

# —The— Preacher's Magazine

J. B. Chapman, D. D.  
Editor

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## *Concluding the Service*

THE EDITOR

A THOUGHTFUL preacher said, "I wish you would write something about how to conclude a service. I seem to have less talent at that than almost anything else connected with my pulpit work." But the trouble is I have the same weakness, and this weakness brings a chain of faults in its wake. Sometimes I find a fortunate text and an auspicious occasion. I get off to a good start and proceed so well that I find considerable satisfaction in my effort. Then I look at the clock and see that my time is about up, and it strikes me that I have my seine away out in the middle of the creek, and that in order to save my fish I must find a good landing place. Then I begin to cast about. But just then the stream is passing between high banks on either side, and I conclude I must go on for a while. Then there come rocky places and shallows filled with weeds. The hour grows late and I just have to quit without concluding.

Of course it is something to be able to quit. I know a young preacher who tried for two hours to quit. In the meantime the people quit, and went home, and he was left with a "baker's dozen." But quitting without concluding is to leave the service suspended, and in large measure to defeat its purpose.

I heard an ideal evangelistic address. The preacher announced a text. Gave a brief explanation of the meaning of the text. Made a simple application. Gave two illustrations and commenced his exhortation. He was just a little over twenty minutes in coming to the place where he invited the people to the altar, but he continued his invitation and exhortation for forty minutes with wonderful results. But I chance to know that he planned to do just this. In fact he announced his plan at the beginning, and I could see that with him the conclusion was the main thing, and he hunted for a good place to conclude almost from the time he commenced.

I have heard a pastor preach a sermon on tithing. His treatment was simple and scriptural. At the close he announced that he would join in with

forty-nine others in agreeing to pay the tithe fully and promptly and that when there were that number in the agreement, he would cease to take special collections and depend upon the regular tithers with the help of spasmodic givers to take care of the needs of the church. An enthusiastic member stood up to say he would be one of the forty-nine. But the preacher had not planned to make immediate capital of his plea, so he thanked the brother and pronounced the benediction. But the result was more than he asked, although it was some weeks in coming up to his minimum figure.

Speaking on the general principle, I would say that the preacher should plan and strive to conclude in an interesting and effective manner. The preacher's purpose will of course have much to do with the particular manner in which he will conclude. But always the concluding moments should be interesting and effective. The most important ten minutes of a sermon are the first five and the last five during which the preacher has the floor.

In my judgment, it is a mistake to ask the people to do things which there is no reasonable hope that they will do. I have known a preacher, who, in a formal manner, insisted on giving an invitation for people to come to the altar at every service. Often there was no atmosphere of revival, and of course there was no response to the invitation. But the preacher took consolation from the fact that he "gave them a chance." If there were no chance for praying people to find God except by coming to a public altar, the preacher might be justified in his procedure. But since "those who seek God everywhere will find Him somewhere," the public invitation is simply a method, and

nothing more. Therefore I believe the preacher should seek to bring about the atmosphere of revival. But if he cannot do that in a given service, he should conclude the service and let the people go. For if he opens the altar and no one comes, it will be more difficult to get a move at some other time. If the atmosphere of revival is on and the invitation is given, the preacher should then tactfully and persistently "carry on" until he gets a move. If he cannot get a response to his first invitation, let him vary his proposition and get someone to do something. This is almost fundamental with the preacher who expects to be a successful soul winner. Be right in what you ask and then be insistent on the response. If the object is raising money for the church or for some particular need, do not ask for a large sum and then leave off with a portion of it. Ask for what is needed and what is reasonable for the people to give, and then establish the reputation for getting whatever you go after. My father taught us on the farm to "never stall the colt." This meant that we were not to hitch the young horse to an unreasonable load, and when we did hitch him to a load we were to make him pull it. The colt was never to learn that he could not pull any load.

When the purpose is to develop a spirit of devotion among the people, it is a pity to have some overlooked announcement come in just before the benediction. It is a pity to have a board meeting "at the conclusion of this service." This tends to give the impression that the service is not the end. It is somewhat in the way, and when it is finished you will attend to something important. It is a pity to dissipate the spirit of a meeting by visiting and talking after the benediction. The preacher does

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well to find some tactful way to get the people out of the house when his own effort is finished. If there is an organ, an organ number may serve a good purpose just following the benediction. Or a thoughtful, reverent hymn by the choir, while the pastor hastens to the door may give the people the idea that it is time to get outside. If there is an altar service, the preacher does well to persistently follow some plan to get nonprayers out of the front and, if possible, out of the house.

But perhaps I have gone far enough with suggestions and details. If the preacher will study the question of conclusions, he will find many ways to reach his purpose. If this matter is as important as I think it is, the preacher can afford to pray about it quite as much as he prays over any other part of his work, and he can afford to study it, and experiment on it, and make use of the very best that is available concerning it. And I would like to sign myself, "Yours for better conclusions."

## EXPOSITORY

### *Expository Messages on Christian Purity*

OLIVE M. WINCHESTER

#### SANCTIFICATION COMPLETE AND ENTIRE

*And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23, R.V.).*

**T**HERE have been certain texts that have ever constituted the main evidence for the experience of entire sanctification, and the one we have chosen this month is one of those. Since this text is so basic, it should not be neglected in any series of messages dealing with the subject of Christian purity. Moreover also it should not be neglected for more specifically does it deal with the fact that sanctification is entire and complete than some others. The work of sanctification is begun in regeneration; this is the position of many writers, especially those of the old school, but it is partial, not complete. It is the experience of entire sanctification for which we stand as a church so distinctly.

While there are several ways of approaching this text we are going at this time to take the three words that indicate the fullness of the work. These will constitute the main subtopics for discussion.

#### SANCTIFICATION COMPLETE

The first petition in this prayer of the apostle is "The God of peace sanctify you wholly." The word "wholly" is the one which we wish to consider. The English word does not express the emphasis of the Greek which has the idea of wholly unto a perfect degree. This particular term is found only here in the New Testament. Lange translates or interprets the word thus, "Sanctify you as complete, entire, so that no sort of evil is in you." Martin Luther rendered the word, "through and through." Thus it can easily be seen that whatever the translation the thought suggests entirety.

The nature of the entirety is clearly brought out in Lange's statement, "so that no sort of evil is in you." The one indisputable fact in the experience of entire sanctification is that the question of sin is settled in the heart and life. There is the cleansing of acquired depravity or partial sanctification in regeneration, thus all personal sin actual and acquired is removed in the initial experience of grace, but the inbeing of sin, that which is born with us, the racial sin still remains in the heart. In regeneration man

is restored from the standpoint of his personal relationship to God, but as a member of the human race he is still an alien with this sinful nature within the heart. Mankind was not created on an individualistic basis; he was created after the order of an organic principle. The angels as far as we can understand were created as separate individuals; when they sinned they sinned as individuals, and had there been redemption for them, it would seem that it would have been on an individualistic basis. But mankind was created organically; therefore when he is restored personally there still remains the racial nexus within his heart, and this requires the work of entire sanctification.

When we consider the reasons for the second work of grace, and when we are called to answer the question why is not the work completed in regeneration, we feel that herein lies the real substantial reason; man is twofold, he is an individual and he is a member of the race; therefore when he is to be restored, he must receive this work of restoration in a twofold work. Sanctification therefore must be complete, purifying the heart until all sin is removed, and until this is done man cannot stand fully whole before his Lord and Maker. For this reason the Apostle Paul prayed thus for the Thessalonians, and the prayer echoes down through the centuries for every child of God who has believed on Jesus Christ that he also may be sanctified wholly. This is the fullness of the heritage of the child of God that he may not only stand redeemed in his own personal relationship, but that he may also be heir to the redemption of the race when mankind as a whole and even nature shall join in the new creation.

#### SANCTIFICATION ENTIRE

The next word under consideration is entire as we have noted in the topic just stated. It has the thought of every part. The former term would seem to relate to evil within the heart, and this word would seem to have reference to application of this work within the heart to every function of man's being. Lange makes the statement that in their principles Christians are holy; but it is only by slow degrees that perfect sanctification pervades all their powers." We understand by this statement that the principle of sin is eradicated in the work of entire sanctification and the principle of love reigns in its fullness,

but there are still deficiencies of understanding, and aberrations of the imagination that need to be fully brought in line with this new life in the soul. Such a work as this might come under what Pope, one of our older and most reliable theologians, calls progressive sanctification. There is the work of sanctification that is instantaneous which is the cleansing from sin and then there is the clarifying of the understanding the sensitizing of the conscience, the tempering of the emotional urges and drives until all express this divine life within the soul. The Scripture brings this thought out quite clearly in other passages where it changes the tense to indicate the kind and type of work. For the work of cleansing we find the aorist tense which indicates an instantaneous work, then for the work of the enlightening of the mind we find a present tense to indicate that it is a process.

In speaking of this work of grace in the heart Denny sums it up thus: "This inward life, in all its aspects, is to be sanctified through and through. All our powers of thought and imagination are to be consecrated; unholy thoughts are to be banished; lawless, roving imaginings, suppressed. All our inventiveness is to be used in God's service. All our affections are to be holy. Our heart's desire is not to settle on anything from which it would shrink in the day of the Lord Jesus. The fire which He came to cast on the earth must be kindled in our souls, and blaze there till it has burned up all that is unworthy of His love. Our conscience must be disciplined by His word and Spirit, till all the aberrations due to pride and passion and the law of the world have been reduced to nothing, and as face answers face in the glass, so our judgment and our will answer His."

While there may be a suggestion of suppression in this quotation, and with this we would not agree, yet the ideal set before us we feel is the one desired. We believe and know that such a state can be reached only through the eradication of sin. Moreover also Denny sets before us the resultants through the crisis experience of sanctification without differentiating what takes place in the crisis experience and what comes through growth, but for the most part he is dealing with phases and expressions of sin and these are purified in the crisis experience.

If our whole soul and body together with our spirit are to be preserved at the coming of Jesus Christ it must needs be that these powers that

have felt the stultifying power of sin and their operations have not only been blunted, but have also been perverted must have the revitalizing that comes through the divine life in the soul. Clearer and clearer there comes to the mental vision of man the supremacy of spiritual values and the more fully does he understand truth as he goes along the Christian way in experience of entire sanctification. It is true that there will not be complete restoration of these faculties until we receive a resurrected body, but just as there was in the heart a condition of total depravity by which we mean that every phase and function of man's being felt the corruption of sin, so in entire sanctification every part of man's being feels the revitalizing power of divine life.

#### BLAMELESS

The last qualifying word describing the state and condition that the apostle prayed for the Thessalonians is the word blameless. The expression here would indicate that there is on the one hand the operation of divine power in this act of keeping or preserving, and we know well that such keeping of man can be only through divine grace. But if divine grace is to operate then there must be co-operation on the part of man. The Spirit of the Lord never sets aside the human will nor does the divine Spirit ever coerce man; there is always the assent and co-operation on the part of man.

There are various bars of judgment before which the life of man comes in arraignment, that is, bars of judgment within man's being. First there is conscience in the life of the moral man, then there is the operation of the Holy Spirit upon conscience in the life of the Christian wherein conscience is quickened and brought to a place of response that it never had before, and further there is also to be the piercing look of the divine Master when He comes again to judge the quick and the dead. It is before this final arraignment that we are to be kept blameless.

The natural man can sear his conscience and the Christian sometimes goes through a process of reasoning whereby he justifies himself; he fails to listen closely to the checks of the Spirit and though not altogether wilful in his attitude, yet he has not kept an absolutely open mind, but there will be no possibility of self-justification before this final arraignment. All attempts will vanish as dew before the morning sun; we will

stand with every motive made bare and every thought and intent of the heart disclosed.

