race. She came into the world by natural procreation. She was under the curse of the Fall and inherited sin as all since Adam have been under the curse. The Scriptures say, "In Adam all die [sin]." Nowhere do the Scriptures either declare or imply that Mary was an exception from the results of the Fall. She was a little girl once, and she no doubt did the annoying things that sometimes little girls do, like pinching Baby Brother, stretching the truth, running away, or being noisy or nosy. Mary, as a member of the human family, was beset by temptations and errors in the growing-up process. By being repentant for wrongs done, and by making right choices, she became a noble young woman, a woman "highly favoured," of God and the one who holds the

distinction of being chosen to convey through her own body the sinless Son of God into the world. There is no better way to say it than in the angel's words, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

This is the miracle of Christmas! With more meaning now you can say, God "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." This means we have a divine Saviour in Jesus Christ the Lord. He was God come to earth. To commit yourself to that faith is to be saved! To deny it is to be lost!

This pastor sat in a home where death had walked in, an unwelcome visitor, and taken the husband. I listened to accounts of the deceased's goodness and kindness. But the unanswered question in my mind concerning destinies was, What did this person do with Jesus? And it does not seem at all strange that this question should determine destinies when we realize this Christmas time that Jesus was God on the earth.

A divine Saviour . . . Is it any wonder the angels came out to declare it? Is it any wonder that shepherds bowed in adoration? Is it any wonder the planets moved together to make a sign in the heavens seen by wise men or that a king inquired about the time of the star? Jesus was God on the earth, and He came because His love demanded a rescue mission.

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,*

*That were a present far too small.*

*Love so amazing, so divine,*

*Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

---

#### HINT TO PREACHERS:

Always remember that you are working for the immortal sons of God. For them you cannot afford to do it slipshod. No matter how plain and humble your congregation, you are under obligation to do your best. Do not be afraid of throwing away your best efforts on the plainest and poorest of God's people.

—F. LINCICOME

# Christ, the Unspeakable Gift

By Joseph T. Larson\*

**TEXT:** *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift* (II Corinthians 9:15).

Since earliest creation God has given gifts to mankind. These gifts may be seen in the natural creation of the world and all things in it. These gifts are seen in the animals, the trees, the flowers, and all vegetation, varied in colors and in kinds. Mankind has spent six thousand years seeking to fathom all the beauty, glory, and depths of the earthly creation. Have you considered the glory of the sunrise, the sunset, or the glory of the sun, the moon, and the stars? "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work" (Psalms 19:1).

The greatest of all gifts is the gift of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son. He is a free gift, an everlasting gift of God. Paul exclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." A godly apostle exulted in the greatest gift of all. A gift may be appreciated. It may be received with thanksgiving. Those who can appreciate and worship Jesus Christ properly may have an continual Christmas. Without Him there is no real Christmas in the Biblical sense.

It was unspeakable love which sent this gift to us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). No hu-

man being has ever fully fathomed the love of God. This love of God is tender, divinely compassionate, and prevailing with the sons of men. From it flows every blessing that we have in Jesus Christ. No mere human love could have planned for Christ's coming; it took infinite wisdom and perfect love to give to humanity a perfect gift—the unspeakable gift of God which is Jesus, our Lord.

It was an unspeakable wisdom of God which sent Jesus Christ to bring to us fullest redemption. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33) This gift was not born of shallow purposes or plans; He came in fullness of time, to be "born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Christ was given as the gift of God because of God's unspeakable mercy, grace, and divine power. God was about to show mercy to millions of souls in the centuries to come, when He sent forth His Son. God broke the silence of many hundreds of years when He "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

It is to be expected that God can give gifts which are Godlike and of infinite worth. Such was the gift of Christ.

## WHAT KIND OF GIFT IS JESUS?

*He is a divine gift.* Human gifts are only temporary and may pass

\*Evangelist, Denver, Colorado.

away. Christ is a divine gift which cannot pass away. Because He is divine He can lift us up to God's own level, yea, even above that of the angels. New life, new hope, new visions are given to us in order to enable us to fully appreciate this divine gift of God. Divinity lifts humanity out of its sin into a divine life and position of sons of God, even as we are adopted through Jesus Christ. Of what use is a divine gift unless it can lift you up to a place of holy position and godly power in the Lord?

*He is a majestic and glorious gift.  
Majestic sweetness sits enthroned  
Upon the Saviour's brow;  
His head with radiant glories crowned,  
His lips with grace o'erflow.*

He who is the Ancient of Days sent forth His Son to become a majestic Saviour, Ruler, Leader, and King of Kings! As loyal subjects we should give willing homage, praise, and worship to Jesus, who is Lord of all! In Him shone forth the radiance of the Godhead, not only in the Transfiguration, but also in His early life, miracles, teachings, and divine personality. So much glory in the world is only passing, but that of Jesus Christ is eternal glory. God's glory is seen in His face, in His graciousness of character, and in His manifold manifestation to the whole human race. This glory surpasses all human glory, all splendor, and all rulers. This glory becomes our inspiring portion, a blessed grace, and a quieting presence for all of those who truly know and love Him. As we see the greatness and glory of Christ, we see less and less of human greatness and learn to know how frail we are in reality.

*He is a holy and a heavenly gift.*  
St. Luke, the first and second chapters, reveal to us how holy and

heavenly is this unspeakable gift of God. Mary seemed to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that she exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. . . . For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name" (Luke 1:46-49).

The angels announced Him as coming from heaven. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:10-14). Jesus Christ had a supernatural conception, the commission of God, and the unction of the Holy Spirit. In the light of His glory, holiness, and righteousness, every soul senses his own insufficiency, making necessary his coming to Christ for salvation. This was the ultimate purpose of Christ to all the world.

Men have not in nineteen hundred years been able to fully comprehend Him or sound the depths of His glorious divinity. He is unspeakable in His predictions, in His nature, in His humanity, in His miracles, in His compassions, in His purpose in the kingdom of God. Men have sought to express how unspeakable is Christ in song, in sermon, in music, and in Christian character. Yet how imperfect that expression has been! Handel labored twenty-four days to compose his great *Messiah*, which is a masterpiece in song, scripture, and music. Thousands of choirs have vied with one another to give praise to Jesus Christ, who is "called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

THIS GIFT HAD A DIVINE PURPOSE  
AND DESTINY

Most gifts are material and with no particular direction or purpose. Inherent in Christ were both purpose and destiny. In His earthly birth, life, and ministry He had a definite purpose. His mission was to die for the redemption of a fallen race, to redeem souls unto God. He came to be the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. He came to heal the broken in heart, to comfort the sad and discouraged. He came to give life to dying souls of men. He came to defeat Satan, man's archenemy. He met him in a threefold temptation (Matthew 4) and by God's Word utterly defeated him. He came to befriend the friendless, help the helpless, cure the sick, raise the fallen, and resurrect the dead. His mission was more far-reaching than any other person that ever lived. Jesus came to proclaim liberty to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind. He came to usher in God's kingdom, defeat all forces of wickedness, and cause men to see clearly the way of righteousness as it is in God's purposes.

Jesus Christ came to make possible personal salvation for everyone who truly repents of his sin, and to all who seek Him earnestly. Christmas would become meaningless to all those who never find personal salvation. In this instance, Christ gives us life and gives new direction to our personal lives. He desires to live in souls He redeems. "Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Jesus, our Lord, gives new meaning to the Bible, new faith in God's purposes, and new life for perishing souls. The world needs a divine director; Jesus is that Person. He can become

Counselor of men and nations. He is God's final gift; in Him all other gifts converge; in Him all prophecies focus; in Him all promises of God find real meaning.

"The gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23). Christ gives eternal life to as many as trust in Him. "Wise men" accept the gift of Christ, worship before Him, and in turn bring themselves as gifts for service among men for the glory of God. Would you be one of these "wise men"? Accept, then, this unspeakable gift! "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). The Christ of Christmas can be yours with all gifts that accompany Him and His eternal purposes. If you have Him at Christmas you are rich indeed. If you are without Him you are poor indeed. Accept today the true riches of God in Christ.

Phillips Brooks of Boston had had a very busy week during Christmas. While sitting in his manse he suddenly fell asleep. He dreamed that Christ had not come, that the world was in moral and spiritual darkness. Things seemed very dark and hopeless all around. It made him feel keenly his disappointment from the dark scenes he saw. Just then he awakened and heard the youth singing in the Christmas program which they were practicing:

*"Joy to the world! The Lord is  
come;*

*Let earth receive her King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heav'n and heav'n and nature  
sing!"*

Then Phillips Brooks realized the impossibility of his dream, and that Christ had come and made things so different in the world. He is the "unspeakable gift" which can never be fully fathomed.

# The Bribing Priests

By J. Ray Shadowens\*

*TEXT: Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.*

*And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.*

*And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.*

*So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day (Matthew 28:11-15).*

That the priests worked by the principle that "every man has his price" is abundantly clear. What they were unable to achieve by intrigue, duplicity, and coercion, the offering of bribes brought them nearer to accomplishing. To gain their own diabolical ends, they were not above appealing to the baser nature in man where the love of money, unrestrained lust for power, and the inordinate desire for social approval hold tyrannical sway.

