

"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."

The WORD and WORK

"Holding forth the Word of life."

OCTOBER, 1989



Gordon R. Linscott,
now with his Lord.

This month's Theme:

PREACHING GOD'S WORD

SERMON EVALUATION

A preacher could benefit by xeroxing this, giving copies to a few friendly, discerning listeners, and asking for their honest input.

Date _____ Sermon Topic or Text _____

SERMON COMMENT:

1. Based on Scripture; really explained some Bible texts(s):
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
2. Well-outlined; main points were clear:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
3. Well-prepared, showing thorough study:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
4. Relevant to the needs of the audience:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
5. Use of illustrations:
____Very helpful ____Fair ____Not helpful
____Too many ____Too few ____Just right!
6. Applications:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
7. Length of sermon:
____Too long ____Too short ____Just Right!
8. Humor: ____Too much ____Too little ____Just right!

SERMON DELIVERY:

1. Eye-contact: looking at the audience:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
2. Gestures: ____Too stiff ____Too active
____Distracting mannerisms ____Just right!
3. Voice: ____Too loud ____Too soft ____Too soft sometimes
____Monotonous in pitch ____Just right!
4. Appearance: dress, posture, facial expression:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor
5. Sincerity, enthusiasm & urgency; intensity of feeling:
____Excellent ____Good ____Fair ____Poor

Any Other Comments:

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION: 1. Title of Publication: **Word and Work**, Publication No. 691460; 2. Date of Filing: Sept 29, 1989; 3. Frequency of Issue: Monthly (except Nov. and Dec. combined); 4. Mailing Address: 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, Jefferson, Kentucky 40212; 5. Address of General Business Office of Publisher: Same; 6. Publisher: Alex V. Wilson, 231 So. Galt Ave., Louisville, KY 40206; Editor: same; 7. Owner Same as Editor; 8. Bondholders, Mortgagees, etc.: None; 10. Circulation: A. Total copies 1145 (average preceding 12 months), 1130 (issue nearest filing date); C. Total Paid Circulation 968 (average preceding 12 months), 981 (issue published nearest to filing date); D. Free Distribution: 44 (average preceding 12 months), 45 (issue nearest filing date); E. Total Distribution: 1012 (average preceding 12 months), 1026 (issue nearest filing date); F. Copies Not Distributed: 1. Office use, etc.: 133 (average preceding 12 months), 104 (issue nearest to filing date); G. Total 1145 (average preceding 12 months), 1130 (issue nearest filing date). 11. Signature: Alex V. Wilson, editor (signed).

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$6.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$5.50 per copy. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. LXXXIII

OCTOBER, 1989

No. 10

In This Issue

Theme: *PREACHING GOD'S WORD*

Preaching God's Word — Alex V. Wilson	- - - - -	290
A Topical Sermon: Christian Joy and Sorrow — John R. W. Stott	- - - - -	293
A Textual Sermon: Christian Maturity — John R. W. Stott	-	296
An Expository Sermon: Your Father Knows — John R. W. Stott	- - - - -	299
A Case for Expository Preaching — Dennis Kaufman	- -	302
Preacher, Beware — A. W. Tozer	- - - - -	305
Heroines of Faith: The P W — Martha Carmichael	- -	308
Questions Asked of Us — Carl Kitzmiller	- - - - -	310
VOICES from the FIELDS	- - - - -	313
The Holy Spirit's Power: Conclusions — Alex V. Wilson	- -	314
A Man With A Great God — The Editor	- - - - -	317
Inside Out Church — Gordon R. Linscott	- - - - -	318
NEWS AND NOTES	- - - - -	inside back cover

THEME:

Preaching God's Word

Alex V. Wilson

This month we are trying something different. Our theme articles are not for preachers ONLY, but they are for preachers ESPECIALLY. We have included three sermons, with a twofold purpose: everybody can benefit from *what* the preacher says, and preachers can also benefit from *how* he says it.