When we consider the incisiveness of this judgment, we wonder at the magnitude of the work that we should be kept blameless. It is only possible when the work of sanctification has touched every phase of our being and that there has been the continuous effort on our part to keep this work vital and living ever operating and extending its holy influences into every function and its activity

The old rule that Scripture interprets Scripture is applicable here, and this essentially in a state of blamelessness is given to us elsewhere; we read in another place that we are to be holy and without blame before Him in love. Even though our understanding may increase in its enlightenment; yet it can never reach a state of absolute perfection in this life; the fact that we are human would preclude that in the first place and in the second place because our faculties are not what they would have been even in the human state if sin had not entered. But love in the heart in its fullness operating in all of its quickening power brings light to the understanding, and if that love is kept unsullied in the heart it places the soul in a position where he stands before God without blame.

Love shedding its radiance over our being expands our personality bringing life and health. Human love enlarges but how much more divine love? When we open our hearts to love in all of its fullness, and when we keep this love motivating all our actions, ruling all our thoughts, then are we ready for this great final assize.

Thus the work of sanctification is complete and entire. It eradicates all sin from the heart; it brings in the fullness of love which radiates through and through the being quickening anew the powers resident in man. A glorious work, and through its efficiency we may stand before God at the coming of his son, Jesus Christ, blameless.

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Sylvester Horne, at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, held in Queen's Hall, London, in 1911, said, "It is not very long ago since a man eminent in literature in Germany at the present time said, 'The great question for all people is not what they make of the Bible, but what the Bible makes of them.' Goethe said, 'I read all books, all sacred books, but the Book stands alone, because this Book reads me'."

# HOMILETICAL

## A Preaching Program

ORVAL J. NEASE

### January 3—Morning

*The Christian's Advance Guard*

TEXT—*The Lord, he it is that goeth before thee*  
(Deut. 31:8).

SCRIPTURE LESSON—Exodus 33:12-23.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The aloneness of life.
    - a. The forgetfulness of life.
    - b. The misunderstandings of life.
    - c. The individualness of life.
  2. The soul cry for companionship.
    - a. The capacity of the soul for companionship is father to the desire.
    - b. "God is our environment," one writer declares.  
Past? "Sea of forgetfulness."  
Beneath? "The everlasting arms."  
Above? "Shadow of the Almighty."  
Before? "He goeth before."
    - c. Our New Year motto, "God is ahead today!"  
Awake every morning, "God is ahead today!"  
Face every problem, "God is ahead today!"
- I. "HE DOTH GO BEFORE"—A SENSE OF SAFETY
1. The perils of living.
    - a. The unexpectedness of living.  
Isaiah 54:3, "Things we looked not for."  
(1) Social unrest.  
(2) Industrial unrest.  
(3) Economic uncertainty.  
(4) Governmental uneasiness.
    - b. The unexpected tests' preparation.  
Who is prepared to live?
  2. The "Prearranging Grace" of God.
    - a. Old-time preachers spoke of "prevenient grace."
    - b. Fatalism? No! Trust!
    - c. The God of emergencies.

#### II. "GOD DOTH GO BEFORE"—A SENSE OF PREPARATION

1. God penetrates "tomorrow."
  - a. Prepares "tomorrow" for me.
  - b. Prepares me for "tomorrow."  
Job, "He knoweth the way I take."
2. Tomorrow not a "trackless waste."
  - a. Christ has made the journey of pain.  
"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18; 2 Peter 2:9).
  - b. Christ has made the journey of death.  
"And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3).
3. In every tomorrow there is God.
  - a. The eternity of God predicts this.
  - b. The omnipresence of God assures this.
  - c. The omniscience of God attests this.
  - d. The omnipotence of God confirms this.  
God, shaping arranging, ordering, preventing, etc., for my good and His glory.  
Matt. 8:28, "God maketh all things work together."—WESTCOTT.

*Illustration*—When the President of the U. S. travels by train a pilot engine is sent ahead to test the tracks and be certain all sidings are closed, that destination may be reached without harm.

#### III. "GOD DOTH GO BEFORE"—A SENSE OF COMRADESHIP

1. "Show me thy way" (Ex. 33:13).
  - a. Jesus said, "I am the way" (John 14:4-6).  
The way to God and heaven.
  - b. Christians referred to as those of "the way" (Acts 9:2).  
Christ the Way of life.
  - c. The Christian's Way is God's Way.

- (1) *Illustration*—Daniel Boone blazed a trail for those who would follow. Johnnie Applesseed, in early days of western migration, collected apple seeds in the East and planted them along the trails in the West for those who should follow.
- (2) God has been this way.  
The loneliness and longness of the journey dispelled by the indications of God.
2. "Show me thy glory" (Ex. 33:18).
- a. The glory of God is the manifest presence of God.  
"If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:15).  
"My presence shall go with thee and give thee rest" (Ex. 33:14).  
"Wherein shall it be known that we have found favor in thy sight unless thou goest with us" (Ex. 33:16).
- b. The presence is vouchsafed for the entire journey.  
Matt. 28:20, "Lo I am with thee alway, even unto the end of the world."  
*Illustration*—In Bunyan's story of Christiana, Christian's wife, in her journey to the Celestial City, Greatheart, the soldier and guide, was granted her for the entire journey.

## CONCLUSION

1. We must take the way if we would have the Presence and be assured of the destination.
2. Figure in one of Wordsworth's poems:  
Bird swept from the shores of Norway by storm, battled until exhausted, and then giving up threw itself upon the breast of the gale and was blown to the sunny shores of England.

## January 3—Evening

*The Bible Fool*

TEXT—*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* (Luke 12:20).

SCRIPTURE READING—Luke 12:13-21.

## INTRODUCTION

1. An investigation of the term "fool."
  - a. Matt. 5:22 forbids the use of the term.
  - b. Luke 12:20 apparently commits the very error that Matthew forbids.
  - c. 1 Cor. 3:18 seems to commend one for being a fool.
  - d. 2 Cor. 12:11 Paul rather glories in being a fool for Christ's sake.
2. The unthinking one sees nothing but contradiction and confusion here.
  - a. New Testament use of the word "fool."
    - (1) Matt. 5:22 means "vile, worthless, rebel, an unbelieving one, an atheist, (as Psa. 14:1)." The use of the term in this sense is forbidden.
    - (2) Luke 12:20, 1 Cor. 3:18, 2 Cor. 12:11, the term means, "want of understanding, dull, stupid, witless. Thus, One who does not perceive what is passing.  
*Illustration*—As a statue; one who misses the significance and value of life.
  - b. It is in this general use of the term that Jesus and Paul employ it.
    - (1) Paul glories in that he has become so absorbed in God that earth's charms have lost their attraction and thus to the world he has become a witless person, a fool.
    - (2) Jesus declares that the rich man of the text, in that he has become so absorbed in earth's values, has become witless, dull and stupid toward God, thus a fool.

## I. CONSIDERATIONS IN WHICH HE WAS A COMMENDABLE PERSON

1. Nowhere is he accused of immorality or of fraudulent practices.
  - a. No doubt a respected citizen.
  - b. No doubt exemplary in conduct.
2. He was evidently ambitious, industrious and thrifty.
  - a. These are commendable qualities.
  - b. Evidently rich—no harm in this. (Danger—but no harm).
3. Three questions to be answered.
 

*Illustration*—An old gentleman at the close of a busy and successful career said he thought there would be three questions put to him at the judgment day.

  - a. Did you make all you could?
  - b. How did you make it?
  - c. What use did you make of it?

*Note*—The rich fool of the parable could undoubtedly answer the first two questions satisfactorily but he with others fail to pass the test of question three.

## II. CONSIDERATIONS IN WHICH HE WAS A FOOLISH PERSON

1. Utter absence of any idea of, or reference to God in thought or speech.
  - a. Prosperity became channel of godlessness.
    - (1) Depression not the worst foe of godliness.
    - (2) Some men cannot endure success.
  - b. What he called his own was not his own.

### *Illustrations:*

Nebuchadnezzar, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" (Dan. 4:30).

Herod, smote by an angel of God because he gave not glory to God (Acts 12:21-23).

- c. "What has been lent of God should be used of God."
- d. "What has been lent of God will be recalled by God."—A. CLARKE.
- e. It is the mark of a wicked heart for a man to ignore God.
2. Supposing that this world's goods could satisfy his soul.
  - a. He made the things of this life his chief good.
  - b. Presumed that he would have long life in which to enjoy it.
  - c. Thought himself rich when he was really poor.
  - d. He was serving time and forgetting eternity.

## III. INDICATIONS OF GOD'S REPROOF

1. The man was called away
  - a. Suddenly.
  - b. Unexpectedly.
  - c. Irretrievably.
2. Circumstances of his death.
  - a. The mockery of it.
    - (1) Death, amidst plenty.
    - (2) Poverty seems better suited to death.
  - b. The horror of it, "This night."
    - (1) The night of his folly.
    - (2) It is always night when men forget God.

*Illustrations*—Belshazzar's night of folly. "Judah went out and it was night" (John 13:30).

3. An immediate accounting demanded.
  - a. Not of his goods, primarily,
    - (1) "Our last robe is made without pockets."
    - (2) What we take with us must be in our hearts.
  - b. This accounting was of his soul.
 

"Thy soul is required of thee."

    - (1) Relation of world's goods to soul's condition.
 

Have the years brought fuller barns or fuller hearts?
    - (2) When a man loses his soul—
 

He never means to lose it.

"He not only pays the price, but he loses the purchase."
    - (3) A man may lose his soul and never gain the world.
 

"Love of money the root of evil."

### CONCLUSION

1. The Fool's Mistake.
  - a. Resolved to pull down barns, but not to destroy sin.
  - b. Resolved to build, but not build on the Rock of Ages.
2. The inevitable reckoning with God.
 

"Then whose shall these things be?"

"The loss of wealth is much,  
The loss of health is more,  
But the loss of the soul is such a loss,  
That no man can restore."

### January 10—Morning

#### *Ownership or Stewardship*

*TEXT*—As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1 Peter 4:10).

*SCRIPTURE READING*—Matt. 25:14-30.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The subject of man's accountability.
  - a. As old as history itself.
  - b. It has entered into all philosophies and all religions.
2. The Christian religion places emphasis here.
  - a. All life is looked upon as a trust from God.



- b. The coming judgment where each must give account to God of his trust.
  - c. The man who believes in his personal responsibility to God is an entirely different person.
3. Questions that need to be asked and answered that will more clearly define Possession, Ownership, and Accountability.

I. DOES POSSESSION DETERMINE OWNERSHIP?

1. To acquire and to possess, are fundamental instincts.

*Illustrations*—The child, "My toys."  
 The housewife, "My home."  
 The business man, "My money."  
 The young man, "My time."  
 The bride, "My future."

- 2. To give title to land points back to God.
  - a. A complete proof of title will trace ownership of property back to government, to Indians, to God.
  - b. We have learned much about ownership during years since World War.
    - (1) Heavy taxes for the privilege of saying "Mine."
    - (2) Depression has released our grasp on much we called "ours."
  - c. Title does not guarantee ownership.
    - (1) The law grants a title to possession.
    - (2) Possession and ownership are not synonymous terms.

*Note*—Israel recognized this: "The earth is the Lord's; unto you is it given for a possession."

"The land shall not be sold forever, for the land is mine; I am the Lord your God."

(3) "Have dominion." Gen. 1:28-30 refers primarily to fruitage of earth, bird, beast, fish, herb and seed.

- 3. Ownership inheres in God.
  - a. Ownership as stated in the Old Testament. Gen. 14:22, "All belongs to God most high, possessor of heaven and earth."  
 Psa. 50:10, 11, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, I know all the birds of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the fields are mine."  
 Hag. 2:8, "The silver and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts."

Deut. 8:17, 18, "And lest thou say in thy heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God, for it is he that hath given thee power to get wealth."

- b. Ownership in the New Testament.  
 1 Cor. 4:7, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

James 1:17, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father."

*Parables:*

Talents—Matt. 25:14-30, Talents point out our duty to use, increase and return.  
 Pounds—Luke 19:11-27.  
 Vineyard—Mark 12:1-9.

- c. God, the Creator of all, is owner.  
*Illustration*—Dr. E. M. Patent asks—  
 How did I get what I have?  
 (1) If I am a barbarian, I no doubt fought for it.  
 (2) If I am a twentieth century gentleman, I have it with the consent of society.  
 (3) But if I am a Christian, all I possess and I myself am owned of God.