Caught in the cataract which drives relentlessly those who willfully permit themselves to be morally and spiritually weakened by a series of continuous heinous wrongs, these sanctimonious conspirators built crime upon crime. It was not enough that, failing to excite to a frenzy the fickle masses in earlier mob violence which would have ended with the

murder of Jesus, they employed one of Christ's intimates as an accomplice in history's most infamous act—the betrayal. It is not at all strange when one reads: "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him," (Matthew 26:14-16) that the Sanhedrin would resort to falsehoods and "buying off" barbarous and indifferent Roman soldiers. In the light of the evil already committed, they could ill afford to permit the truth concerning the Resurrection to come to the ears of the populace. To hold together their treacherous scheme, they fabricate "a conspiracy so full of rotten fictions that nothing is true in it at all, but that it is a conspiracy, that it is a fiction."<sup>1</sup>

As one untruth leads to another invariably, implied in their coup with the guard, "the 'persuasion' of Pilate doubtless meant quieting him with a bribe." There is plenty of evidence to prove that these petty Roman overlords were not above taking "hush money." One has only to recall the instance where crafty Felix "hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him" (Acts 24:26). A succession of unprincipled quislings, hated by those subject to them, governed the outlying Roman provinces.

To add to the shamefulfulness of their crime is the fact that it was the cun-

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<sup>1</sup>"Biblical Illustrator."

ning efforts of the highest moral and ethical religionists of the day. If this had been the work of polytheistic Grecians or Romans, whose concepts of truth, decency, fair play, and the lofty worth of individual personality never approached that of contemporary Judaism, its blackness and deception might have been considered less vile. The Hebrew religion has been epitomized by: "Its sublime yet intimate and accessible God; the Law, its preservation of the high and pure moral and social life; it championed the purity and tenderness of family life, preserved worship of the home." With this as a background, the mere suggestion of "bribing priests" offers a spectacle warped by gross contradictions.

Jesus chided His harassing interrogators on one occasion by charging them, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matthew 22:29). It would seem that the members of this august assembly were willfully blind to some explicit Old Testament prohibitions concerning bribes. "And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8). "Fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery" (Job 15:34), and again, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: in whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes" (Psalms 29:9-10).

To be a party to such a conspiracy ran counter to the explicit high moral code of the Scriptures. It presented a distorted picture of a group whose solemn duty it was to interpret and uphold individual and civil righteousness stooping to one of the lowest forms of treachery. By what misguided rationalization could they perfunctorily carry out the duties of their office overshadowed by flagrant violation of moral law? Their con-

sciences were stained with wicked falsehoods and blood money.

Ignoring explicit teachings denouncing all such underhandedness, these betrayers of a most sacred trust employed lies, bribes, distortions to conceal their treacherous intrigue. The whole tenor of the Old Testament demands for righteous conduct was trampled under the feet of these whose veneer of piety served only to make more repulsive their crime.

It would not be unjust to charge the three different groups comprising the Sanhedrin with guilt which attaches itself to being willful instruments in the blighting of the personalities of their fellow men. The frightened Roman guards were "used as mere matter-tools to be handled without thought about their consciences or their moral responsibilities."

Had the priests acted entirely on their own, with their crime dying with them, the sin would have been grievous indeed. But the social implications of this wrong, not always so manifest, added to its seriousness. Gloating in their own cleverness, they evidenced their disregard for the dignity of human personality. Of course, the Roman soldiers were their inferiors. It is no surprise that the Sanhedrin would make mere pawns of them to conceal the truth of the Resurrection and propagate a lie.

One raises the question: Was not the cause of the condemnation unspeakably greater in the bribers than in the bribed?

This is no attempt to absolve the guard of the curse which being accomplices in such an atrocity carried with it. To save their skins, they came cowering to the priests, all too willing to lie, accept blood money, and actively perpetuate a known falsehood. They knew full well the Roman penalty for sleeping on guard,



Their indifference to highest of human values, personality, is understandable when one realizes that men's lives were cheap commodities in the current markets. Assassinations, revolutions, murders to keep overlords in their precarious and uncertain positions were common and expected procedures.

It is not too surprising then that the chain of sin and crime that this sanctimonious assembly was forging would include such glaring abuse of other personalities. It only points up the lesson that vile men will stop at nothing, even staining the consciences of unfortunate hirelings, to gain their own diabolical ends.

The human unscrupulousness of these "holy fathers" is further accentuated by their deliberate callousness in assuming the full responsibility for originating and perpetuating a lie. The writer of the first Gospel deems it necessary to make this explanation by inserting, "This saying ['His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept'] is commonly reported until this day" (Matthew 28:15).

"The main intended contrivance was to discredit the true doctrine of our Saviour's resurrection." That they enjoyed a certain degree of success, there can be little doubt. It is appalling that men's minds would be in the grip of moral insensibility until a story so full of obvious falsehoods is accepted as a fact.

Listen to a previous denunciation of Jesus: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). If this came from the lips of one who was the very embodiment of truth,

how awful the condemnation that "bribing priests" will come under!

It is not within our purpose to attempt an exhaustive evaluation of flourishing modern cults and "isms." There are none, to my knowledge, whose pattern and structure mark them as following in direct lineage of the "bribing priests." By way of broad generalization one might say that any similarity with those early day enemies of truth must be found in their active propagation of error.

In drawing an analogy between these contemporaries of Christ and their modern counterparts, it should be pointed out first of all that both presume to be God's representatives. It is precisely at this point that we face one of our most difficult present-day problems. These deceptive, fringe religionists employ terms and titles borrowed from time-honored creeds and read into them meanings totally foreign to their orthodox usages.

To the extent that they lead unsuspecting followers to believe that they, like the Sanhedrin, are spokesmen for God, to that extent do they assume the awful, sacred responsibility of guiding the spiritual destinies of immortal souls. In fact we should be cautious in charging this or that cult or cult leader with being actively engaged in promoting error; nevertheless, the inescapable fact remains there are some irreconcilable differences in the messages preached. Since the days when the Church was young, experience has taught us that when strong personalities finally find a resting place for their questing minds, no matter how untenable their beliefs to those within the pale of evangelical Christianity, they become ardent exponents of their way of life. Devotees of such movements number currently in the millions. To what degree these false teachers will be

charged with final destinies, the Judgment alone can reveal.

It has been suggested that whatever appeal the cults have for the masses is, in many instances, directly traceable to the iteration of a system of beliefs that ignores the moral and ethical demands of righteousness. By circumventing the question of personal sin, an unrealistic view about the problem of evil, they have attracted countless thousands into their folds. To thrust sin, with all of its accompanying disvalues out the door is only to bring them back through the windows. Zeal these cultists have, none can deny; but if they become followers of false leaders, blind leaders of the blind, their mutual destination is the ditch.

If there is any similarity here between the unscrupulous Sanhedrin bribers and modern advocates of heresy, it is that both come under the same condemnation imposed on all who willfully ignore the demands of an objective standard of morality. In the first instance this group cannot be excused because they were thrust into some situation where an impulsive decision was made. A long moral and ethical heritage was brushed aside as their unbelieving hearts dictated disregard of the immutable law that God loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. Just how their modern counterparts sidestep these moral demands, without which this universe is insane and our existence meaningless, is by no means clear. Grave indeed will be the consequences of initiating a system of half-truths, however palatable, whose basic structure is built upon an evasion of moral implication inherent in the unalterable divine attribute of holiness.

As the seriousness of this wrong committed by the religious elite of

the first century is increased because of its abuse of misguided personalities—the Roman guard—so to the twentieth century cultists must go the blame for confusing the moral sensitiveness of consciences of their duped followers. This is not to say that the masses escape their rightful share of condemnation that active adherence to heresy entails. “Thou art inexcusable, O man” (Romans 2:1). We begin to see the proportions that this iniquitous design assumes when we attempt to evaluate the influence of an ever-increasing number of members and sympathizers who give their time to the distribution of their fallacious literature and propaganda. See them in every town and hamlet zealously preaching and teaching their spurious doctrines, making converts to their ideologies. We cannot know to what degree influential leaders are chargeable with the condemnation divine justice imposes on final unbelievers who have deviated from truth into the way of error, but to be haunted eternally by their own deception and the knowledge that they contributed to the deception of others is retribution beyond comprehension.

If we stand too close too long to this treacherous act and whatever present-day analogy that can be drawn, we are in danger of missing the most profound truth that gathers around this whole episode.

Bribery, lies, warped, demon-directed human instrumentalities combined could not strangle the glorious fact of the bodily resurrection of Christ. In spite of all the evil forces arrayed against the message of the risen Lord, it still triumphs in the souls of trusting believers. This keystone of the Christian doctrine has survived all of the vicious thrusts leveled in its direction across nineteen centuries, providing a reliable basis of our faith.