Lots of Work

Contrary to what many folks think, preaching is not easy. To do well requires a great deal of time, prayer, study, and thought. According to Dub McClish, "The average sermon contains 5,000 words. Most preachers deliver at least 90 sermons per year. This totals 450,000 words per year. An average full-length novel contains 50,000 words, so this means that a preacher is producing the equivalent of 9 full-length novels each year." In twenty years a preacher may produce the equivalent of 180 novels. Whew—no wonder I feel tired!

Lots of people can stand up and gab, but who wants to be like the man Abraham Lincoln described this way: "That man can cram more words into fewer thoughts than anyone I know."

Appreciate your Preacher

Everyone needs encouragement once in a while, so when you can say it sincerely tell your minister that his message helped you. If you don't know how to word your compliment, here are some samples I have collected of statements folks have told preachers: "Each sermon is better than the next." "Well, you always manage to fill up the time." "I don't care what others say, I like your sermons." "Brother, a sermon need not be eternal for it to be immortal." "Your message today was like a cup of cold water to a drowning man!" Once a preacher remarked apologetically, "I guess I talked too long today," but a lady replied, "Oh no, it wasn't long, it just seemed long."

Some of the preceding "compliments" may have been apocryphal, but it's a fact that someone told a tall Hoosier preacher known to many of us, "Brother, of all the preachers I know, you can go down deeper, stay down longer, and come up drier!" He didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Let's hope we preachers communicate better than some of our complimenters do.

Effective Preachers

God preachers will be men of devotion, like Ezra. He "devoted himself to the *study* and *observance* of the Law of the Lord, and to *teaching* its decrees and laws in Israel" (7:10, NIV). Understand, obey, instruct; we must do all three, and that requires devotion or setting our heart (ASV) on the Lord and His Word.

Effective preachers will also be urgent. There's an old saying, "If you don't put fire in your sermon, put your sermon in the fire."

Someone else wrote, "My preaching is a failure if it can *charm* but not *change*." How true. We are called not to entertain but to proclaim God's transforming word. Charles Spurgeon specifies the challenges we face: "Some are dead, you must rouse them; some are troubled, you must comfort them; others are burdened, you must point them to the burden-bearer. Still more are puzzled, you must enlighten and guide them; still others are careless and indifferent, you must warn and woo them."

That requires nothing less than power from on high, as we emphasized last month. Only God Himself is sufficient for these things.

But it also requires that the preacher be a wise planner. Denis J. V. Lane shares important insights about this, in his book *Preach the Word*:

I am convinced that *regular expository preaching carefully planned* ahead is the best way to feed a congregation.... You may decide to preach through a book, or the life of a Bible character, or take a theme such as prayer, or the signs of Jesus' coming, or the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever you do needs regular realistic assessment, continued planning and careful thought as to how long each series should be. Some people may fear the limiting of the Spirit of God in all this. There is no real basis for this fear. The Spirit can guide you six months ahead as easily as six hours. If He tells you to scrap the subject for the day you can do it. He normally works through the minds of men in an orderly fashion. Planning can be as prayerful as last minute preparations.

Then of course preachers should be loving. A wise believer once asked his minister, "You love to preach, don't you?" "Oh yes, very much," came the reply. The questioner continued, "Do you love *those to whom you preach*?" And the minister went his way searching his heart. Denis Lane observes, "If we would be effective preachers we must *listen to God and understand men*. For the preacher this involves the tension between the study and the street, between pulpit preaching and pastoral visiting. Both are essential...." Loving, listening, understanding, caring—no one can be a good preacher otherwise.

We have said that preachers should be devoted, urgent, divinely empowered, wise in planning, and loving. Do you see why *preachers need to be prayed for!*? I think it was Brother Boll who wrote, "If you want a better preacher, pray for the one you have."