II. ALL LIFE IS A STEWARDSHIP

- 1. Stewardship is partnership with God.
  - a. All life is a trust, a stewardship.
    - (1) All vital energy, physical, mental, moral, or spiritual is from God.
    - (2) All the immeasurable store of material wealth, air, water, soil, minerals, plant and animal life, is God's.
    - (3) Time is lent of God.
    - (4) Money is a part of the stewardship. Money represents life—the life of the earner.
  - b. Stewardship is partnership.
    - (1) Old Testament—the steward was a trusted servant.

*Illustration*—Joseph, in whose hands Potiphar placed his entire possessions and the operation of his household (Gen. 39).  
 Eliezer was Abraham's trusted servant in whose control were all the affairs of his master (Gen. 15).

- (2) New Testament purifies this conception of steward. Steward not a servant but a trusted friend, with whom the lord of affairs enters a confident relation of trust.
2. Stewardship a threefold partnership.
- a. God, society and the individual.
- (1) God supplies life and the materials of trust.
- (2) Individual contributes the will to co-operate in use of talents, time, energy and all the materials of trust.
- (3) Society provides the field of operation and the place of service.
- b. The partnership must be actual.
- (1) No one may then claim ownership.
- (2) Anyone may make legitimate demand upon the materials of trust in keeping with ability, and opportunity of service.

### III. THE TITHE IS THE RECOGNITION OF STEWARDSHIP

1. The tithe is the recognition of God's ownership.
- a. All time a trust from God and therefore belongs to God.
- Illustration*—Sabbath is no more God's than the other six. We observe the Sabbath in recognition that all time is God's.
- b. The tithe recognizes God's claim upon all we are and all we possess. We give the tithe regularly, recognizing that the balance belongs to God, is being employed as for Him, and is subject to His call at any time.
- c. The tithe is the test. Recognizing the ownership of God and the sacredness of our trust.
2. The tithe is our minimum.
- a. It is not a question of how much one gives, it is rather how much does one have left.

(1) Alibis:

Man of moderate means says it is unfair for rich to give only tithe—see how much he has left.

Man of larger income declares it is all right for poor man to tithe but it is too much to lose to tithe large amounts.

(2) Tithes and offerings.

"And offerings" is the place where giving is equalized, where one recognizes the claims of stewardship.

- b. The tithe is the working basis.
- "Systematic Religion."
- Regularity in church attendance, prayer, and giving—the tithe.
3. Why should I tithe?
- a. The tithe recognizes the sacredness of life as a trust.
- b. It places giving on a business basis.
- Giving out of principle rather than sentiment.
- c. Setting aside of the tithe provides the tither with ready money for any worthy object which makes its appeal through the Spirit.
- d. Giving of the tithe provides a working capital for the church.
- e. The tithing Christian is ever a happy Christian.
- f. Tithing will solve every normal financial problem of the church.

#### CONCLUSION

"Will a man rob God?"

#### January 10—Evening

#### *The Handwriting of God*

TEXT—*This is the finger of God* (Ex. 8:19).

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The origin of handwriting.
- a. Civilization, we are told, began with the reduction of language to writing.
- b. The first writing was picture symbols. Like sign language in speech.
- c. Different peoples, different styles of writing.
2. Graphology.
- a. The study or science of handwriting.
- b. The art of judging a person's character, disposition and aptitudes from his handwriting.

*Illustration*—Handwriting experts.

3. The handwriting of God.

- a. The Bible records that God wrote four times.
- b. The examination of these writings express to us the will and nature of God.

#### I. GOD WROTE IN STONE

1. "Written with the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18).

"The writing was the writing of God" (Ex. 32:16).

2. "Tables of stone" (Ex. 31:18; Deut. 5:22).
3. The message was law (Ex. 31; Deut. 5).
  - a. Law is a statement of relationships.
  - b. Law is a rule or standard of conduct and action.
4. The law of God expresses the nature of God.
  - a. The law is based upon what God is.
  - b. The law is based upon what man ought to be.
5. Broken tables of stone (Ex. 32:19).
  - a. Broken tables signify broken law.
  - b. No power in the law to enable man to keep the law. The history of man is a history of broken law.

## II. GOD WROTE IN FIRE

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand and wrote" (Dan. 5:5).

1. The hand of justice.
 

"The king saw the part of the hand that wrote."

  - a. "Out of the sleeve of midnight."
  - b. Burning letters of fire (wrath).
2. The message was judgment.
  - a. "Thou art weighed in the balance" (Dan. 5:27).
  - b. "Thou art found wanting."
3. The transgressor condemned.
  - a. The king knew the law.
 

"And thou, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart though thou knewest all this" (Dan. 5:22).
  - b. The king was condemned.
 

"His thoughts troubled him" (Dan. 5:6).
  - c. The king was destroyed.
 

"In that night was Belshazzar the king slain" (Dan. 5:30).

## III. GOD WROTE IN SAND

1. The incident (John 8:1-11).
 

The Pharisees bring a woman guilty of adultery to Jesus.
2. The hand was mercy.
  - a. What did Jesus write in sand?
 

Some say *sins* of Pharisees.  
Some say *law* of Moses.  
Some say *promises* of forgiveness.  
"Come now let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1:18).

"Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:11).

- b. I believe it was forgiveness.
3. The message was pardon.
  - a. Jesus and the woman alone.
 

"The woman standing in the midst" (v. 9). Broken-hearted, tear-stained, frightened. A broken heart, alone with Jesus.
  - b. Contrast of law and mercy.
 

"Moses commanded us" (v. 5).  
"What sayest thou?" (v. 5).
  - c. Jesus says—
 

"Neither do I condemn thee."  
"Go and sin no more" (v. 11).

## IV. GOD WROTE ON THE HEART

1. The parchment of human hearts.
  - a. Law upon stone was outer and lifeless.
  - b. Law upon the heart is inner and living.
 

"Ye are the epistles of Christ—not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3).  
See Ezek. 36:24-28. Heb. 8:10.
2. The penman is God.
 

"Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor. 3:3).

  - a. The in-working of grace (Heb. 10:16).
 

b. "It is God that worketh in you."
3. The message is love.
 

"I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Heb. 8:10; Ezek. 36:28).

  - a. The law becomes a delight (Psa. 1:2; 119:77).
  - b. Love makes law a delight.

### CONCLUSION—THE DIVINE PENMAN

1. Chooses parchment in keeping with character of message.
2. Do you recognize the handwriting as God's?
3. The message is God's message!

### January 17—Morning

#### *Songs in the Night*

TEXT—*But none saith, where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?* (Job 35:10).

SCRIPTURE READING—Heb. 11:8-16; 24-39.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Elihu is here attempting to diagnose Job's condition.
  - a. He states that the oppressed cry in their affliction.

- b. But that they fail to cry unto God.
- c. God would give comfort in the night of affliction.

2. We often fail to rightly value our shadow experience.

- a. We credit the days and discredit the nights.  
Nights are times of rest and relaxation.  
Times of refreshment and meditation.  
Times of reflection and correction.  
Times of planning and resolution.
- b. Our nights should be the key to our days.

3. The night has its songs.

- a. Nature's night sings a rich melody.  
The lap of the waves upon the shore.  
The harmony of the stars in their courses.  
The murmuring of the breeze in the trees and the grasses.  
The plaintive and staccato night calls of insect, bird and beast blend into a natural harmony.
- b. God has night songs for His children.

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN'S NIGHT SONGS

- 1. Any man can have song in the day.
  - a. When success attains his efforts.  
Prosperity, influence, health.
  - b. Easy enough to sing when you can see the notes. Any little bird in the sunshine can sing.

*Illustration*—It is only the nightingale and the mocking bird that sing in the night. It is their nature.

- 2. Man-made songs do not carry in the night.
  - a. Man's theories of hope are mockery.

*Illustration*—A noted infidel announced that there would be no songs at the grave of his brother.

- b. Man's songs are built on personal success. Therefore when sickness, reverse and loneliness come there are no songs suitable.

*Illustration*—Habakkuk said, "Though the fig trees do not blossom yet will I trust thee." Job declared, "Though thou slayest me yet will I trust thee."

- 3. God inspires the Christian's night song.
  - a. Confidence in God enables a man to sing when he cannot see.
  - b. God is the Christian's song. Daylight in the soul.

*Illustration*—The promises of God read the same in the darkness as in the daylight.

II. WHAT IS THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE NIGHT SONGS?

- 1. The songs of the man who has lost God.
  - a. Sings of his troubles.
  - b. Sings of days that are past or memory of time when he knew God.
  - c. Sings the false note of earthly pleasure. "Vanity, all is vanity," cries Solomon.
- 2. Three types of God-given night songs.
  - a. Song of Thanksgiving.
    - (1) Deliverance from pain.
    - (2) Deliverance from temptation.

*Illustration*—Children of Israel delivered from Egypt and the armies of Pharaoh by the Red Sea. Upon the banks of the Red Sea they sang their songs of deliverance (Ex. 15:1-27).

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously."

"The Lord is my strength and song, and he has become my salvation."

- b. Songs of faith.
  - (1) Heb. 11:33-39, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises . . . these all obtained a good report through faith."
  - (2) Paul and Silas in Philippian jail at the midnight hour.
  - (3) Paul on shipboard en route to Rome, in darkest hours of storm declares, "Sirs, be of good cheer for I believe God."
- c. Songs of hope.
  - (1) The day cometh!  
"The night cometh and also the day."  
"The evening and the morning were the first day."
  - (2) The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The fig tree is already budding. The signs of the times indicate His nearness. "Lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh." "Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus."

(3) The grave will soon be robbed of its prey.

3. The excellences of these night songs.

a. A song under trial is a hearty one.

*Illustration*—Missionary girls in China sang as they laid their heads under the decapitating knife.

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for every one, And there's a cross for me."

b. Such songs discomfit the devil. The devil cannot bear a song.

*Illustration*—Gideon's men sang, "The song of the Lord and Gideon," and put the enemy to flight.

Israel sang and shouted as they marched around Jericho.

c. Such songs are a serenade under the window of God.

*Illustration*—Colored chef in Holiness College testified that he awoke in the night with a whole quartet singing in his heart. A love song to God.

4. Such songs cheer struggling souls.

5. Such songs prove the sufficiency of God's grace to keep and to bless.

#### CONCLUSION

Hell—

The night of eternal songlessness.

Heaven—

The day of eternal song.

#### January 17—Evening

##### *Impossible Gain*

TEXT—*What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* (Mark 8:36).

#### INTRODUCTION

1. There are many Bible pictures of Satan

a. Adversary of God and man (1 Peter 5:8).

b. A fowler (Psa. 91:3).

c. A sower of tares (Matt. 13:25-28).

d. A wolf (John 10:12).

e. A roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8).

2. No picture more fitting than that of serpent (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9; 20:2).

a. Thus he came to our first parents.

b. Deception the prime characteristic of his nature.

"Deceive if possible, the elect" (Mark 13:22; 2 Cor. 11:3).

"The wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11).

"Satan transformed into angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14).

"Father of lies" (John 8:44).

3. The text implies one of the devil's lies.

The world may be gained.

The soul is not lost, but if lost can be recovered.

#### I. THE WORLD CANNOT BE GAINED

1. That the world may be gained is

a. The acquisitive instinct.

*Illustration*—Youth dreams of possessions.

(1) The desire to acquire is God-given.

(2) When controlled toward worthy ends is to be commended.

b. The desire to acquire may become a ruling passion.

(1) To acquire, a good servant, but poor master.

(2) To acquire, may so rule that all other values in life are obliterated.

(3) The end (to acquire) will seem to justify the means.

(4) A lust for acquiring.

*Illustration*—Dickens's picture in "Oliver Twist" of the Jew who drove his lads to pocketpicking while he counted his gold.

c. The lure of things.

(1) Men have shut themselves from their homes and families by the drive of the office for gain.

(2) Men have excluded music, art, literature and the finer arts for the harsh clink of gold in the marts of trade.

(3) Men have put the church, religion and God out of their lives that they might satisfy the acquisitive urge.

d. This urge to acquire not always for gold.