## I See an Altar

By Willard B. Airhart\*

A VISITING MINISTER, viewing the architecture of the church, looked at the simple railing set in front of the platform and asked, "What is that used for?" It was the altar, prominently placed and solemnly regarded. It was the "mourners' bench," where people bow to pray in our services.

While some of the clergy trained in more liturgical schools may question the wisdom of including such a simple bit of furniture in a new and modern church building, I want always to see it from my pulpit!

To me it is the symbol of the accessibility of God. It says there are no long delays waiting for the convenience of others. It stands as a silent invitation from God to any battle-worn pilgrim. Its structural design is the symbol of the simplicity of the gospel-center, "Come unto me." Its uniform construction indicates that this is no place for a selected few but a meeting place for all. And its prominent location speaks of the significant importance it holds for us all.

The public altar is a useful institution. New lives are begun here. Homes are once more united here. Habits of sin are broken here. The power of carnal pollution is banished here. A thousand inner distresses are

relaxed here. Multitudes have settled their divine callings here. And pastors, many a church quarrel has been averted or settled here. The practical usefulness of the altar is beyond estimation.

This altar, humble but beautiful, should be a familiar place to laymen. We do not believe in our people becoming chronic "altar runners," but why may they not feel that in the time of special trouble or burden its refuge is open to them? The altar is for God's people and for those who earnestly seek that estate. Yet I fear many are cold spiritually because in their time of need they did not know that it was permissible and reasonable for a hard-pressed Christian to kneel at the public mercy seat. Make the altar a familiar place for meeting with God. There is no better use for it.

Because the altar is all this and more, it is perhaps the sanctuary's most sacred area. The tears of the broken and penitent, the newly redeemed and the praying saint have moistened well its varnished surface and surrounding carpets. Victories of eternal importance have been won. Tearful decisions that could shake our church have been resolved. God has held communion with many a soul. It is a sacred and hallowed place.

Yes, from my pulpit, let me ever see—the altar!

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### III. "Preach the Word"

By D. Shelby Corlett\*

**T**O BE EFFECTIVE the preaching of the doctrine of entire sanctification must be scriptural. Life-situation preaching has its value; a philosophical approach to the doctrine will help; explaining the psychological phases of the teaching will be of interest and will appeal to some hearers. But as a basis of faith and a foundation for life the holiness preacher must "preach the word" (II Timothy 4:12).

It is essential that a holiness preacher knows the Word of God, especially that he knows its teaching on the doctrine of entire sanctification. There is no substitute for Biblical preaching.

Generally there seems to be a revival of interest in the Bible today. Among Christians there is a greater desire to know what the Bible teaches. Many of the radio preachers are strong teachers of the Word. It is true that much of their teaching is colored by their theological training and that may be opposite to our Wesleyan emphasis, but they are preaching the Bible. Many of those people who sit in our pews have accepted to some degree the teaching of these radio preachers because they are impressed with the Biblical content of their messages, and because of a lack of Biblical preaching from our pulpits they have not been fortified against it. If there are any preachers who should be strong preachers of the Word it should be the exponents of the message of entire sanctification.

A young fellow who was just starting to preach but who had no sub-

stantial training in the Word said, "I wish someone would tell me how to preach holiness; you certainly cannot learn to preach it from the New Testament." With no more knowledge of the Bible than he had it is doubtful that he should have been trying to preach. Also it can be questioned that what he had to say from the pulpit was truly Christian preaching. The true Christian preaching is founded on the Word of God. True preachers "preach the word."

How are we to preach the Word as it relates to the message of holiness?

Preach it clearly. Make sure the scripture used teaches holiness as a second experience in Christian life. Not all scriptures emphasize it; however, none deny it. There are other messages in the Bible besides that of entire sanctification. Never strain the plain statement of the Bible in an endeavor to make it teach what at that point it does not teach.

Give the background of the text or portion of scripture used. What was the spiritual state of those addressed? What was the writer teaching in this statement? How does it compare with other scriptures which teach the same truth? What is its meaning to us? Make the message practical, not too theoretical.

Preach it positively and with authority. Positively because the preacher thoroughly believes the truth he is presenting and enjoys the experience personally. Authoritatively because the preacher believes the Word of God, the final authority on matters relating to our salvation.

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What God promises in His Word, He will do. What Christ has provided for us in His atoning work, He will make real in the lives of those who believe. People generally, particularly church people, like the authoritative ring to preaching that comes from "Thus saith the Lord." Much of the success of Billy Graham's ministry can be attributed to his authoritative preaching of the Bible as the Word of God.

Preach it convincingly. Employ every phase of the text or scripture portion to stress the truth that is being presented. Preach it with the purpose of inspiring a sense of need within the hearts of the hearers. Preach it as a possibility in personal experience. Preach it as a truth for everyday, practical living. Preach it with a full dependence upon the Holy Spirit to make the message a living Word. Preach the Word—it is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

A few suggestions for preaching from the Word the message of entire sanctification as a second definite work of grace are given in this article.

No better scripture can be found than the high priestly prayer of Jesus, prayed just before He was crucified, and recorded in the Gospel of St. John, chapter seventeen. The theme might be "Jesus Prays for His Children" or "Jesus Prayed for You."

### Jesus Prays for His Children

Read the entire chapter. **TEXT:** *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth* (v. 17).

#### I. FOR WHOM DID HE PRAY?

- A. For "them"—His own disciples, v. 9.

- B. For us—"for them also which shall believe on me through their words" (v. 20).

- C. The relation of these disciples to Jesus indicates the conditions necessary before one may be a candidate for the experience of entire sanctification. Note verses 2, 6-12, 14, 16.

#### II. BY WHOM WAS THE WORK TO BE DONE?

- A. By the "holy Father," as an act, not as a process of growth (v. 11).
- B. It is provided for them and us by Jesus (v. 19).

#### III. THE WORK TO BE DONE.

- A. "Sanctify them." Define its meaning.
- B. Stress the experience phase.

### Jesus' Last Command

**TEXT:** *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high* (Luke 24:49).

**INTRODUCTION:** Emphasize that this is the parting message of Jesus to His disciples. The next few verses tell of His ascension, so their message is important. Note that He gives—

- I. A DEFINITE PROMISE. "I send the promise of my Father upon you." They understood this "promise of my Father" to be related to the coming of the Holy Spirit. See Acts 2:17, 32-33.
- II. "UPON YOU," HIS DISCIPLES.
  - A. They were branches of the True Vine (John 15:5), which indicates they were then "in Christ," therefore new creatures (II Corinthians 5:17).
  - B. Their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20); hence

they were accepted of God, or were justified.

- C. They belonged to Christ as no other people had (John 17:11-12; 20:21-22).

III. A DEFINITE CONDITION—"TARRY YE."

- A. However much this crossed their desires or purposes, it was the command of Jesus, "Tarry ye." They had to obey.
- B. It meant the setting aside of all factors in their hearts and lives which were contrary to this requirement—all selfish interests, all carnal ambitions and affections, all evil.
- C. They maintained an active attitude; they tarried in order to receive. "They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14). Stress this oneness of desire and anticipation.

IV. A DEFINITE FULFILLMENT WAS PROMISED. "Until ye be endued . . . from on high." This was to be the end of their tarrying.

- A. They tarried until their hearts were satisfied—until they could say assuredly, "This is that promise which has been given."
- B. Until they were filled with the Holy Spirit—until they had "power from on high." The statement of fulfillment was, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This was so definite, so assuring, so satisfying in relationship to the risen Christ, that they did not question it. So it may be with God's children today.

The letters of St. Paul make frequent allusions to entire sanctifica-

tion as a second work of grace. Nowhere is this more explicit than in his first letter to the Thessalonians. He stresses sanctification as the will of God for them. It is of interest to note that the "will of God" as used here more particularly stresses the sense of requirement than that of an inheritance. The theme might be—

**God's Requirement for His Children**

TEXT: *This is the will of God, even your sanctification* (I Thessalonians 4:3).

I. WHO ARE REQUIRED TO BE SANCTIFIED?

- A. That they were Christians is evident from his description of them in chapter one—summarize it.
- B. That they were not backslidden is evident from chapter 3:1-6. Timothy had just brought to Paul a good report of their faith and love—two cardinal virtues (v. 6).
- C. Although they were Christians, and not backslidden, they were not sanctified; so whatever sanctification was, they did not have it and God required them to have it—a second experience.

II. WHAT IS THE REQUIREMENT?—"SANCTIFICATION."

- A. Give its meaning from theologies and dictionaries.
- B. Gather further meaning from the context.
1. The perfecting of their faith (2:10).
  2. The increasing (or perfecting) of their love (2:12).
  3. The establishment of their hearts in holiness (2:13).

### III. WHY DOES GOD REQUIRE THEM TO BE SANCTIFIED?

A. Because God desires Christians to be like Him. This is intimated in 4:7-8, and also stated in I Peter 1:15-16.

B. Because Jesus died that Christians might have it (Hebrews 13:12). If it was so important in the atonement, God requires His people to have it.