Effective Sermons

Quite commonly sermons are divided into three kinds—topical, textual and expository. This classification is oversimplified but still useful. It is "based upon the *use* made of the *text* in the construction of the sermon," says N. M. Van Cleave, who goes on to explain:

"1. The *topical sermon* takes from the text only a topic or subject. The divisions are invented by the preacher in accordance with the rhetorical possibilities of the subject and the preacher's knowledge of the subject as it is treated in the whole Bible." Here are some topical outlines. Brother Boll's message, Four Indisputable Things, had these main points: I. There is no Book like the Bible. II. There is

no God like the God of the Bible. III. There is no Savior but Jesus. IV. There is no Life so good and true as the life lived in conformity with this Book and the will of this God and the salvation of this Savior. Or a topical sermon on How God Overrules World Affairs might have these major divisions: I. Sometimes God Overrules Supernaturally (examples: Daniel amid the lions, and his friends in the blazing furnace) II. Sometimes God Overrules Naturally (examples: Esther's husband's insomnia, and Absalom following Hushai's advice rather than Ahithophel's). Or here is a third, simpler example, on Redemption. Main points might be its meaning, its necessity, its method, and its results. All these sermons take a subject and amplify it from anywhere in the Bible, as the preacher decides.

"2. The *textual sermon* takes from the text a subject and the main divisions. The main points of the sermon are only the ones stated or clearly inferred by the passage of Scripture upon which the sermon is based. However, the *sub-divisions* are invented by the preacher in the same way that *all* the divisions are invented in the topical sermon" (Van Cleave, *Handbook of Preaching*).

Here are examples. With 1 Tim. 4:12b as your text ("Set an example . . . in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity"), an outline is simple: you talk about each of the six main words. But in explaining those words you draw information from elsewhere, for in this sentence Paul doesn't discuss the traits but only lists them. Or take another verse, Phil. 3:3, "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh." Commas divide the text into four obvious main points. But in amplifying and applying those points (that is, in arranging your *sub-points*) you may need to bring in ideas from other books of the Bible. Paul explains points #3 and 4 in the following verses, but the preacher will need to draw upon other passages when presenting the matters of true circumcision and spiritual worship.

H. W. Cragg preached on "The Damage Wrought by Sin," using as his text Isa. 53:5. He used the four phrases of the verse as an outline: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The four distinct aspects of sin suggested in the verse were summarized as: I. a broken law (transgressions); II. a twisted character (iniquity); III. a shattered peace; IV. a gaping wound.

"3. The *expository sermon* not only takes a subject and main divisions from the text, but *all the sub-divisions* as well. It is usually based on a longer passage than the topical or textual sermon"—perhaps a whole paragraph, chapter or even book. "No idea can be introduced into the expository sermon which does not come from the passage of Scripture upon which it is based" (Van Cleave).

Guy King preached an interesting message on being "filled with the Spirit," Eph. 5:18. Developing the idea of drunkenness used in that verse, he applied the thought throughout Paul's whole paragraph, verses 15-19. What a contrast between being influenced by liquid

spirits and by God's Spirit. Unlike his worldly counterpart, the Spirit-filled man has no staggering walk (v. 15, ASV, NASV), no wasted days (16), no muddled head (17), and no discordant song (19)!

I agree with Dennis Kaufman that we need more expository preaching, *exposing* God's truth in its depths. Denis Lane adds his amen too:

"Why do our people starve in the midst of plenty? I firmly believe it is because too often we indulge in 'blessed thoughts' and too infrequently teach the Word of God in all its fulness. We use a text as a kind of launching platform to be left behind after take-off and we never return to it. Then we say what is from our own hearts, and this may have no foundation at all in the text itself. Sincere exhortation and a fund of good stories, however, are no substitute for the authority of the Word of God. A simple test will show us whether our preaching is expository or not. *Do our hearers feel compelled to open their Bibles and do they refer to them when we are speaking?*"

To make the three main forms of sermons even clearer, we have included this month three sermons—one of each type. All of them are by John Stott of London, an outstanding expositor of our time. Many years ago he gave *Word and Work* permission to reprint occasionally from his church's magazine the sermon-summary included each month. We are grateful for his generosity. Though the articles are condensed versions of his messages, they still unfold the beauties of God's word. Be enriched by what he says—and if you preach, by how he says it.