(1) May be intellectual attainment.

(2) May be for social prestige.

(3) May be for political power.

(4) Anything that warps the nature, gives one an unbalanced sense of life's values, that shuts out God and eternal verities for the fleeting "now" and the perishing "present."

2. Little of this world that can be acquired.

a. No one man can know everything. Few men know much.

- b. No man can own everything. Most of us live from hand to mouth. Someone has said that most men live thirty days from the poorhouse. We have realized this during the depression.
- c. No one man can politically control the world—at least not for long.

*Illustrations:*

Alexander the Great soon passed.  
 Napoleon's sun soon set.  
 Kaiser's bubble soon burst.  
 Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and all other dictators will soon be forgotten.

- d. What one does acquire is loosely held.
  - (1) The depression has taught us this.
 

*Illustration*—Bank accounts one morning—banks closed the next. Real estate worth thousands today—sold for taxes tomorrow. Investments that promised good returns—a liability.
  - (2) There are no pockets in shrouds.
 

Job 1:21—"Naked came I into this world and naked shall I return hither." Also see Ecc. 5:15 and Psa. 49:17.

1 Tim. 6:7—"For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

## II. THE SOUL MAY BE LOST

- 1. The soul is the only ultimate human value or retainer of value.
  - a. All other values are instrumental. Gold is valuable because it serves the wants of a person. Real estate is valuable only as it serves a person. Beauty is only beautiful as there are persons to appreciate it. All human values must be valuable to persons to be of worth.
  - b. The soul is all we really have, for it is all we really are. The soul cannot retain "things." It is only what of satisfaction and enrichment that things bring to the soul that makes them valuable.
- 2. The soul may be lost.
  - a. Things may and soon will be lost, we must agree.
  - b. The soul may be lost as well.
    - (1) What do we mean by "lost soul"? Lost to the purpose for which intended.

*Illustration*—"I lost my purse or my home" does not mean their obliteration but that they have slipped from my grasp, my control or my purse.

"I lost my child," lost from my arms, my care, my home, my protection.

- (2) Soul lost.
  - Lost to contentment, satisfaction, happiness for which it is capacitated.
  - Lost to service of which it is capable.
  - Lost to companionship for which it was created.
- c. The soul may be lost
  - (1) Easily.
  - (2) Eternally.
  - (3) Irretrievably.

## III. THE REPORT AFTER GAIN MAY PRECIPITATE THE SOUL'S LOSS

- 1. By diverting attention.
- 2. By absorbing one's time.
- 3. By making secondary things first.
- 4. By setting up false standards of value.
- 5. By neglecting one's soul.

*Illustration*—Balloon ascension. Man falls from the parachute. I cry, "He is lost." He has not hit the ground. He is not yet dead. Gravity has him and unless a stronger power immediately intervenes, he is gone. After three seconds of falling the rate of his fall is so accelerated that any power sufficient to save him would kill him.

## IV. WHAT MAY ONE GIVE TO RECOVER ONE'S SOUL ONCE IT IS LOST?

- 1. What will he have to give?
  - a. Give his time? It is spent.
  - b. Opportunity? Already passed.
  - c. Talents? Squandered.
  - d. Possessions? Fallen through fingers.
 

*Illustration*—The soul in bankruptcy.
  - e. Calvary holds the only price for man's redemption, and Calvary has been rejected.
- 2. To whom shall the price for recovery of soul be paid?
  - a. Christ? He has been rejected.
  - b. Holy Ghost? He has departed.
 

*Illustration*—Business is transacted only when store is open for trade. Think of it! The store of mercy closed!
- 3. The selling price of souls.

- a. Historically:
- (1) Esau—satisfaction of appetite.
  - (2) Saul—a craving for power.
  - (3) Judas—30 pieces of silver.
  - (4) Ananias—a parcel of real estate.
- b. What are you getting in exchange for your soul? Most of you are driving poorer bargains than Esau, Saul, Judas or Ananias.
- c. What is your soul worth?
- (1) What is it worth to you? It is all that you have.
  - (2) What is it worth to God? He gave His Son!

#### CONCLUSION

The tragic implication of the text, "Once lost—forever lost."

*Illustration*—College mathematical genius asked at his graduation by an old minister, "You are proficient at mathematics, solve this problem in profit and loss. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul?"

*Illustration*—Eternity's pauper.

#### January 24—Morning

##### *Christ's Legacy*

TEXT—*I give unto you* (John 14:27).

#### INTRODUCTION

This passage taken from the closing moments of Christ's earthly ministry.

#### 1. Meaningful last things.

Last words, last events, last instructions, last moments, are always most cherished.

*Illustration*—Picture Christ with disciples about Him giving final instructions as to the disposition of those things most cherished by Him.

#### 2. What had Christ to leave to believers?

##### a. The world's most benevolent poor man.

A borrowed cradle for His birth.

A borrowed colt for His triumphal entry.

A borrowed grave in which to be laid at death.

"Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20).

##### b. He had naught to bestow that would rate on the stock exchange or in the marts of trade.

##### c. Christ's giving had to do with comforts, blessings, inspirations, assurances.

These exhaust all language to express.

Christ gave with open hands and open heart.

Christ gave Himself.

*Note*—We couch the giving of Christ in terms of modern worth that we may be the better understood.

#### I. CHRIST BEQUEATHS HIS CAPITAL

##### 1. "My peace I give unto you" (v. 27).

###### a. The world has peace.

(1) The peace of the world is cessation from struggle, strife, turmoil, labor.

(2) The peace of the world is the satisfaction derived from the attainment of the desired end.

###### b. The peace that Jesus gives is:

(1) Perfect adjustment to God and man.

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Romans 5:1).

(2) Rest in activity, storm and stress.

Peace in the midst of struggle, temptation and defeat.

*Illustration*—Artists in competition paint their conception of peace. One paints a calm sea flooded by unbroken moonlight. A second paints a meadow with sheep and cattle contentedly resting beneath a widespreading tree with a quiet stream nearby. A third paints a waterfall with dash and spray, rolling, tumbling, surging. Beneath falls on a jutting rock a bird sitting peacefully upon her nest undisturbed by the falls about her. This was peace in the midst of storm—an inner peace.

(3) Christ's peace is not deliverance or escape from temptation, struggle and pain; it is calm assurance; it is enablement in the midst of storm.

##### 2. "My joy fulfilled in them" (John 17:13).

###### a. The world has its joy.

(1) It is the joy of pleasure, success.

(2) It is the joy of passing events and associations and fades with the events and associations.

(3) It is dependent upon outer sources.

###### b. The joy of the Lord is inner and lasting.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength."

(1) Peace and joy are fundamentally the same.

(2) Joy is "peace in motion."

*Illustration*—Joy is the active wave upon the surface of the sea but is dependent upon the quiet depths of the waters of peace that lie beneath.

- c. Christ does not deal in silver and gold, He deals in soul qualities.  
 “Righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost.”

## II. CHRIST BEQUEATHS HIS BUSINESS

1. Christ gives us His message.  
 “I have given them thy word” (John 17:8, 14).
  - a. Christ’s business was the proclamation of a message.
    - (1) A message of repentance.  
Forsaking of sin.
    - (2) A message of welcome  
“Come unto me.”
    - (3) A message of enablement  
“Tarry ye, until ye be endued with power.”
  - b. This threefold message committed to believers for proclamation.
    - (1) We are not called to proclaim the speculative or the sensational.
    - (2) Ours is a message necessary to prepare to live, to die and to live hereafter.
2. Christ gives to us His work (John 14:12).
  - a. The work of Jesus was for others  
To minister to every human distress.
  - b. The work of Jesus was salvation.  
Christ provided salvation for men.  
It is ours to bring men to salvation.  
May not this be the “greater works than I do” that Jesus committed to believers?

## III. CHRIST BEQUEATHS HIS SOCIAL CIRCLE

1. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them” (John 17:22).
  - a. God’s glory is God’s presence.  
*Note*—The glory above the mercy seat in the holy of holies in the tabernacle of old was Jehovah’s presence.
  - b. “My presence shall go with thee.”
2. “Another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).  
 “The Comforter which is the Holy Ghost” (John 14:26).
3. “Lo I am with you alway.”
  - a. The assurance of the companionship of Jesus.

- b. We must make vital and real this heavenly association.

## IV. CHRIST BEQUEATHS HIS REAL ESTATE

1. “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).
  - a. The last mission of Jesus was to prepare a home for believers.

*Illustration*—Aged building contractor lay dying. Turning to his pastor he said, “Pastor, the last undertaking of Jesus was the building of a heavenly mansion and I have word that my home is about completed. He is coming soon for me that I may occupy my new home.”

- b. What kind of home?
    - (1) A home in keeping with Christ’s ability to prepare.
    - (2) A home in keeping with our capacity to enjoy.
- “O think of the home over there.”
2. “That where I am there ye may be also” (John 14:3).
    - a. “Where Jesus is ’tis heaven there.”  
 “This world is but a resting place,  
 This world is not my home.”
    - b. The joy of this inheritance.

*Illustration*—Little girl rocking her dollies to the tune of lullaby in the yard of a run-down, dilapidated old house. A passerby asked her how she could sing with such an old house in which to live. She pointed across the meadows to a new house, nearly completed and said, “I am not singing about this old house, I am singing about that new one over there. We are going to move next week.”

## CONCLUSION

Inheritance is for blood-kin only!

*Illustration*—It is said that within the Bank of England are millions of dollars of unbestowed legacies would-be heirs are unable to prove their claim to relationship.

## January 24—Evening Unprofitable Sorrow

TEXT—When the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful (Matthew 19:22).

## INTRODUCTION

The story of the text, Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:18-30.

A momentous interview.

Two rules—Jesus and the young ruler.



## I. THE COMING OF CHRIST

1. How he came to Jesus.
  - a. The fact that he came is commendable.
  - b. He came publicly.  
What this may have meant.  
A rich young ruler coming to an unpopular Christ.
  - c. He came earnestly.  
"There came one running" (Mark 10:17).

*Illustration*—Christian of *Pilgrim's Progress* ran toward the Celestial City with fingers in his ears, crying, "Life, life, eternal life."

- d. He came humbly.  
"And kneeled to him" (Mark 10:17).  
It is a manly thing to pray.

*Illustration*—Saul of Tarsus, "Behold he prayeth" (Acts 9:11). Saul the persecutor had turned to Saul the prayer. It is an encouraging indication when men pray.

- e. He came reverently.  
"Good Master" (v. 16).  
He is certainly near the kingdom.  
Just one step more and he will make it.

2. Why he came to Jesus.
  - a. What he had gave him no satisfaction.  
He had position and prestige.  
He had wealth and luxury.  
He had youth and honor.
  - b. He believed in a future life for which he was unprepared.  
"How may I inherit eternal life?"
  - c. He had a sincere concern about his need.  
Awakening precedes action.

## II. THE INTERVIEW WITH CHRIST

1. His approach to Christ received the sympathetic attention of Christ.
2. He earnestly stated to Christ the object of his quest.
3. Christ laid clearly before him the terms upon which his request would be granted.
4. The granting of his request became a matter of his personal choice.

## III. THE DEPARTURE FROM CHRIST

1. Why he went away.
  - a. He loved riches more than Christ.  
Strength of a man's desire will be tested.
  - b. The terms of life eternal demanded the destruction of his idol.
  - c. He desired eternal life on his own terms.  
He wanted God and mammon.
2. How he went away.

- a. With complete knowledge of what was demanded of him.
  - b. He went away deliberately after a studied choice.
  - c. He went away with a full purse but an empty heart.
  - d. He went away sorrowfully—but nevertheless away.
3. Where did he go?
    - a. Away from Christ!
      - (1) Away from Christ means away from all that his heart had sought in Christ.
      - (2) Away from Christ is the path to eternal night.
    - b. Back to all he had left before he sought Christ.
      - (1) Back to old friends.
      - (2) Back to old pleasures.
      - (3) Back to his riches.
      - (4) Back to the old discontent.
      - (5) Back to the results of his own way.