C. Because Christians need this experience.

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## Gleanings from the Greek New Testament

By Ralph Earle\*

Romans 7:14-25

### Regenerate or Unregenerate?

There has been much dispute as to where the autobiographical section of Romans (7:7-25) fits into Paul's life. It is rather generally agreed that the apostle is describing his own experience. But was it his pre-conversion or post-conversion state that is related so vividly? Is this a picture of an unregenerate or a regenerate man?

David Brown feels that the best solution is to divide the passage into two parts, taking verses 7-13 as describing the unregenerate man and verses 14-25 the regenerate man. He writes:

"From v. 7 to the end of v. 13 the apostle speaks entirely in the *past tense*; whereas from v. 14 to the end of the chapter he speaks exclusively in the *present tense*. And as the words of v. 9, 'I was alive without the law at *one time* (pote), clearly refer to his unconverted state, so . . . all from v. 14 to the end of the chapter is a description of his converted state."<sup>1</sup>

This view is also defended by Hodge. He too notes the change from the past tense to the present tense. Of course both he and Brown insist that the conflict between the old carnal nature and the new Christ nature continues in the believer throughout life. Hodge holds that the language of verses 15, 16, 19, and 22 cannot be attributed to an unregenerated individual.

In contrast, Adam Clarke maintains that this piece of autobiography cannot be applied to a Christian. He says:

"It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that 'the apostle speaks here of his *regenerate state*; and that what was, in such a state, true of himself, must be true of all others in the same state.' This opinion has, most pitifully and most shamefully, not only lowered the standard of Christianity but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character. It requires but little knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel, and of the scope of this epistle, to see that the apostle is, here, either personating a Jew under the law and

<sup>1</sup>JFB, VI, 231.

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without the Gospel, or showing what his own state was when he was deeply convinced that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified."<sup>2</sup>

With Clarke's reasons for taking this position one can well sympathize. But part of the force of his argument is vitiated by this statement which he makes:

"From all this it follows that the epithet *carnal*, which is the characteristic designation of an unregenerate man, cannot be applied to St. Paul after his conversion; nor, indeed, to any Christian in that state."<sup>3</sup>

When he wrote that he must have forgotten I Corinthians 3:3—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." It is evident that in Paul's thinking new converts may be carnal.

Most of the Greek fathers, together with Erasmus and other modern scholars, held that the reference here is to the legal Jew, one who tries to fulfill the law but finds no real salvation in it. Augustine at first held this view, but changed it after his dispute with Pelagius. From that time he interpreted the passage as a description of the Christian and his struggles with his sinful nature. This view was adopted by Jerome and also by the reformers.

H. C. G. Maule held that through verse eleven the passages describe the unregenerate state.<sup>4</sup> But the tone changes after that. The man now "wills not," even "hates," what he practices. He "delights, rejoices, with the law of God." Says Maule: "He who can truly speak thus of an inmost sympathy, a sympathy of delight, with the most holy Law of God, is no half-Christian."<sup>5</sup> But the thing

that is missing here is any reference to the Holy Spirit. That comes in chapter eight.

The final word on the interpretation of Romans 7:7-25 will perhaps never be said in time. But as far as the *application* of it in preaching is concerned we feel that Riddle has the best point of view. He writes: "To refer it to a movement possible both before and after conversion, a state with reference to the law, *encourages* unbelievers to go to Christ, and *rouses* believers to go to him."<sup>6</sup>

Certainly much of the language of this passage echoes the feelings of new converts who have discovered that the carnal nature still resides in their hearts. We have heard many testify how they suffered defeat from time to time in their early Christian experience because of the inner sinful propensity, until one day they were delivered in the cleansing of entire sanctification. Their language sounded much like that of Paul in the seventh of Romans.

A main argument for allowing this double application of the passage is its position in Romans. It falls in the center of the apostle's discussion of sanctification in chapters six through eight.

### Spiritual vs. Carnal

In verse fourteen Paul declares that the law is *pneumatikos*, but he is *sarkinos*. The first adjective comes from *pneuma*, which means "spirit." It is used both of the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. In some passages it is very difficult to decide which of the two is intended, as will be discovered by comparing the English versions.

Brown feels that the law is "spiritual" because it comes from God, who is Spirit and so breathes spirituality in its nature and intent. Perhaps the

<sup>2</sup>"New Testament," II, 86.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>"Romans" ("Expositor's Bible"), p. 191.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>6</sup>Lange, "Romans," p. 246.



simplest way is to take "spiritual" here as meaning "divine." The law was God-initiated and God-inspired. It reflects His holy character and reveals it to man.

The second adjective, "carnal," poses somewhat more of a problem. The reading of the late manuscripts, translated in the King James Version, is *sarkikos*, which means "fleshly" in contrast to spiritual. It signifies a state of being dominated, or at least strongly influenced, by the flesh (*sarx*). Paul uses *sarx* in two ways: for the physical body, and for the carnal nature. In the previous sentence we mean "flesh" in the second sense.

But the earliest manuscripts have *sarkinos* in Romans 7:14. French notes that adjectives ending in *-inos* generally indicate the stuff of which a thing is made. So *sarkinos* would properly be "fleshy"; that is, made of flesh.<sup>7</sup> That creates a problem of interpretation.

In spite of the fact that apparently *sarkinos* must be adopted as the correct reading, it would seem that the meaning here is "carnal" in contrast to "spiritual," referring to character rather than to substance. Brown interprets it as indicating "the sinful principle in the renewed man."<sup>8</sup>

Meyer emphasizes *sarkinos* as meaning "made of flesh" and uses this as further support of his position that it is Paul under the law, before his conversion, who is here described. He feels that this term is "far stronger" than *sarkikos*.<sup>9</sup> Lange favors making *sarkinos* equal *sarkikos*.<sup>10</sup> This would allow it to refer to the believer. It seems difficult to maintain the usual distinction between the two Greek terms, as far as this passage is concerned. In any case, it is clear that "carnal" means under the domination of the flesh, in contrast to spirit, which means under the domination of the Spirit.

The question has often been raised as to why Paul closes this chapter on the melancholy tone of verse 25b. But it should be noted that 25a is an index finger pointing the way to chapter eight, where the life of glorious victory through the indwelling Holy Spirit is described.

But why then is 25b added? Godet gives a helpful explanation when he suggests that 25b is a summary of what Paul has been saying in the previous verses. Writes Godet: "He simply sums up in order to conclude."<sup>11</sup> This makes all the more striking the contrast in chapter eight.

<sup>7</sup>"Synonyms," p. 272.

<sup>8</sup>JFB, VI, 233.

<sup>9</sup>"Romans," p. 275.

<sup>10</sup>Op. cit., p. 237.

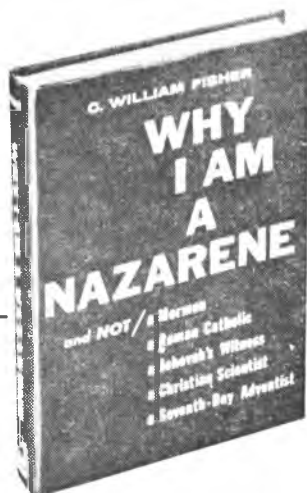
<sup>11</sup>Op. cit., p. 291.

### Foot in Mouth—

I have it on good authority that one of our preachers recently, when elected to a place of responsibility in the church, stood up and thanked the people for the vote, but said, "I am sure you people have greatly underestimated my ability." Then he went on to say, "But if the time ever comes when I do not feel that I have the ability or am qualified, why, I'll resign." He obviously said just the opposite in both statements to what he intended to.

—B. V. Seals

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## The Altar Call—Moment of Supreme Importance

By Fred Thomas\*

**T**HIS SUPREME MOMENT of importance does not begin in the message or the invitation of the evangelist, but it began in the heart of the infinite Creator before the foundation of the world. God willed that man should be holy, and thus created him in His own image. God did not create man because He desired someone to love and to worship Him, for He did not need to go outside of the blessed Trinity to find satisfaction. But God created man because He desired him to be the recipient of the mercy of His love, fellowship, and companionship. The glory of man's creation was the holiness of God, and his supreme delight was the fellowship of his Creator. The divine Creator found holy pleasure in coming to the garden in the cool of the day as He communed with the holy man and the holy woman who were created in His divine image.

The Lord God, who had created man in his own image, also endowed him with the power of moral choice. In this power of moral choice man has the ability to accept or reject, to love or to hate, to obey the holy precepts or to transgress the divine law. Adam, through willful transgression, lost the glory of his creation and fell from the lofty heights of God's eternal holiness into the utter depths of

human depravity. Thus, man is the monarch of his own life and destiny.