* * * * *

A TOPICAL SERMON:

Christian Joy and Sorrow

John R. W. Stott

"Should a Christian ever be unhappy?"

There have been periods in which it would have seemed absurd to ask such a question—periods in which Christians have cultivated an air of grave solemnity and earned for themselves a reputation for being glum.

At other times in the history of the Church—including, I think, our own day—the opposite tendency has been apparent. Evangelism has been debased into the simple invitation to "Come to Jesus and be happy." Christians have appeared hearty and boisterous.

But the true, biblical image of the Christian is neither of these, nor both, for the Christian should neither be glum nor glib, although joy and sorrow are part and parcel of Christian experience. We are followers of One who kept saying "Be of good cheer . . . go in peace," and yet was called "the Man of sorrows." We are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing (2 Cor. 6:10).

1. The Christian life is a life of joy

The gospel is "glad tidings of great joy," and in God's presence is "fullness of joy." Jesus said that He wanted His disciples' joy to be "full." Joy and peace are the fruit of the Spirit, and Paul prayed that God would fill His people with all joy and peace in believing.

I do not deny any of this. On the contrary, I believe it and rejoice in it. I see it in others and have experienced it myself. There is joy—true, deep and lasting—in the knowledge of forgiveness and the experience of fellowship, in hearing and receiving the Word of God, in seeing sinners repent, and in God Himself, who satisfies the hungry with good things.

2. The Christian life is a life of sorrow also

Indeed, if we want to redress the balance in our own unbalanced days, I find myself wishing that there were fewer grins and more tears, less laughter and more weeping.

(a) *Tears of nature.* I refer to the tears of natural sorrow and define them thus because they are not specifically Christian but simply *human* tears. They are due to the common nature which we share with all humanity, and not to any special grace which we as Christians have received.

For example, there are the sorrows of parting, as when Paul was arrested and Timothy could not restrain his tears, and of bereavement, as when Jesus cried at the graveside of Lazarus. There is also the sorrow of our mortality when we sense the frailty of our body and groan in it, longing to be finally delivered, and there are also the trials and testings of life, as a result of which we are "in heaviness."

I have many times been on a railway platform when missionaries were being seen off to the field, and at the graveside of a Christian being buried. On such occasions I have sensed the inhibitions of Christian people, who have either forced themselves to suppress their feelings or turned away to hide their tears. Is it wrong, then, for a Christian to weep?

Now, of course, there is a selfish and unrestrained weeping which would be unbecoming in Christian people. We are forbidden to sorrow over our Christian dead *like those who have no hope*. But we are not forbidden to sorrow or to weep. To regard natural sorrow as unmanly is more stoic than Christian. The gospel does not rob us of our humanity or make humans inhuman.

(b) *Tears of penitence.* We all know the story of the woman who stood behind Jesus weeping and began to wet his feet with her tears. These were tears of penitence for her sin and of gratitude for her forgiveness.

"But," an impatient Christian may object, "she was a fallen woman, and these were the tears of her conversion. Certainly I am glad when eyes are moist at the gospel invitation and the counseling room is wet with tears. *This is holy water indeed.* But surely *Christians* do not weep over their sins?"

Don't they? Would to God they did! Have the people of God no sins to mourn or to confess? Was Ezra wrong to pray and to make confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God? And were God's covenant people wrong to join him in bitter

weeping? Did Jesus not mean what He said in the Sermon on the Mount when He pronounced 'blessed' those who mourn, which in the context seems to mean mourning over their sin?

David Brainerd, that most saintly missionary to the American Indians, wrote in his Diary for 18 October 1740: "In my morning devotions my soul was exceedingly melted, and bitterly mourned over my exceeding sinfulness and vileness. I never before had felt so pungent and deep a sense of the odious nature of sin as at this time."