4. Jesus let him go!
  - a. Christ will not violate a man's choice.
  - b. Christ loved him but could not save him against his choice.
  - c. Nothing more heard from him. He is lost from history.

## CONCLUSION

"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."  
"One thing thou lackest."  
"Almost" is failure.  
"One thing" is sufficient barrier.

## January 31—Morning

TEXT—*I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service* (Romans 12:1).

## INTRODUCTION

1. Paul the theologian.  
In the foregoing chapters Paul has been dealing with the fundamental doctrines of Christian faith.
2. Paul the practical preacher.  
We think of John and James as the practical preachers, but no more emphatic insistence upon applied Christianity is to be found in the New Testament than in the writings of Paul.

3. The earnestness of Paul's appeal.  
 "I beseech you, brethren."  
 "By the mercies of God."

#### I. THE SACRIFICE TO BE OFFERED

1. The principle and necessity of sacrifice.
  - a. Found in nature, history and Bible.
  - b. Ceremonial sacrifice—Moses.
  - c. Meritorious sacrifice—Christ.
  - d. Living sacrifice—Christian.
2. "Present your *bodies*."
  - a. We readily commit our souls but reserve our bodies to serve our own ends.
  - b. *Bodies* emphasized as the medium of soul's expression.
  - c. The completed man—*all* must be presented to God.
3. Present *your own* body.
  - a. The Jew must bring *his* lamb.
  - b. No ceremonial substitution can replace the Christian's giving of himself to God.
  - c. Not even the sacrifice of Christ obviates the necessity of my giving of myself to God.
  - d. This places it upon the personal and individual basis.
4. "Present" your body.
  - a. Relinquish all claim.  
*Illustration*—Indian givers are said to be those who give and then withdraw their gift.
  - b. We must lay upon the altar of God all we have, all we control, and all we are.
  - c. As the lamb was given over unto death so the Christian must be abandoned to God.  
 "Here I give my all to Thee,  
 Friends and time and earthly store.  
 Soul and body Thine to be,  
 Wholly Thine forever more."

#### II. THE NATURE OF THIS SACRIFICE

1. A *living* sacrifice.
  - a. Living—as contrasted with dead sacrifices of Jewish altars.
  - b. Christ's death forever removed dead sacrifices from the altar.
  - c. Living sacrifices—yet given over in fellowship and service as completely as though severed from the past by death.
  - d. Living sacrifice—as continuous.  
 The Christian sacrifice a sacrificial life.
2. A *holy* sacrifice.
 

"Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost."

- a. A holy sacrifice for a holy service to a holy God.  
 "Sanctify" means set apart, but it is illogical to set apart an unholy sacrifice for a holy God.
  - b. "Whatsoever toucheth the altar is made holy."
  - c. Holy in the sense of a cleansing from everything that would hinder a holy service to God.
3. An *acceptable* sacrifice.
    - a. Acceptable—R. V., "well-pleasing."
    - b. An approved sacrifice.

#### III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS SACRIFICE

1. A *nonconforming* to this world.
  - a. A soul committed to God in yieldedness will seek conformity to God's will.
  - b. Worldliness—Dr. Jowett defines it as life on low levels.  
 Submission to God raises the living to high levels.  
 "Delivered from this present world" (Galatians 1:4).
2. A transforming of the inner man.
  - a. This is a sacrifice of the heart.
  - b. The transformed inner life guarantees a transformed outer life.
  - c. Transformed may be translated "renewing." Thus a made new inner man.
3. An enlarging experience of the will of God.
  - a. Putting God to the test.
    - (1) "Proving" to oneself and to the world the will of God.
    - (2) "Proving," a demonstration of the workableness of God's will. (The practicality of God's will.)
  - b. Seeking the superlative.  
 "That good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

#### CONCLUSION

Paul by earnest appeal calls all believers to meet the provisions of the sacrifice of Christ for them by a sacrifice of themselves to God for others.

January 31—Evening

*Salvation Parables*

TEXT—*This man receiveth sinners* (Luke 15:2).

LESSON FOUNDATION—Luke 15:1-32.

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Three salvation parables here uttered by Jesus were given in answer to critical Phari-

sees who would have discounted His ministry because He ate with and conversed with publicans, a thing forbidden in the traditions held by these legalistic religionists.

- a. Parable of the Lost Sheep.
  - b. Parable of the Lost Coin.
  - c. Parable of the Lost Son.
2. Jesus does not deny that He receives lost sinners but rather acknowledges that He receives them, and by these parables indicates the lostness of men and upon what basis He receives them.

#### I. THE THREEFOLD ASPECT OF LOSTNESS AS EXPRESSED BY THESE PARABLES

1. The Parable of the Lost Sheep.
  - a. Lost to safety and protection.
    - (1) Outside the fold and thus beyond any right to the shepherd's care.
    - (2) Outside the fold and thus subject to all the perils of wilderness and beasts of prey.
  - b. Helpless in lost condition.
    - (1) A lost sheep the most helpless of animals. May be lost within a few rods of familiar places.
    - (2) The sinner is helpless so far as recovering himself is concerned. Human attempts at salvation are futile.
2. The parable of the lost coin.
  - a. Lost to service.
    - (1) The value of a coin is dependent upon the service to which it may be placed.
    - (2) Every man has a place in the program of God and if he continues without Christ is lost to the purpose of God.
  - b. Carelessly lost.
    - (1) The coin not lost in the wilderness as the sheep, but lost in the house—in the home.
    - (2) A man may be lost in a home with a family altar, or in a church where he listens to the gospel.
3. The Parable of the Lost Son.
  - a. Lost to fellowship.
    - (1) Broken relationship between father and son.
    - (2) Man without Christ is lost to fellowship with God.
  - b. Wilfully lost.

(1) "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me."

"And he took his journey into a far country."

(2) With knowledge and deliberation he made his choice and left his father.

*Note*—These parables are progressive in their unfolding of the truth; lost to safety, to service, to fellowship; helpless, careless, wilful.

#### II. THE THREEFOLD SEEKING FOR THE SINNER'S RETURN

1. The Parable of the Lost Sheep.
  - a. The shepherd seeks.
    - (1) Leaves the ninety and nine.
    - (2) Braves the dangers of night and wilderness.
  - b. God has ever been seeking lost men.
    - (1) Garden, "Adam, where art thou?"
    - (2) In every dispensation God has been represented as seeking His lost sons' and daughters' return.
    - (3) Every agency of the cross and the Church indicates God's interest in the return of lost men.
2. The Parable of the Lost Coin.
  - a. The woman seeks.
    - (1) An intelligent search—lighted candle.
    - (2) A diligent search—with broom.
  - b. The woman represents the Church.
    - (1) Christ's Church should carry Christ's concern for the lost.
    - (2) The main business of the Church is soul-winning.
3. The Parable of the Lost Son.
  - a. The Prodigal.
    - (1) "When he came to himself."
    - (2) "Bread and to spare in my father's house."
    - (3) "I will arise and go to my father."
  - b. The yearning heart of the sinner.
    - (1) The sinner's heart calls for God.
    - (2) A seeking sinner and a seeking God will always find a happy meeting place.

*Note*—The shepherd sought the helpless sheep, the aroused woman sought the carelessly lost coin, but the wilfully lost son had to arise and as wilfully return to the father's house.

#### III. THE THREEFOLD REJOICING OVER THE RETURN OF THE SINNER

1. The Parable of the Lost Sheep.
  - a. "Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

- b. God's heart knows a deep satisfaction—"He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."
  - c. Who dare say that the news of returning lost is not taken to loved ones waiting in the heavenly home? "Tell Mother I'll be there."
2. The Parable of the Lost Coin
    - a. "Joy in the presence of the angels."
    - b. A happy church is a soul-winning church, and a soul-winning church is a happy church.
    - c. There is no joy like the joy derived from the knowledge of having won a soul to Christ save the personal knowledge of sins forgiven.
  3. The Parable of the Lost Son.
    - a. The forgiven heart a happy heart.
    - b. The returning son was the center of joy making.
      - (1) For whom the fatted calf? The unfed prodigal.
      - (2) For whom the ring? The unadorned prodigal.
      - (3) For whom the robe and shoes? The unclothed prodigal.
      - (4) For whom the social circle? The unbefriended prodigal.
      - (5) For whom the music? The unhappy prodigal.

## CONCLUSION

"Lord, I'm coming home."

## *Prayermeeting Suggestions for January*

LEWIS T. CORLETT

### A Purpose for the New Year

(Phil. 3:13)

1. To begin the year in a spirit of worship.
2. To live closer to God.
3. To honor God's Word.
4. To heed the Spirit's call.
5. To be a greater soul winner.

### The Right Way to Look

(2 Kings 13:17)

*Open the window eastward*

1. To the dawning of the day.
2. To the rising of the sun.
3. To the opportunity for a new beginning.
4. To a time of fresh service.
5. To another privilege of enjoying God's blessings and grace.

### A Hardship Turned Into a Joy

(1 Chron. 29:6-17)

Many people regard giving as a hardship. It should be a joy. Because of:

1. The Divine Reason for Giving—To become like God. He is the Greatest Giver (John 3:16).
2. The Divine Order in Giving (2 Cor. 8:5). Give Self first—then it is easy to give our money.
3. The Divine Proportion to Give (Mal. 3:10; Matt. 23:23).
4. The Divine Time to Give (1 Cor. 16:2).
5. The Divine Spirit in which to Give (2 Cor. 9:7).

6. The Divine Course from which to Give (1 Chron. 29:14; James 1:17).
7. The Divine Assurance Concerning Giving (Phil. 4:19).

--SELECTED.

### Objects of Our Love

*We love him, because he first loved us* (1 John 4:19).

- I. LOVE IS THE BOND OF UNION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN
- II. OBJECTS WHICH WE ARE COMMANDED NOT TO LOVE
  1. The world (1 John 2:15).
  2. Money (1 Tim. 6:10).
  3. Evil or things of iniquity (Matt. 24:12).
  4. Results of loving such objects is degrading to a man's higher life.
- III. OBJECTS WHICH WE ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE
  1. God (Matt. 22:37).
  2. Christ (Matt. 10:37).
  3. Mercy (Micah 6:8).
  4. One another (John 15:12).
  5. Neighbors (Matt. 22:39).
  6. Enemies (Matt. 5:44).
- IV. THE RESULTS OF LOVING THESE OBJECTS AND PERSONS IS CLEAR
  1. Love of such worketh no ill (Rom. 13:10).
  2. "They shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. 122:6).

3. There are blessings.
  - a. "But if any man loveth God, it is known of him."
  - b. The Lord giveth help (Jer. 31:3; Deut. 7:9).

### Christ Our Guide

(Matt. 4:19)

1. Christ Provides for the Journey (Phil. 4:19).
  2. Christ Bears Our Burdens (Psa. 55:22).
  3. Christ Must Have Strict Obedience (John 13:15).
  4. He will save us at the expense of His life if need be (John 10:4).
  5. He will surely lead us to our journey's end.
- SELECTED.

### Rewards of Obedience

(Prov. 3:6)

1. We must be constant to our duty, because that is the way to be happy.
  2. We must live a life of dependence on God, because that is the way to be safe.
  3. We must live in the fear of God, because that is the way to be healthful.
  4. We must serve God with our substance, because that is the way to be truly rich.
  5. We must bear afflictions well, because that is the way to profit by them.
  6. We must ask for wisdom, because by so doing we shall understand God's dealings with us.
- SELECTED.

### The Kingdom of Christ

(Dan. 2:34)

The Kingdom of Christ is:

1. Divine in its origin.
2. Humble in its beginning.
3. Progressive in its tendency.
4. Triumphant in its course.
5. Universal in its extent.
6. Eternal in its duration.—SELECTED.

### The Happy People

(Psalm 144:15)

There are many reasons why the people who serve God are happy.

1. Happy in the experience of God's pardon (Psalm 32:1).
2. Happy in the enjoyment of God's peace (Rom. 5:1).
3. Happy in the experience of a pure heart (Matt. 5:8).