Since God created man with the power of moral choice, the ability to lose the glory of his creation (which he did), I am confident that God would rather have a fallen man made holy through the vicarious atonement of Jesus because he wills to be holy than a created holy man without the power of moral choice. Thus, the death of His only begotten Son on Mount Calvary was not an afterthought on the part of God to meet man's crisis, but in the cathedral of God's unknown eternity God founded and established the glorious scheme of man's redemption. As God wills that man should be holy, first by creation, and second by redemption; and as He "is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," the altar call is the moment of supreme importance to God, the Father (II Peter 3:9).

The altar call is the moment of supreme importance to God, the Son. Jesus declared, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This was the mission of the great Incarnation. It was a great leap from the celestial throne to the borrowed manger, from the top of glory to the bottom of humiliation, from the bosom of

\*Evangelist, Elkhart, Indiana.

God to the breast of a woman, from prominence to obscurity, from infinite wealth to abject poverty, from a Son to a servant, from the hosannas of angels to the jeers of men; but He came that He might call men from darkness to light. The Son of God became the Son of Man that He might make possible the vicarious atonement through His outpoured blood on Mount Calvary. His humanity did not rob Him of His deity, and His deity did not rob Him of humanity. His humanity was a necessity that He might die to satisfy the demands of the laws of justice; yet His deity is a necessity to break the powers of sin and cleanse the human heart from inward depravity and lift it to the sublime heights of God's holiness. His investment in His infinite incarnation, in His spotless life, in His untold agonies of death, and in His glorious resurrection was for the moment of supreme importance when men either accept Him or reject Him.

The altar call is the moment of supreme importance to God, the blessed Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the executive of the Godhead and He is the Administrator of the vicarious atonement of Jesus. Beneath the shadow of the Cross, Jesus told His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:7-8). If I understand the concept of this gracious promise correctly, the Holy Ghost reproves the world as He comes in and through the sanctified human personality or through His Church. The blessed Holy Ghost can do more in one day through a sanctified Church than we can do in the next hundred years without Him. In all of our prepara-

tions of church politics, promotional programs, organizations, and church machinery the blessed Holy Ghost must be supreme. The Holy Ghost must have the control of our church services from the beginning to the end. If we are not careful in our preludes and postludes we will miss the deluge of the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. There can be no substitute for the grace and power of His presence. He must be pre-eminent in the invitation, for He and He alone can bring men to the foot of the blood-stained Cross in complete submission. The altar call is the moment of supreme importance to the Holy Ghost because it is the moral battlefield on which men decide for God or against God.

The altar call is the moment of supreme importance to both heaven and hell. In this moment of supreme importance, heaven is either populated and hell is unpopulated or vice versa, because men often seal their destiny in the invitation.

The altar call must be the moment of supreme importance to the Church. As the passion of Christ was "to seek and to save that which was lost," so it is the passion of His Church. Every wheel of church machinery and organization must always be a means to an end in that it is to seek and to save the lost. That must be the supreme motive and passion of our beloved Zion, both ministry and laity, at home and around the world. In this realm of holy passion, if the machinery and organization of our church will move with the heart and life of our church, then the pastor can organize the forces of his church in effectual, weekly, house-to-house, personal evangelism. When one is possessed with this love for a lost soul, the personal worker will not become discouraged, but will ring the doorbell time and time again when seemingly

there is no sign of response. The love of that personal worker will melt its way through to the frigid heart and love him into the kingdom of God. This passion will cause the church to lie on its face before God in tears and holy intercession, and as she awakes at night and in private and public devotions, she will by crying for lost souls. The most priceless treasure of her life is the salvation and the cleansing of immortal souls. A church that is possessed with this holy passion will have a weekly program of evangelism.

But a revival is more than a program. A revival is more than a board meeting or a choir rehearsal. It is the harvest of the church. The invitation in the revival campaign must be the moment of supreme importance to the church because in that moment the golden grain for which the church has labored and prayed will be either saved or lost. It is a vital necessity that every child of God is faithful in his attendance to the revival. As the invitation is extended he must be possessed with such a passion for souls that the Holy Ghost will move on the hearts of men to bow in complete submission.

Personal work in the invitation is almost a forgotten or lost art among us because of the unwise things done and said in the past. But in spite of all of the mistakes that have been made in personal work in our invitations, I have never read of a great revival in church history, or heard of a great revival in this our day, nor have I personally seen a great revival, without personal work when the invitation is given. When God's people begin to move in the congregation in personal work it is always easier for needy hearts to move toward the altar. I was delighted in the fall of 1956 in my revival cam-

paign in East Liverpool, Ohio, First Church when I found that Rev. J. E. Hunton, the wise pastor, had instructed each one of his personal workers to sit in various places throughout the congregation where they could see individuals as they raised their hands for prayer. Then immediately when the invitation was extended the personal workers went throughout the congregation and gave a personal invitation to those who had expressed their needs, to take the next step, and they would go with them to the altar of prayer. And many responded because of the personal invitations of the personal workers.

This moment of supreme importance in the invitation is the pulse, the heart, and the lifeblood of the God-called evangelist. It is for this moment he lives an isolated life away from home, separated from those he loves, travels throughout the nation and abroad, and becomes the recipient of all kinds of hospitality with grace and poise. Knowing that my family circle is broken in this world, my daily prayer is, "Father dear, while I am giving my life in the ministry of evangelism, grant that I may have one unbroken family circle around Thy celestial white throne." And I am happy today that each member of my family is enjoying a beautiful experience of grace. The God-called evangelist lives, eats, sleeps, prays, and makes preparation for the supreme moment in the invitation. Life to him is more than favorable surroundings which he enjoys or unfavorable surroundings which he endures. Life to him is a passion to bring men to God. As he eats, the burden of his heart is the famishing soul without the Bread of Life. As he goes to sleep at night, he cries to God for the perishing soul without shelter from the coming judgment. As he awakes to the light of a new day, he

is praying for the blinded soul who has never seen the true Light of the World. David Brainerd said, "Oh, I care not where I go, or how I live, or what I endure, so that I may save souls. When I sleep I dream of them, when I awake they are first in my thoughts."

The evangelist in the preparation of his message must keep ever before him the moment of supreme importance in the invitation. This is the purpose of his message. Thus, his message is vital and important. He must be God's man with God's message for the hour. He must be clear and definite in his presentation of divine truth. There was a time when we were awakened that our message was too negative and we needed more positive truth. And while it is true we must have a positive message, let us also remember we cannot be positive for holiness unless we are negative against sin. Too often, I am afraid, we have preached a moral code of ethics, "If you do, it won't save you; and if you don't, it won't damn you," instead of the glorious gospel of the blessed Son of God that will transform the human heart and life. The tremendous need of this hour is God's man with God's anointed message that will declare the whole counsel of God. This man who feels with the Apostle Paul, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" does not deal with non-essentials, but his message will cry out against the evil of this our day, including both the sin of the flesh and also the sin of the spirit. His message must be so saturated with truth that it will convince men of the penalty of sin, the certainty of the judgment, and the torments of hell. Thus he must be a man of conviction with a fearless spirit and yet with a compassionate heart. His message must

also possess truth that will inspire men to live lives above the pollution of this vile world, with all of its charm and glitter; and to live lives of holiness, which is a life of glorious, triumphant, Blood-bought victory.

This moment of supreme importance in the invitation must be considered in the time when the message is given. Many invitations have met with utter defeat because of the lateness of the hour before the evangelist could bring his message to a close. It is so important that the evangelist know when the God-given climax of the service has come, whether it is in the congregational or special singing, whether he has preached five minutes or completed his sermon. If he desires to win men to God, he must not pass the God-given climax but at once extend his invitation. This is the moment for which he lives. To sing or to preach past the God-given climax defeats his mission in winning men to God.

The first hymn of the invitation is of vital significance in this supreme moment of importance. Choosing the wrong hymn or having to wait until the organist comes from the congregation will often defeat the victory of the altar call. I like to have the privilege of selecting the first invitational hymn or at least have an understanding with the song evangelist as to the type of hymn that will be needed. I like for the organist to play throughout the entire invitation. Surely each one that has any part in the service must be a colaborer with Christ to be effectual in winning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the power of God. We must never lose our absolute dependence upon the faithfulness of the divine Spirit in this moment of supreme importance.

## II. Rights of Our Laymen

By a Fellow Pastor

**L**AST MONTH WE DARED open the door to a discussion of some of the basic rights of our laymen. We should add that another right which belongs to laymen is the privilege of being married and buried by the minister of their choice. A few years ago I had a dear old lady in my membership who had taken a special fancy to one of my predecessors. She had said to him, "When the time comes, I want you to bury me, and look after my things. Even if you are not here, no matter where you are, I want you to come when I die."

Years passed but she never changed her mind. She liked me, and I sought to be a faithful shepherd. But she politely let me know her wishes. I ministered to her in her last months, and made every possible arrangement for her care in her last illness. But when her end came I stepped aside and my fellow minister, who had to come a distance of 120 miles, took over. I think he was embarrassed, but he needn't have been. We were simply respecting the rights of the old lady. Between the other minister and myself there was no cause for the slightest strain. I confess I have not always been as mature. But I have come to see that any excessive heartburn in a situation like that is a mark of immaturity, if nothing worse.

This right applies to marriages. In an early pastorate we had scarcely gotten into the parsonage before we learned that our immediate predecessor was coming back at the end of the week to officiate at the marriage of one of our young people. I hope I succeeded in hiding my feelings, but

I confess that inwardly I was troubled. But I have long since come to see that there was nothing in that the least irregular or surprising. He had been there for seven years. The young person had grown up under his godly care; he knew him and loved him. Why should he have been compelled to be married by a stranger out of deference to some tyranny called "professional ethics"? For we are not dealing with robots; we are dealing with people. We may theorize all we please but we are not going to be able always to impose our theories on the human heart. We cannot force the affections and desires of our folk into the nice little grooves of our petty systems.

Then, laymen have a right to call the pastor of their choice. Naturally we are thinking now of the local church as a body, for we recognize at once that the private rights of individual laymen are limited in this matter by the will of the majority. But the autonomy of the majority is clearly stated in the Constitution of the Church of the Nazarene.

This right is focused at two points: the action of the board in recommending a candidate, and the secret ballot of the membership in accepting or rejecting the board's recommendation, or in voting on the present pastor. In the first instance the rights of the church board are modified somewhat by the prerogatives of the district superintendent. Essentially the superintendent can veto but he cannot impose. Wise superintendents rarely exercise the first and never attempt the second. The veto is intended to



protect the church from a man whom the superintendent knows to be clearly unfit. It is not intended to block the church in calling a man who simply may not be the superintendent's preference. Naturally the district leader has his responsibility if he does not seek in moderate and legitimate ways to bring about the action which to him seems wisest. But he would prefer to fail than to succeed at the cost of good will. He does not desire to imperil "his man" by a board which is smarting under a sense of having been manipulated and outwitted. If he bluntly tells a board, "No, you can't have him," or on the other hand, insists on the board accepting the man he recommends, he is creating a deep feeling in the hearts of the laymen that their rights and opinions are being trampled roughshod. Successful superintendents are careful to see to it that boards are happy in their choice and feel it is their own.

Whereas the superintendent is the most delicately related to the rights of laymen at the board level, it is the pastor who must watch himself lest he unwittingly embarrass laymen in regard to their voting privileges. Here the preachers need to be reminded of two things, the sanctity of the right of secret ballot and the timeliness of maturity.

There are many subtle ways of infringing on the sanctity of the secret ballot—all of which one would indignantly censure if one's own ballot were at stake. One way is to endeavor to fix the individual votes in advance by private persuasion or manipulation. A politician is expected to campaign, of course, but it is in poor taste for a pastor to do so, just as it is in poor taste for a physician to solicit patients. Another way, even less defensible, is by making remarks publicly which brand a negative vote as treasonable and carnal. A minister

has no right to do one thing which would seem to intimidate or penalize the legitimate exercise of the layman's right to vote his convictions. A layman must not be made to feel that by voting *no* he commits a criminal act, and thereby becomes a marked man. And it is despicable for the minister to try to discover who voted against him, and having done so, reprimand them. A secret ballot should be kept secret. Otherwise the people should be instructed to sign their names; this would enable the pastor to get his information much more easily and accurately.

By the "timeliness of maturity" is meant simply that it is high time we preachers grew up and learned to take a sane, balanced view of all our relationships with laymen. The exhortation to endure hardness, as a good soldier, is apropos here. There are many wounding disappointments in the ministry; but the man who takes them in his stride and goes right on with cheerful poise and loving patience will in the long run have fewer wounds than he who gets things out of perspective and stops to nurse wounds which he should ignore. Relating this to the subject of voting, we can say that a negative vote should not be distorted into an irrefutable evidence of carnality. It is not necessarily a proof of bad spirit. It may not mean personal dislike of the preacher as a man. Rather it should be looked on as a vote *for a change* and as such it should be treated with utmost respect. The pastor may be secretly embarrassed by it, but if he takes it in good grace he will not truly be disgraced by it, or permanently injured.

Now comes the preacher's "finally": Laymen have a right to be heard. I am not thinking at the moment of their right to make a speech in busi-

ness meetings. They have a right to be heard privately—*by a minister*.

What minister is there who does not at times get disturbed about situations which to him seem to need attention, and desires to talk out his heart to a trusted friend, possibly his district superintendent? Maybe nothing can be done, but at least the agitated preacher feels better for having gotten it "off his chest." Should we deny a similar right to laymen? They are human too and, if they love the church, will get disturbed about matters and feel that something needs to be said or done to bring about improvement.

Very likely these grievances will concern other people (what else would we expect?)—possibly even some other preacher. Right here is the delicate question. Should a minister refuse to listen to a layman when another minister is involved? Possibly in some circumstances, yes. But I believe it would be dangerous for ministers generally to adopt a policy of refusal. It would drive the laymen back to their fellow laymen for sympathy and support. They are going to talk to someone, of that one may be sure. Is it not better for a minister to be a "safety valve" than to force laymen into such a service? The minister is more apt to give the right counsel, he is more apt to prevent the matter from spreading, and he is more apt to be in a position to do something about it, if the situation warrants action. These are advantages which should not be forfeited lightly.

It is profoundly important that the lines of free communication be kept open between the clergy and the laity. Class isolation and insulation are not

only out of harmony with the basic Christian ethic, but are the surest way to destroy the clergy's influence over the laity. If in our commendable zeal to suppress gossip and protect our fellow preacher we shut the layman off, and build up the feeling that no sympathy or understanding can be expected from us ("no chance of getting a 'fair deal' from the preachers—they all stick together"), we will be doing three things: (1) fostering gossip and criticism among laymen, (2) preventing ourselves from helping the layman when he needs us the most, and (3) creating a cynical distrust of preachers. As a result we will find the laity tending to stick together in common defense against the ministry. Apart from being so utterly unchristian, such an impasse would be stupid, as it would effectively paralyze the entire church. It would appear, therefore, that any policy is unwise which would in any way contribute to such an intolerable situation.

Let us keep on letting laymen talk to us. It is their right, and it is good sense too. They may be dead wrong. They may even be carnal in their spirit and attitudes. But if we give them a sympathetic hearing, and treat them with respect and gentleness, we may be able to show them their error. Otherwise we haven't a chance to do any good at all. And they may be dead right instead of wrong. Even when their methods are injudicious, their spirit, in God's sight, may be sanctified. Let us not wound them. Let us give them a fair hearing—it is one of the layman's rights. And in honoring their rights we will be honoring the ministry in the bargain.

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Freedom is not the right to do as you please, but the liberty to do as you ought.—*Emmanuel*.

# SERMON WORKSHOP

Contributed by Nelson G. Mink\*

## NEW DEFINITIONS

**Modesty:** the art of imperfectly concealing your talents.

**Duty:** a task we look forward to with distaste, perform with reluctance, and brag about afterwards.

**Exclamation point:** "A period that has blown its top."

—David K. Kline in *Nacogdoches, Texas, Nazarene Bulletin*

## "WHY THE ANGELS SANG"—Luke 2:13-14

1. Because the long, long darkness was past.
2. Because the "desire of all nations" had come.
3. Because of the good news they had to bring to all people.
4. Because sin was to receive a knock-out blow.
5. Because our great redemption was being completed.

N. G. M.

## READ IT THIS WAY

I John 1:7. Extended translation: "If we walk, move, make progress, develop, grow, mature, are active, go on in the light, as He is (a moving God, going somewhere) in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, acts as a constantly-flowing, cleansing agent, keeping us clean from all sin."

—Richard Traver,  
in the "Free Methodist"

## THE FIVE POINTS OF THE STAR MAY HAVE MEANING:

1. Fulfillment of prophecy
2. Jesus, Light of the World
3. Chief Shepherd
4. Our eternal Lord
5. Courage for the Christian

N. G. M.

## THE RIGHT OF WAY

After President Garfield was assassinated, he was taken to a quiet, isolated house where he could have absolute quiet and rest in his fight for life. A special railway was constructed to facilitate the bringing in of doctors, nurses, and loved ones to his bedside. The engineers laid out the line to cross a farmer's front yard, but the determined old farmer refused to grant the right-of-way, until they explained that it was for the President. Then the farmer exclaimed: "That is different! If that railroad is for the President, you can run it right through the house."

—Elkhart, Indiana, *First Church Bulletin*

## SENTENCE SERMONS

"If all the cars of the nation were placed end to end, some fool would pull out and try to pass them."—*Mileposts*.

Why is it that we count our blessings on our fingers and our miseries on our adding machines?"

"Rip Van Winkle is the only man who ever became famous while he was asleep.

"Don't expect God to put you into a bigger hole until you plug up the one you are in."

"Many a man counted a fool by financiers has laid up in heaven a fortune they would envy."—*Selected*.