4. Happy in the environment of God's protection (Psa. 125:2).
5. Happy in the expectancy of God's promise (Phil. 3:21).

### Sins Jesus Deplores Most

(Matt. 7:21-23)

Many people today have a different viewpoint of sin from that of Christ. Christ's viewpoint of sin is expressed in many ways but the following seem to call from Him the severest denunciation:

#### I. SELFISHNESS

1. Self-seeking (Matt. 20:26-28).
2. Self-satisfaction.
3. Self-righteous.

#### II. HARDHEARTEDNESS

1. Indifference to other people's tribulations.
2. Unforgiving spirit toward fellowman.
3. Uncharitableness in speaking and judging.

#### III. UNBELIEF

1. At Nazareth.
  2. At Capernaum.
  3. At Jerusalem.
- SELECTED.

### Endurance

(Rom. 12; Rev. 2:10)

- I. THE QUALITY OF STEADFASTNESS, LONGSUFFERING, PERSISTENCY
- II. ENDURANCE IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
  1. Greatest quality imparted by grace.
  2. Opposites rebuked (Eccl. 10:18; Prov. 19:15; Heb. 6:11, 12; Luke 9:22).
  3. Endurance commanded (Joshua 1; Psalm 24:17; Isa. 40:31; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Cor. 16:13).
  4. Rewards of endurance (Mark 13:13; James 1:12; 1 Peter 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

### The Wonderful Love of God

(1 John 3:1)

- I. GREATNESS SHOWN BY THE MANNER OF BESTOWMENT
  1. Provided by Christ.
  2. Given to man.
- II. GREATNESS AND GOODNESS SHOWN BY WHAT IT DOES FOR THE RECIPIENTS
  1. Provided a means of forgiveness (1 John 1:7).
  2. Provided a means of fellowship with God (1 John 1:3).
  3. This love provides baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27).

4. This love instils confidence (1 John 2:28).
5. This love promises eternal life (1 John 2:25).

### III. THIS LOVE IS MANIFESTED TO THE WORLD THROUGH THE RECIPIENTS

#### Walk in Love

(Eph. 5:2)

1. Imitating God.
  2. As Christ loved.
  3. Avoiding sin.
  4. Desiring and practicing the love of God for the world.
- V. ENJOYING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

#### Discipleship

(Matt. 16:24)

- I. LAW OF DISCIPLESHIP
  1. A deliberate choice.
  2. A cheerful choice.
  3. A resolute choice.
  4. A willing choice.
- II. TERMS OF DISCIPLESHIP
  1. Renouncing of self.
  2. Emptying of self.
  3. Abandonment of self.
  4. Taking up the cross.
  5. Following Christ.
- III. THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP PERSONS BECOME PARTAKERS OF GOD'S NATURE AND BLESSINGS

## "God Hath Spoken"

### An Outline Study of the Book of Hebrews

PAUL S. HILL

**T**HIS epistle does not start with an apostolic greeting, as is usual with the other epistles, but immediately states the case to be argued, and takes at once the stride of majestic reasoning and sublime eloquence, which is maintained throughout the entire epistle.

Look at the first word, "God." Here is no argument that there is a God, but by the very word there is at once presented a common ground of human belief. Humanity believes there is a God, and there is no better place for the beginning of an argument than a place of common belief. The introduction of this epistle by that word is a master stroke. There is no getting back of God.

Especially did the Hebrew people believe in God, and their idea of God was clear and fixed, as contrasted with the polytheistic notions of

the heathen world. And what better method of reasoning is there than to identify the God already mentioned as the God of the Hebrews, the God of the Old Testament, and thus distinguish Him from any pagan idol or heathen notion. And not only is God identified as the God of the Old Testament and the God of the Hebrews, but there is in the first verse of this epistle, not only a concession to Old Testament revelation, but a bold statement to this revelation as a fact. That is, the Old Testament revelation is not reluctantly granted, but emphatically asserted to be the truth. God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, *did* speak unto the fathers, by the prophets. Can there be any better beginning for an epistle to the Hebrew people?

Following hard on the claim of Old Testament revelation is the claim to a New Testament revelation. God hath spoken again. Read the second verse. Here is the verb of the sentence, "Hath . . . spoken." God hath spoken. The God of the Old Testament, the God of the Hebrew prophets and people, hath in these last days spoken again. Some writers, commenting on this epistle, have chosen certain expressions from the argument which they use as "key words," or expressions around which they build the whole epistle. To us it seems there is no better expression than this one, "God hath spoken by his Son."

Here is the beginning of the argument. All the foundation necessary has been laid, "God," all the content of the Old Testament, all the methods of Old Testament revelation. How well every point is guarded, what glad assent to all the Hebrew people believed regarding the Old Testament. What a quick and sure process of logic brought the argument to the place where the historical Christ could be presented, and the claim made that He was the Son of God! Note the introduction of the "New Testament," the "Historical Christ," the claim of "deity for Jesus," "*hath, in these last days, spoken unto us, by his Son.*" Surely there can be seen here a new development of Old Testament truth, another *speaking* of God, another event in revelation.

Although the Epistle to the Hebrews was written especially for the Hebrew people, yet there was a learned, and cultural system of philosophy and religion among the Greeks, which must be met with the doctrine of "Christ the Son of God." Among the philosophical teachings of the heathen could be traced a thought which could be expressed as "the divinity of man." This

thought, and this expression, are still in the world. It allows that Jesus was the Son of God, but also says, "So are we; we are all divine." It even allows Jesus a superplace among men, but still says "So are we divine." We do not wish here to develop this issue. What we want is to see what the writer of this epistle says about Jesus' being the Son of God, and when we have finished this chapter we are sure that Jesus will be shown holding a place that no other person, however "divine" he may be in his humanity, does, or could possibly hold. We would like to take the entire first chapter, and gather together all the things written there about Jesus, and when we have them all together give them out in one massive word that would express all that is written. While writing this sentence we have wondered what that word could be, and we believe it would be the word used in verse two, *His Son*.

It may be that the writer of this epistle recognized the inability of the human mind to grasp that term, for all the rest of the chapter is used to help explain the "Son" of God. Not that the writer stooped to baby talk, or little speech, in order to make this explanation. He did not, but continued the lofty forms of sound speech while he stated the attributes and scope of the person and work of the Son of God. Truly this is a picture of the New Testament Christ.

We ask here that the first sentence of the epistle be read. It includes verses one to four. We ask this that the grammar of the sentence be noted. Note the word "whom" in verse two. This word modifies the word Son, and connects to the Son all the things mentioned in the sentence. Nor is this all, it also introduces all that is said in the entire chapter about the Son. Read the entire chapter and consider the scope of the abilities, and characteristics ascribed to the Son. The chapter has but 14 verses, yet in that chapter is packed a treatise of the Son of God that covers at least thirty-three identifying qualifications for the deity of Jesus, which qualifications refer to the person and work of Christ the Son of God, and which could never be ascribed to a human being, regardless of how loudly that human being cries, "I also am divine." Let us look at the chapter with this in mind.

Before we give the list of things recorded in this chapter, let us take a little space to suggest three tests by which they are to be weighed and

measured. First, do the things mentioned here, which refer to the person and work of Christ as the Son of God, agree with the Old Testament? That is, does the Old Testament teach these same things in reference to Christ? Secondly, do the things mentioned here, that refer to the person and work of Jesus, agree with the historical Christ who is being presented by the writer to the Hebrews? Are these things properly ascribed to the historical Christ, either through His own claim to them, the testimony of events in His life and ministry, or established by signs and wonders? And thirdly, has the New Testament Christian, the person who has accepted the teachings of Jesus, and in whose heart the spirit of Jesus dwells, has he the testimony of his own heart to these things, and has he an inner life, fundamentally changed by the grace of God through faith in Jesus? If the claims of this chapter are sustained by these tests, then we need look no farther for the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. He is here, and God hath spoken to the world by Him, hath spoken the second time, the New Testament dispensation.

As we give the list let the reader consider each item theologically, historically, or from the viewpoint of New Testament Christian experience, or from all three. Following is the list. We will give it by verse.

Verse 2. (1) Appointed heir of all things. (2) He made the worlds.

Verse 3. (3) Is the brightness of God's glory. (4) Is the express image of His Father's person, has the personality of God. (5) Maintains and upholds all things. (6) Has the word of authority, or power. (7) Purged sin by a sacrifice of Himself. (8) Sat, or was reseated, at the right hand of Majesty on high.

Verse 4. (9) Better than the angels in nature and name. (10) Has a better inheritance than the angels.

Verse 5. (11) Begotten of God. (12) Acknowledged by God as His Son.

Verse 6. (13) Brought into the world. (14) Worshiped by all the angels.

Verse 7. (15) This verse shows the ministration of angels, who attend to the ministry of the revelation of the Son. See note on verse 14.

Verse 8. (16) Is called God. (17) Has a throne. (18) His rule is eternal. (19) His rule and judgments are according to truth and righteousness.

Verse 9. (20) He loves righteousness (this indicates one attitude of the absolute holiness of Christ). (21) He hates iniquity (this indicates another attitude of the absolute holiness of Christ, love for righteousness and hatred for sin is holiness, either one without the other does not mean holiness. (22) He is anointed of God. (23) He is anointed with the oil of gladness (this evidently refers to the gladness of Christ at the successful redemption of a sin-saddened world). (24) He is anointed above His fellows, the best in the universe, the best in the flock.

Verse 10. (25) He is eternal, in the beginning. (26) He laid the foundation of the earth. (27) He made the heavens.

Verse 11. (28) He shall remain after the world perishes.

Verse 12. (29) He shall fold up the heavens and the earth. (30) His nature is unchangeable. (31) His years have no end.

Verse 13. (32) He is the basis of God's warfare against sin. This verse shows Jesus sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having accomplished the atonement for sin, where He shall remain until the warfare is over. It also shows the atonement as the basis for warfare, and the final settlement of the sin question.

Verse 14. (33) He is the Author of that salvation which is administered by angels, in both Old and New Testament dispensations.

This is the list. Thirty-three specific things, given by the writer of this epistle, to identify Christ, the Son of God, through whom God hath spoken to this world the second time, hath spoken a New Testament, hath brought the Old Testament into bloom, the beautiful bloom of Christianity. Can any human being study thoughtfully the above list and then drone, "Yes Jesus was divine, but so am I"?

Every one of the mighty things ascribed to Jesus in this chapter refers to His deity. No human son of Adam has a right to claim any one of them, nor can he fill the requirements of these claims of divinity which the writer of this epistle boldly asserts belong to Jesus as the Son of God.

And now to apply the tests we suggested preceding the giving of this list. Test one: Do the things mentioned here, which refer to the person and work of Christ agree with the teaching of the Old Testament? They do. Get a reference Bible and look up these claims in the Old Testament. Test number two: Do the things mentioned here,

which refer to the person and work of Jesus have the sanction of the historical Christ of the New Testament? They do. Read the Gospels, which contain a record of His earthly life and ministry, and in which Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, with all power given unto Him. Test number three: Has the New Testament Christian experienced a fundamental change in his heart through faith in Jesus as the Son of God. He has. Read the lives of the disciples and apostles. Read Acts, and the record of the Day of Pentecost. We refer the reader again to the "time element" of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which the New Testament Church had received before the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. Yes, the New Testament Christian had a New Testament blessing, and that blessing met the requirements of this third test.

The entire first chapter of this epistle is a classic. We ought to thank God that He gave us such a Christ, and such a writer as the author of this epistle to champion His cause for us.

Any effort on our part to enlarge this argument would be useless. We merely submit the outline of the chapter for study, conscious that if the matter submitted does not offer sufficient grounds for proof of the deity of Jesus, then we do not know where to look for further proof that would be acceptable.

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### Two Churches

There was a church in our town

Which thought 'twas wondrous wise.  
It tried to pay expenses  
By selling cakes and pies;  
But after years of trying  
That plan to raise the cash,  
The folks got tired of buying  
And the whole thing went to smash.

There was a church in our town,

And it was wondrous wise;  
It always paid expenses  
By simply paying tithes.  
For when 'twas found the tithe did pay  
It seemed so very plain,  
Forthwith 'twould have no other way,  
Not ever once again.—*The Baptist*.