## TIPS ON TIME

1. Time is money. We have no right to waste it.
2. Time is power. We have no right to dissipate it.
3. Time is influence. We have no right to throw it away.
4. Time is life. We must value it.
5. Time is a sacred trust from God. We must answer for every moment.
6. Time is preparation for eternity. We must redeem it.

—*World Conquest*

\*Pastor, Waco, Texas.

December 7, 1958

**IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH**

MORNING MESSAGE:

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 4:1-26; TEXT: verse 24

INTRODUCTION: Worship in the majority of churches has ceased to be spiritual. It is a form of godliness but lacks the essential qualities of worship. Spiritual worship has certain characteristics that identify it. There are also certain things that are necessary for true worship.

**I. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE WORSHIP ARE:**

- A. It is reverent.
- B. It is inspiring.
- C. It bares the heart and soul to God, thus striking a deathblow to sin and hypocrisy.
- D. It is emotional.

**II. WORSHIP "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" IS POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

- A. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."
- B. His way is a way of peace.
- C. His way is a way of restitution.

**III. TRUE WORSHIP IS DEPENDENT UPON RIGHT ATTITUDES.**

- A. We must have the right attitude toward God.
- B. We must have the right attitude toward our fellow Christians.
- C. We must have the right attitude toward the lost.
- D. We must have the right attitude concerning difficulties and obstacles.

—WILLIAM SUMMERS

**THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

EVENING MESSAGE:

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13

INTRODUCTION: The parables of Matthew 13 are a closely knit unit depicting the kingdom of Heaven.

**I. THE SPREAD OF THE KINGDOM**

- A. Parable of the mustard seed presents the "reach of the kingdom —whosoever will" (vv. 31-32).
- B. Parable of the leaven shows the "penetration" of the Kingdom —Spirit-filled lives are transformed lives (v. 33).

**II. THE SEARCH FOR THE KINGDOM**

- A. Parable of the treasure hid in the field reveals how one stumbled unto the treasure quite by accident, but when he found it, he gave his all to get it (v. 44). Make spiritual application.

- B. Parable of the pearl of great price (vv. 45-46). He was on the search for it when he found it! He, like the man who found the treasure in the field, was willing to part with everything he had in order to get it.

### III. THE SEPARATION FROM THE KINGDOM

- A. Parable of the tares (vv. 24-30, 36-42). Tares were not recognized until the heads (fruit) began to develop. Though they were let alone until the time of harvest, due to the danger of uprooting some good wheat in destroying them, their fruits betrayed their presence. Make a spiritual application.
- B. Parable of the net (vv. 47-50). You can't always tell what kind of fish you have until you draw the net to the shore. Men may fool men, but God knows the very thought and intent of the heart.
- C. Both of these parables emphasize the fact that there is a day of separation coming. Those who have done the "right" will receive the Lord's "Well done." Those who have done "evil" will hear His "Depart from me."

### CONCLUSION:

- A. Every one of us is responsible for what he does with the message of the Kingdom. We have heard the message. What are we doing about it?
- B. Our attitude is summed up in the parable of the sower.

—ALVIN T. SMITH

Pastor, Chicago, Illinois

December 14, 1958

## CHRIST, THE REVELATION OF GOD

### MORNING MESSAGE:

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-35

TEXT: . . . *great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* (I Timothy 3:16).

### I. REMARKS

- A. Christ is God's great "mystery of godliness" in the world.
- B. Christ came to give humanity a revelation of God.
- C. It took both humanity and divinity to reveal God.
- D. God's plan is to redeem a lost world through Christ.
- E. God's purpose is to have a holy and sinless people.

### II. CHRIST, THE GREAT "MYSTERY OF GODLINESS"

- A. He was "God manifest in the flesh."
- B. Christ was "seen" (looked upon) by both men and angels.
- C. Christ was "preached" to both Jews and gentiles.
- D. Christ was "believed on" and accepted as Messiah in spite of the Jews.
- E. Christ was "received up into glory" with His resurrected human body. He is now there as our Intercessor.

### III. THE REVELATION OF GOD THROUGH THE FLESH

- A. He was "manifest" at His birth. Angels sang and wise men and shepherds worshiped him.
- B. Christ was "manifest" at His baptism.
- C. He was "manifest" on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- D. Christ was "manifest" after His resurrection from the dead eleven times.
- E. He was "manifest" at His ascension when He "was received up into glory" before His disciples.

—H. B. GARVIN

*Pastor, Augusta, Kentucky*

## THE CHALLENGE OF LOOKING UNTO GOD

EVENING MESSAGE:

SCRIPTURE: Micah 7:1-7

TEXT: *Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me* (Micah 7:7).

### I. REMARKS.

- A. Looking to God involves a step of vital faith.
- B. Salvation reaches the heart through a faith channel.
- C. "Waiting" for God is a mark of patient seeking.
- D. If "God will hear me," my soul will find hope.
- E. I will "look unto the Lord" because I know that God is reasonable.

### II. THE SOUL'S DETERMINATION TO "LOOK UNTO THE LORD."

- A. It is certainly wise to appeal your case to God.
- B. You may not always get justice in the courts of earth, but you will in the courts of heaven.
- C. Through Jesus Christ, God can be approached by the vilest sinner.
- D. Doors of mercy will open to those who will "look unto the Lord."
- E. When we "look unto the Lord" it will take our eyes from self and sin and will bring victory to the soul.

### III. PERSONAL SALVATION THE RESULT OF WAITING ON GOD.

- A. Those who seek God should wait patiently for Him.
- B. Personal salvation is the result of definite seeking after God.
- C. It pays to "wait for the God of my salvation."
- D. Those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" will be willing to wait on the Lord.
- E. The process of waiting on God helps men to make definite decisions.

### IV. HOW WE MAY GET A HEARING WITH GOD.

- A. Faith opens the ears of God.
- B. Confidence in God's ability brings blessed victory.
- C. God will hear us when we turn from evil and call on Him.
- D. When God hears us we will have a witness of it.

V. SERVING GOD IS THE RESULT OF RIGHTEOUS DECISIONS.

- A. Men and devils may hinder but I will trust the Lord more firmly.
- B. Wait more patiently and expect Him and be saved.

—H. B. GARVIN

*Pastor, Augusta, Kentucky*

December 21, 1958

STAR OF PROPHECY

MORNING MESSAGE:

TEXT: Matthew 2:2

INTRODUCTION: Yearly astrologers forecast events by means of the stars. Many phenomena they can reveal with accuracy. Doubtless these wise men had seen many strange things in the heavenly bodies but none affected them as had the star that was seen in the east. This star of prophecy was but the revelation of God to man. Let us consider the details of this scene.

I. THE DISTANCE THEY HAD TRAVELED.

- A. From "the east," supposedly Arabia.
- B. Since they were not the adventurous type of men, what led them on this venture?
- C. We ought to act on God-given impressions, revelations, inspirations. Don't count the cost or the sacrifice. Distance is not to be measured when blessings are anticipated.

II. THE CHRIST THEY SOUGHT.

- A. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They were prompted by the Spirit.
- B. They made inquiries concerning the star of prophecy. None could give them an answer or had a knowledge of the Christ.
- C. Gross ignorance among the church people—even today. To many, Christ is a stranger.

III. THE STAR THEY HAD FOLLOWED.

- A. It meant nothing to thousands, but to the wise men it spoke volumes.
- B. They moved on "inward" inspiration and "outward" revelation.
- C. This phenomenon was divinely providential. It is just as easy to make a star move as it was to make the sun stop.

IV. THE EFFORT THEY PUT FORTH WAS CROWNED.

- A. Trip was not in vain. Joy was more than usual.
- B. One glimpse of Jesus would make any sacrifice or suffering seem trivial.
- C. Their experience and venture startled the world.
- D. Few today would venture out on God's promises.
- E. When they beheld the star of prophecy, their lives were changed. As a result they went to their own country to tell about it.

—HENRY T. BEYER, JR.

*Pastor, Baton Rouge, La.*

## ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

EVENING MESSAGE:

TEXT: I Corinthians 11:17-34

INTRODUCTION: Paul was the greatest of the apostles. He received more from the Lord for our benefit than did any of the others. He received the revelation of the first Lord's Supper, given to us in this chapter.

Among the things that we should consider on this communion day are:

- I. THE TIME THAT WE COME TOGETHER TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A TIME OF SELF-EXAMINATION.
  - A. One should examine his own spiritual standing.
  - B. One should examine his life as objectively as possible and evaluate it in the light of God's Word.
  - C. One should examine his relationship with others with special attention to one's attitudes.
- II. THE CANDIDATES FOR THE LORD'S TABLE ARE MEMBERS OF GOD'S FAMILY.
  - A. One must have been born of the Spirit and adopted into the great family of God.
  - B. One must be in daily fellowship and communion with Him.
  - C. One must recognize that no wall is existing between himself and the other communicants.
- III. EVERY TRUE CHILD OF GOD OUGHT TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.
  - A. It is an act of worship.
  - B. It is a valuable means of grace.
  - C. It is a testimony to the world that we are sustaining a right relationship with God.
  - D. It speaks of the absence of our Lord and looks forward to His soon return.

—WILLIAM C. SUMMERS

## December 28, 1958 WHAT LIES AHEAD?

MORNING MESSAGE:

TEXT: Deuteronomy 34:4

INTRODUCTION: We are not trying to predict the unforeseen future, but neither will we allow ourselves to become pessimistic as regards the pall of gloom that hovers over the world today with the cold war, strife, and other heartbreaking scenes. God allowed Moses to look ahead and see the beautiful promised land and yet he was not allowed to touch its sacred soil. May this year find us farther up the road spiritually than ever before, and desire others to make it with us into the gates of the city of God.

- I. A CHRISTIAN MUST HAVE A FAR-REACHING VISION.
  - A. Moses on Pisgah's lofty heights saw the promised land.
  - B. We are not dealing with territory today but precious, immortal souls.
  - C. If vision is lost, a person settles down to self-complacency.



- D. Forge ahead and reach land of service.
  - E. Must see others as potential Christians.
  - F. Christians with far-reaching eyes.
- II. A CHRISTIAN MUST HAVE A VISION OF HIS TASK.
- A. A vision should not be dimmed by laziness, prayerlessness. We are responsible to God.
  - B. We must not lose romance in working, preaching, and testifying.
  - C. Not pleased with going over much-used trail. Accept new challenges.
- III. A CHRISTIAN WILL HAVE VICTORY IF HE FAINTS NOT.
- A. When souls are saved and work, they become established.
  - B. A great reward in knowing God is pleased with us.
  - C. A great satisfaction to know we can give ourselves. It is not how glad to wear a crown, but how willing to bear a cross. "The finality of cross-bearing is crown-wearing."
- HENRY T. BEYER, JR.  
Pastor, Baton Rouge, La.

## SUDDEN DESTRUCTION

### EVENING MESSAGE:

**TEXT:** *He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy* (Proverbs 29:1).

**INTRODUCTION:** The yoke makes a callous on the neck of the ox. But the callous comes by much straining in the yoke. The heart is hardened by rejecting the light of the gospel. A hardhearted person is usually a stiff-necked person, one that is stubborn and self-willed.

Jesus gave us an example of a man such as our text describes. He was a rich man.

- I. PLAYING THE FOOL.
- A. He was rich in material wealth but he was a fool.
  - B. He was trifling with the truth of God.
  - C. He refused to be taught except by experience. The only thing wrong with experience, someone said, is that you get the examination before you get the lessons.
- II. SUDDEN DESTRUCTION IS SURE.
- A. The rich man played the fool and had to face sudden destruction.
  - B. He ignored the warning lights that had been flashing all along.
  - C. Only an instant is necessary for the work of sudden destruction. There are many avenues of approach.
- III. A ONE-WAY STREET.
- A. There is no return trip on this road.
  - B. One eventually gets to the point of no return.
  - C. As a tree falleth, so shall it lie. Now is the time to act.

—WILLIAM C. SUMMERS  
Pastor, Union City, Pa.

### Book Club Selection for October, 1958

#### POWER IN PREACHING

*W. E. Sangster* (Abingdon, \$2.00)

This famous British scholar is known widely as a writer of spirituality "in depth." Theologically we have wished that he would be more forthright in expounding the full Wesleyan position.

But here he deals, not with the "what" of the gospel, but the "how" of the preacher. This volume is a lecture series given at Southern Methodist University. But Sangster blessedly avoids pedanticism. His language is simple, blunt, and in places brusque. But ever there is a ring of sincerity that will jolt any minister endangered by "time-serving" and "pulpit-pattering."

*Power in Preaching* is practical, pointed, and pleads for prayerfulness. Some of it (especially chapter 7) could well be read on your knees.

#### EZEKIEL. THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE

*By H. L. Ellison* (Eerdmans, \$2.50)

This is a welcome volume in a decidedly limited field. It will throw much light on difficult passages in Ezekiel. There is a refreshing emphasis on the gravity of human sin and the freeness of divine grace. The whole period of Israel's exile is illumined by careful and reverent scholarship.

All serious evangelical students of Scripture will profit by this volume. Definitely one for close study, not quick reading, with the Bible open beside it.

W. E. McCUMBER

#### CHRISTIANITY AND YOU

*By Stephen F. Olford* (Eerdmans, \$2.00)

A series of Bible-based messages relating the significance of Christianity to life, faith, pleasures, business, church, school, home, time, friends, and destiny. Each sermon is splendidly outlined and simply written, weaving scripture with scripture in a skillful manner. Anecdotal illustrations are sparse, but the Word of God is happily prominent. Olford knows how to preach if this book is a fair sample.

W. E. McCUMBER

#### ENTERED INTO REST

*By Vance Havner* (Zondervan, \$2.00)

In reading this book I have marked it more than any I have read in several years. It was delightful reading and thought-provoking—a book I will come back to frequently for quotations. In the main it is theologically sound; however, there are a few statements with an eternal security tone to them. But there is a preponderance of value in it.

Its chief appeal lies in the unusual style used by the author, his positively intriguing subjects and his splendid application of the truth.

W. O. FISHER

## **SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY**

*By Elisabeth Elliot* (Harper, \$3.75)

This is a book that many people will wish to read because of the author and because of the tremendous publicity given to its predecessor, *Through Gates of Splendor*.

Elisabeth Elliot, in the *Shadow of the Almighty*, gives the spiritual biography of her husband, Jim Elliot. Jim was the moving force behind the entire episode that led five men to massacre by the Auca Indians.

In *Shadow of the Almighty* we trace the movements of the Lord in the life of Jim Elliot in close detail, and the format is largely a diary of his day-by-day spiritual life as it flowed by in its rapid current.

However, measured by *Through Gates of Splendor*, this is definitely an inferior book and there will be much disappointment in it. The diary is not edited. It was originally prepared for private eyes and there are points of crudity where his deep temptations are revealed in somewhat gross details. You will look many places for victory over sin and fail to find it.

Jim Elliot was an individualist and reflects upon organized church activity at some points—even choosing a civil marriage ceremony. His apparent Plymouth Brethren affiliation reveals itself in several points as well. There is a lot to be said in favor of the book, for it is a searching book as the Lord attempted to lead this young man; but don't look for a worthy successor to the preceding tremendous volume, *Through Gates of Splendor*. This is not equal to it.

## **VICTORY OVER SUFFERING**

*By W. B. Walker* (Higley, \$2.00)

The author, who has given many fine years of ministry in the Church of the Nazarene, deals with a subject that is close to the surface of the lives of multiplied thousands. Brother Walker does a good job of presenting the various aspects of suffering, how it can be turned to good in the life of the one who is called to endure it. The book is spiritually wholesome and doctrinally sound.

## **THE WINDOW SILL OF HEAVEN**

*By J. Winston Pearce* (Broadman, \$2.95)

This could very aptly be called a good book, but hardly a "must book." Fifteen sermons, unusual in titling and distinctly unusual in the approach. The author's disarming manner and conversational style bring him to the punch line late in each sermon.

These sermons could all be classified as being more refreshing than forceful. The use of intriguing titles and the disarming approach provide the strongest basis of appeal for this book.

W. O. FISHER

## **HUMANITY AND GOD**

*By Samuel Chadwick* (West Publishing Company, \$3.50)

This is a reprint of material that for a while it seemed would be totally lost during the destruction of World War II. We are happy to see it produced now. The author is well known for his thorough Wesleyan position and his warmhearted holiness writing. This is a series of sermons very worthy, solidly Wesleyan, totally acceptable. It is a joy to find them available on the market.

W. O. FISHER

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**Revelation**

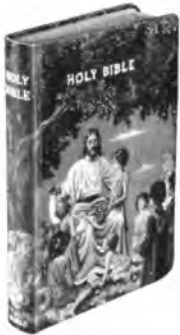
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him:



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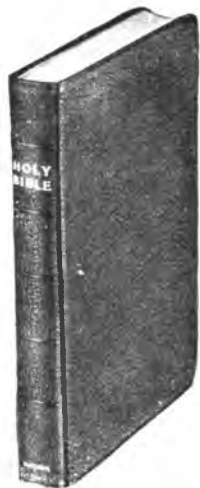
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tremble: he sitteth between  
cher-û-bims; let the earth be mov  
2 The LORD is great in Zion; :  
he is high above all the people.



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ye from Châl-dé'-ans, with a  
voice of singing declare ye, tell

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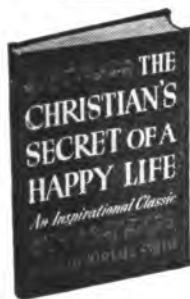
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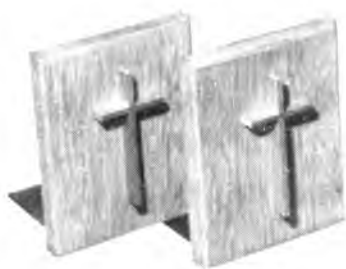
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