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Perseverance means the steady pursuit of a plan whether good or bad; but it would be very unwise to persevere in a plan which conscience or practice has proved to be bad.



# PRACTICAL

## *Plain Words to Preachers*

JOHN W. GOODWIN

### *The Preparation of the Preacher*

THE preacher deals with certainties. There can be no question in the mind of the preacher. It was in this particular Jesus differed from His contemporaries. It is said, "He spake with authority and not as the scribes." The preacher deals with precious souls of priceless value. We could not think of a preacher trifling with human souls! As preachers, when standing in the pulpit, we are in the very presence of heaven. *Our message may fix eternal destinies.*

We should consider the most thorough preparation none too great for such work. I heard Dr. Bresee say that if he knew he had just ten years in which to preach, he would spend, if possible, five years of the ten in preparation. That may seem on the surface a very strange statement, but when you think of the blunders and mistakes which he might make all through the ten years without preparation, and the evil he might do, the wrongs he might commit, the destruction he might work, I do not know that the statement is exaggerated, after all.

I heard a barber once say that if he had two minutes to shave a man he would spend one minute in preparing his razor. Some people would not. You know they would just "whack it off." Some preachers have the idea as they are going into the business of saving souls they must not spend time in preparing. They must go at once; they may go at it with an axe, but a dull axe is bad even to cut off people's heads.

Some have quoted Jesus as an unprepared man. There is nothing that could be farther from the truth. Jesus lived only a little more than thirty years; then He must die so quickly. Do you think it strange that He entered upon His ministry and then in three years His life be snuffed out? Do you think it would have been better for Him to have entered upon His ministry at the age of twenty instead of thirty? God did not think so,

for Jesus waited to begin His ministry until He was nearly thirty years of age. A boy could never have withstood the opposition and trial through which our Lord had to pass. My young preacher, do not rush into battle too quickly; take time for reasoning.

We are now speaking of the ministry and not of that great body of lay preachers who have done so much in winning souls for Christ. In the earnest endeavor to spread the gospel, the Church has never been able to keep up with the passion of the Holy Spirit. A large number of devoted men and women have been moved to step forth and do their best. They have earned their living, and on the side been able to carry on great efforts in soul winning. Thank God for this important class of lay workers. May the Lord of the harvest thrust forth many more into the ripened harvest field. With little or no preparation, they have accomplished much for the Church. But even this should evidence the need of a good preparation to maintain the results gained. We may therefore continue the study in the life of our Lord during those thirty years. He was trained under the most godly tutelage. Both His father and mother from the earthly side were godly people. They heard angels speak. They believed the Old Testament Scriptures without question or doubt. He was trained up in this godly home, learned the lesson of obedience to His parents while in the home. He must have known something of His message at the age of twelve, but went home and was subject to His father and mother. There is nothing that is more conducive to the training of a minister than a godly home where prayer is wont to be offered, where the Scriptures are read and believed without question.

His early training is evident from the fact that He quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures repeatedly and they were as familiar to Him as a primer to a high school student. Edu-

cated? They asked, "When did this man learn?" He was evidently educated at His mother's knee. There is a wonderful eloquence in the silence of the Scriptures relative to His education and training, and we rejoice over this, from the fact that had He been a product of the schools, they would have said someone gave Him his gospel. They would have said that He received it from a man and would have traced it back to the teachings of Judaism. Some have said that Jesus had intuitive knowledge. There may be some truth in this. But at the age of thirty years, it is evident that He had been well trained and was well developed. When He was questioned by a critic He always had a ready and appropriate answer. His philosophy in His discourses is wonderful. Take the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew, and where will you find a philosophy which so deepens and awakens our Christian sympathy?

Please note one text that is given to us on the preparation of Jesus. It is said that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." This means that there is some preparation in the realm of the physical. Physical weakness lays the soul open to temptation and error. Every preacher ought to study to be at his best physically. This was one of the great studies of John Wesley. Great orators have been men of great strength, as Demosthenes, or our own Webster and Bryan. Our great Christian orators, such as Whitefield or Beecher, were men of great physical strength. Thus physical strength has something to do with the power of oratory and the success of a preacher. The preacher, then, ought to study laws of physical training for his body. Paul said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." There are very few preachers who wear out with work. Most of them wear out, if they wear out at all, by worrying and fretting.

A preacher ought to study his habits of life, his eating, his drinking, his sleeping and his clothing. Every preacher, young or old, ought to study how to conserve his physical forces and not waste them. Every preacher ought to conserve his physical forces and have control over his passions. One of the great crimes of the Christian pulpit has been unscrupulous men in the abuse of their bodily passions, not only in adultery and fornication, but in carelessness in private life.

*The preacher should train his voice.* It is not enough for a preacher to speak loudly, and no one understand what he says. He must be in earnest, but if he talks too rapidly, they may not understand. There is the study of pronunciation and how to articulate words. I do not know that a preacher ought to be an expert in the art of elocution, but I do think he ought to have some control over his voice and know how to use it. One of the admirers of Whitefield said he would go a mile to hear Whitefield say, "Oh." Something about the articulation of that word "Oh" thrilled the man's soul.

*The mind must be trained.* There is no limit to the increase of mental strength—brain force. The physical is like fire, knowledge is more like water, and knowledge with the physical sets the soul to boiling and makes force. What did Paul mean when he said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed"? Some tell us that a preacher is just to open his mouth and the Lord will fill it. Some say the apostles were ignorant and unlearned men. I do not see how they could have been with Christ three years and be ignorant and unlearned. Take the men whom God has used as great leaders and have they not been trained men? Paul was the great New Testament leader. Was he not a trained man? Luther was the leader of the Reformation. Was he not a trained man? Wesley was the leader of a great revival. Was he not a trained man? I will not stop to name the great minds which have influenced the pulpit. It has been said that a little knowledge is dangerous. We may not be altogether collegiate. There is a wide difference between graduation and education, although all should study to have their education somewhat rounded by graduation. What shall I study? I answer, a thousand things all about us.

But there must be heart preparation and that is most important. I do not speak now of an experience such as conversion and sanctification. These must be in evidence, but there are some other things which are needful to heart preparation, we must not forget. A preacher must be prepared with a *deep reverence* for the divine. No preacher can ever preach without proper conception of holy things. God and heaven must be as real to him as the things he sees. The Holy Ghost must be real, and the truth preached must be real. No successful preachers deal with holy things in a trifling way. A preacher who would succeed goes into the pulpit under the

weight and burden of holy awe and reverence for God.

A preacher who will succeed must cultivate a *tender sympathy*. If he would appeal to the emotions of the people, he himself must be moved and full of sympathy. Is not this what Paul meant when he said, "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"? A cold heart, I feel sure, can never reach the people. How shall we train our sympathies? Live much in the Garden of Gethsemane. Frequent also the cross. Stay close to the dangers of a human soul lost, where you can almost hear the groans of the damned. Some preachers do not like pastoral visitation because they do not like the sickroom. They do not like funeral services. It works upon their emotions. It is evidence that they are losing much of the soul of a Christian ministry. It does a preacher good to go where there is suffering. It does him good to come in touch with men's trials and sorrows. If a man ever loses sympathy, he loses the force and strength of a beautiful ministry. Then let us cultivate a tender sympathy.

Then a preacher must cultivate implicit faith in God and the Bible. A preacher who is dimmed in his conception of the almightiness of God and the divine presence about him, will lose much of his success. The preacher who talks about the impossibility of miracles, or miracles being in the past, will never have much of a revival. A preacher must live in the sublime precincts of the eternal. He must live in the consciousness of the supernatural.

Doubtless all should study to avoid anything like a superiority complex in mystic attitudes, or an air of superprofession, of a "higher than thou" attitude. Yet there is need of a deep, overflow-

ing devotion, and a constant realization of responsibility to properly represent Christ before men. The preacher stands for God, and before God, in the place of God, to send forth the truth of God to dying men. The forces of darkness war against every effort to advance truth, and the preacher must know that greater is He who abides in him than he that is in the world. Confidence in the ever-present God, is a source of might and strength in service.

*A preacher must cultivate a passion for prayer.* With all his thinking and with all his study, and in all his planning, and amid all his burdens he must never forget to pray. If the devil has any one stronghold above another, it is in his art of destroying the habit and passion for secret prayer with the preacher. If we lose out at all, young men and women, we lose out in secret prayer and secret devotion. There is one regret that every preacher should share, that with the many things he has to do, he does not have more time to spend in secret prayer and communion with God. Let us resolve to spend more time with God in prayer for better soul preparation in the presentation of truth.

One thing has blessed and helped me in my ministry, namely, the cultivation of secret, silent, communion with God. I trained myself in it in my early Christian experience. I roomed in a boarding house where I could not pray audibly for I do not think a man ought to pray very loud in the middle of the night. We ought not to disturb others. Nothing has blessed me more than the secret, quiet whispering of my soul to God, and waiting for His answer. We must live moment by moment in loyal devotion to Christ and thus moment by moment we shall be kept in His love.

## ***Lights and Shadows of a Preacher's Life***

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT EMERITUS  
H. F. REYNOLDS

### PART THREE—THE PREACHER'S FIRST PARISH

**T**HE first parish of the preacher of whom I write was in a small village which had a post-office, a general store, blacksmith shop, cobbler's shop, a hall or two, hotel, school-house, and a M. E. church and parsonage, with a few horsesheds to shelter the teams while their owners were worshiping God in the Sunday school and church services.

Being the only resident pastor in a territory about three miles by ten, in one of Vermont's oldest settlements, many nationalities and many religious beliefs being represented, the pastor was impressed with a feeling that God would hold him, in a measure, responsible for being a general religious overseer of the entire settlement, while his special and first duties were to shepherd his own flock. The new pastor could not boast of

a ministerial background before his personal call to preach the gospel of Christ. His only relative in the ministry was his youngest brother, the Rev. Elmer Elsworth Reynolds, who became an efficient and valuable minister and district presiding elder, closing his services in the church of his choice with a sixty-year pastorate, introducing the "two" preaching services plan on Sunday forenoons in his pastorate in St. Petersburg, Florida, during the tourist season.

The parsonage, which was just across the driveway from the church building, was at the time of my arrival being occupied by a good deacon of another denomination, but I was able to secure a room for study and sleeping in the parsonage.

My untested outline for my work was: Mondays for general duties which usually took me out of my study. The forenoons of all the other five days were given to study and prayer, except when interrupted by calls to visit the sick or emergency cases. All of my Sundays were given to the Sunday school and young people's work, and preaching in the morning and at night. My afternoons were devoted to what I termed pastoral calling.

While I was not versed in pastoral courtesies, I had the feeling that I should make it my first duty to call upon my official board. In making out my slate, I arranged to make my first pastoral call upon the oldest member of my official board, and thus on until I had made each member of the official board a pastoral call. Then, in turn as I might be able, I found my church members. And to speak of "Lights and Shadows of the Preacher's Life," the young pastor experienced both.

My oldest official member was a man well advanced in years, who, with his good wife, lived in a very ordinary home about a mile from the church. I found him on this particular afternoon sawing wood and preparing it for the cook stove. As I approached him, I extended my hand and said, "How do you do, Brother —?" But to my disappointment (shadow) he made no response, but kept on sawing. When one stick was sawn off, he picked up another and kept on sawing. Seeing his axe near by, I began to split up some of his newly sawed wood. But the (shadow began to thicken) fact of his continued silence suggested a change of tactics and I said, "Brother —, shall we go into the house?" He did not make any response, so I started to go

in, and he quit sawing and led the way. I recognized his wife, as she had been to some of the church services. More shadows, for neither Brother nor Sister — would say anything unless it was to answer a question. Being a poor conversationalist, and being in my first parish, and this being my first official call, I became conscious that my afternoon was passing. I said, "Brother —, would you like to have me read a portion of God's Word and pray?" He responded, "Do as you are mind to. I ain't going to have any confidence in you till I see how you live." I certainly did my best to pray, and while the shadows were many, God's light and smile helped me through. And as I left that humble dwelling, the sincere, but heartbreaking statement of my oldest official member kept ringing in my ears and stirring my heart with the question, "Why did my official brother and his wife treat me so coolly, and why did he make such a remark, 'I ain't going to have any confidence in you till I see how you live'?"

My next call for that afternoon was in the home of a well-to-do farmer. While I was not yet out from the awful shadow that settled over me at my recent call, the general appearance of the farm and its fitting surroundings helped to dispel the "shadow." In answer to the doorbell, both Brother — and his good wife welcomed the new preacher with smiles. The balance of the afternoon soon passed, but not before I was made painfully aware that back of the gracious and multiplied smiles, my leading church official and wife were very much out with the deacon who was living in the M. E. parsonage, and with whom I had engaged room and board. When I asked if they would like the pastor to read a portion of God's Word and offer prayer, both the brother and his wife very graciously smiled and kneeled while the pastor tried to pray. When the new pastor was about to leave, both urgently said, "Call again." But there was a gathering shadow, and underneath the smiles and the "Come again" there was the thought so rudely uttered by the oldest member of the official board, "I ain't going to have any confidence in you till I see how you live." And while going ahead of my story somewhat, allow the writer to state that the new pastor found that the oldest member of the official board gave expression to about what all of the members thought and it soon began to come to the new pastor the reason why.

The writer will not be "speaking evil" if he states in just as few words as possible the reason why the question became so universal, even to the extent that for the first three months no one wanted to invest their hard-earned, or otherwise secured money, in the new preacher's support.

The pastor who preceded the writer, like myself, was a young man, this church being his first pastorate. Soon after coming to his new parish he was married, and the younger group of his friends, among whom were some of the extreme worldly type, insisted that the new bridegroom should treat with "cigars," to which the bridegroom objected. But his crowd was not easily put off, and continued, so the report went, to insist that their preacher chum should treat them, and continued the chase through the village and hillside, and finally locked the preacher in a barn and kept him there till he did treat the crowd with cigars. Another story quite commonly repeated in my ears by the church and the people was that my predecessor, on one quarterly meeting occasion, when the presiding elder had notified the pastor that he would be there in keeping with his well established custom, to hold the quarterly meeting on Saturday, 3:00 p.m., expecting the pastor and the official board to be present. The pastor wrote a note and pinned it on the church door, stating that he had gone to the village ball game, and could not have the quarterly meeting. Such things no doubt had very much to do with the feelings of my oldest official brother who said, "I ain't going to have any confidence in you till I see how you live." But when the time came for the reappointment of a pastor, one well-to-do farmer said if they would keep the pastor whom we have mentioned, he would give two dollars for the year, as he liked to hear the preacher talk at the store, post-office, blacksmith shop, or on the ball game field, where he would tell stories and jokes.

As the last autumn months arrived, the pastor and wife were pressing hard the pastoral duties of the vast parish, and at last the financial man of the church board had begun his hard task of trying to secure funds for the pastor's support. One last afternoon the financial man came to the parsonage which was a great surprise to us, for his calls had been very few. He pulled out of his vest pocket a crisp five dollar bill, and excitedly said, "Mrs. —, the proprietess of the hotel, sent this to you, and more! She has in-

vited you and your wife to come to her hotel for dinner next Thursday. Don't fail to go." Evidently the finance committee was disappointed that I also did not become much elated over the five dollars and the invitation. And when I told him that we could not keep the five dollars he demanded a reason. I said, "Brother, Mrs. —, and we as a church, are in two different kinds of business. I have every reason to believe that she is selling intoxicating beverages. Moreover, the husband of our Sister — has been reported by his own wife as purchasing liquors at her hotel, which is contrary to the laws of Vermont (it being a prohibition state at that time). Moreover, we have men who say that they have been obliged to take Mr. — home at times, when he would be so intoxicated he could not go home, although only a short step from the madam's hotel. No, brother, I am as positive on the prohibition question as my wife. I shall take the five dollars back to the hotel woman." To which the financial man said, "Oh, well, if you are going to be so particular as that, we can't pay you your salary." "All right," I said, "charge me with the amount, and I will give you credit for the same," which he did. I took back the five dollars and thanked the madam, and when she asked why, I told her what I had stated to the financial man, "Because you are in a different business from the pastor. We as a church are trying to get people saved from their sins and go to heaven, while you are evidently preparing them to go to hell. We, as a church, may not be able to prove that you are selling liquor to the people of this village, but we believe you are; for at least one of your neighbors comes frequently to your hotel, and sometimes becomes so intoxicated that he either has to be helped home, or remain in your hotel till he is again sober. I thank you for your generous gift, but I cannot keep it." And I gave it to her. She took back the five dollar bill, but she did not ask either my wife or me to dine.

A little later in the season one of the prominent village men, with some of his friends to assist him, butchered a very fine, fat ox on a Sunday afternoon. When I drove into the barn of his neighbor, I saw the fine looking carcass of dressed beef hanging up to cool. After putting up my horse I walked over to the barn where the beef was cooling. As I did so, the man who owned the beef, with several others, came to

the front, and I said, "What happened?" thinking that possibly the fat ox had broken a leg, or had become choked with a potato or an apple and the owner had to hasten to kill the beast to save the meat. To which the owner replied, "I tell you, Elder [everybody called the pastor in the parish Elder], I had sold the beef to a butcher in an adjoining town and was to deliver it on receiving notice, and I got word that the beef was to be delivered at such a date. And I had to kill it." All I said was, "Neighbor, you should have waited till another day, and not butchered on the Lord's Sabbath." On reaching the parsonage, I told wife about the Sabbath afternoon butchering, and said, "Wife, we will have a chance to eat some of the beef." She said, "Well, you took the right stand." A few days later the man whom I had kindly rebuked for breaking God's holy day sent his son over with a splendid large rib roast of that fat beef. I thanked the boy, received the roast, and then wife and I said, "That roast looks good," for we had not had meat for some time, and had no money to buy. But we prayed, and I took the roast under my arm (for we said to keep it would make us partakers of the man's sin, as the man and his neighbors had said that the elder would eat it all right). When the man's wife saw me with the roast under my arm, she became very angry, and said, "It's the best piece of beef of the creature." I said, "Please let me in, and I will explain to you, that while it is true, it is the best piece of the beef, I cannot keep it, for you may not know that I told your husband last Sunday afternoon that he should have waited until another day, and not have broken God's holy Sabbath. And now if we eat this meat, I would be as bad as your husband." She at once broke out with her tears dropping: "Of course you would, and worse, for you profess better things." I had prayer and returned home happy.

Without advertising on my part, the two events regarding the five dollars and the fine roast of beef were noised abroad to the official board, the church, and the people of the entire parish, and the people began to have confidence in us. Everywhere we went in our pastoral calling, even to the neighboring communities, people talked about the return of the five dollars and the roast of beef.

We had been made one of the conference group of churches, for a revival effort. I was the youngest of the pastors of the five churches in

the group, and was ignorant of the severity of the weather after January of each year. The older brethren planned wisely of course, but much to my disadvantage. My time for revival was delayed till late in January, and then the weather and the going were so difficult that none of the pastors came to assist the boy preacher until after considerable time had been taken up alone with my revival effort. However, our pastoral calling on about all the families in my parish, and God's blessing on our stand for righteousness were used to bring the people to the church through cold, storm and snowdrifts. The statement among the people was, "A preacher that would carry back a five dollar bill and return a roast of beef, when in need of money and meat, believes what he preaches, and we are going to hear that fellow preach." Crowds came, and many were earnest seekers and happy finders. For such we praise God. We became more and more established in our humble belief that my official member spoke also for others when he said, "I ain't going to have any confidence in you till I see how you live."

For about two weeks, while waiting for some brother pastor of the group to return his promised evangelistic help, the new pastor would go and call on some family of which a member had the night before been seeking salvation, and continue to call till time for the afternoon service. On returning to the church I would meet the same reply from my wife, "No one has come yet." Then I would preach and conduct an altar service, and perhaps go out again to call on some family that had shown interest in their salvation. At night I would have the same expression from wife, "No one has come yet." Then I would preach, and conduct another altar service. I continued the same routine of calling and preaching with many seekers and finders. On Monday of the third week, a good brother, nearly blind, came to help me in the revival. I turned the whole meeting and its responsibilities over to him, and from exhaustion went to bed, and suffered a bad break in my general health. As a result of which, I requested my district superintendent to send another pastor and I returned for a season to the lumber mill, while recuperating my health.

Yes, how true, every successful preacher will have, "Lights and shadows," but how great and how glorious is that light.

## *The Man Who Explored Hell*

E. WAYNE STAHL

*A rendering of Dante's "Inferno" to which are added some of the poet's experiences after he emerged from the regions of the lost.*

- e. He replied, "This is the wretched doom of those miserable ones who in their former life were neutral; they are joined to that evil company of angels who were neither rebels to God nor faithful to Him, but who thought only of themselves. God ejected them from heaven that His glory might not be dimmed; the abyss of hell will not receive them, for from them the infernal citizens would receive no advantage."
- Then I inquired, "What afflicts them so sorely that their lamentations thunder thus?"
- f. My guide made answer, "In a few words I will make you understand. They have lost all hope of death; in complete darkness and utter abasement their lives are spent; all other existences to them seem far more to be desired. In the world oblivion has quenched their names; they are despised by mercy and justice; refer to them no more. Only observe them and then depart."
- g. As I was looking, suddenly there passed by a rapidly revolving flag; continually it whirled. Behind it marched a procession of spirits of such length that it seemed to be composed of more than all the people who had ever lived and died. Some of the marchers I knew. One was he who, cowardlike, became the great Refuser. At once I realized that I beheld the evil folk scorned both by God and by His enemies.
- h. These miserable ones who did not live, in nudity moved forward; fierce wasps and hornets stung them; blood from the wounds made by these insects covered their cheeks, and, mingling with the tears that flowed, dropped at their feet and were swallowed by loathsome worms that were gathered there.
- i. Farther away I saw a multitude on the banks of a mighty river; then to my master I put this question, "What company is this that I see now in the dim twilight? Why are they so full of desire to cross the stream?" Virgil replied, "As soon as we reach Acheron, the river of sorrow beside which they stand, you will have your question answered."
- j. Feeling I had offended him, shamefacedly I spoke no more until we arrived at the cheerless strand. We saw a boat. With its prow pointed toward us it moved. In that boat was an aged, white-haired man who shouted, "Undone, unholy spirits; despair ever again to look upon the sun and stars. I am here to transport you to the bank beyond, where in everlasting night you shall know the intensities of heat and cold."
- k. Then to me he warned, "You who are living, begone and leave these inhabitants of the land of the dead," but observing that I did not obey him, he added, "In another fashion you will arrive at your harbor and in a speedier bark. Not here may you travel."
- l. My leader said, however, "Cease your anger. It is decreed that he now shall cross. The One who decreed it has power to enforce His will. Be silent."
- m. Not so haughty then appeared the hairy cheeks of the steersman of the dead, who carries them across the horrible, blue-black water. Though silent, his eyes became circles of glaring flames.
- n. The spirits standing on the shore, drooping, and worn and naked, changed color at his merciless speech, and struck their teeth together. They cursed God and their father and mother, they cursed the race of man, their birthplace and their natal day.
- o. With copious weeping and loud lamentation they approached the detestable strand, over which everyone must go who disobeys God. The demon boatman, with blazing eyes, gathers in his vessel the accursed horde, making signals to them. Those who delay receive blows from his oar.



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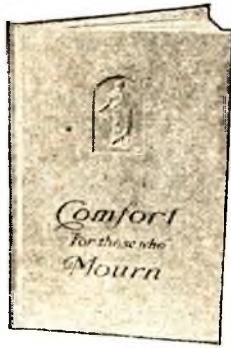
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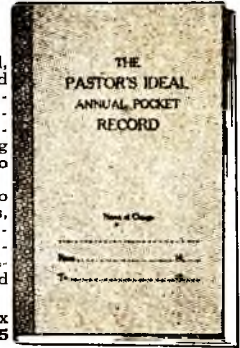
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