(c) *Tears of compassion.* These are wept by Christian people who obey the apostolic injunction to "weep with those who weep."

Some secular humanists weep tears more bitter and copious than ours over the horrors and cruelties of war, over starvation in Africa, over poverty, unemployment, oppression and racial discrimination. Are non-Christians, then, more sensitive than Christians?

Specifically Christian tears of compassion are shed over the unbelieving and impenitent, over those who (whether through blindness or wilfulness) reject the gospel, over their self-destructive folly and their grave danger. Thus Jeremiah could cry: "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Thus, too, Jesus Christ wept over the impenitent city of Jerusalem and the Apostle Paul had "great sorrow and unceasing anguish" in his heart for his Jewish kinsmen.

Similarly, J.C. Ryle has written of evangelist George Whitefield that the people "could not hate the man who wept so much for their souls." And Dr. Dale's attitude to D. L. Moody changed from criticism to respect because Moody "could never speak of a lost soul without tears in his eyes."

(d) *Tears of jealousy.* Such "jealousy" is a strong, intolerant zeal for the name, honour and glory of God.

It is this which caused the Psalmist to say "My eyes shed streams of tears because men do not keep thy law," and Paul to write to the Philippians "with tears" of those who were "enemies of the cross of Christ." Here were writers so concerned about the law of God and the cross of Christ that to see them trampled underfoot brought tears to their eyes. No purer tears are ever shed than these. They contain no admixture of selfishness or vanity. They are the sorrows of a human being who loves God more than anything else in the world, and who cannot see God's love rebuffed or His truth rejected without crying. How is it that we can walk through the secular cities of our day and restrain our tears?
* * * *

In the light of this biblical evidence about the tears both of nature and of grace, I think we should laugh less and cry more. We must certainly repudiate that form of Christian teaching which represents the Christian life as all smiles and no tears.

The fundamental error which underlies our modern tearlessness is a misunderstanding of God's plan of salvation, a false assumption that His saving work is finished, that its benefits may be enjoyed completely, and that there is no need for any more sickness, suffering or sin, which are the causes of sorrow.

But this is just not true. God's saving work is not yet done. Christian people are only half saved. True, Christ cried in triumph "It is finished," and by His death and resurrection He completed the work which He came to do. But the fruits of this salvation have not yet been fully garnered. Nor will they be, nor can they be until the End comes when Christ returns in power and glory. The ravages of the Fall have not yet been eradicated either in the world or in Christian people. We still have a fallen nature, an ingrained corruption, over which to weep. We still live in a fallen world full of sorrow because full of suffering and sin.

Thank God the day is coming when there will be no more crying, sorrow and sighing will flee away, and God will wipe away all tears from our eyes (Rev. 7:19, 21:4). This will take place when the kingdom of God has been consummated, when there is no more sin and no more death. But that day is not yet: hence the continuance of sorrow.

* * * * *

How can we resolve this joy/sorrow tension?

First, let us rejoice in that measure of victory already gained by Christ and received by us — in the forgiveness of our sins, in Christian fellowship and in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, let us rejoice too "in hope of the glory of God," in confident expectation of God's final victory.

Thirdly, let us remember that meanwhile we are living in the interim period, between the beginning and the end of the salvation of God, between the inauguration and the consummation of victory. During World War-2, between D Day and V-Day much blood was spilled and many tears were shed. It is during this timelag that sin, suffering and sorrow continue. Christian people are caught in the tension between what is and what shall be. That is why we are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

[Preachers, observe that Stott did not explain any one passage in depth. Yet the sermon is thoroughly scriptural; he refers to over 20 Bible verses, expressions, or incidents.]

* * * * *

A TEXTUAL SERMON:

Christian Maturity

John R. W. Stott

Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ. For this I toil... (Colossians 1:28, 29a, RSV).

This verse is of great importance in itself, because it brings into sharp focus the nature of the apostle Paul's ministry and the objectives by which his life was directed and inspired. It is also important because of the urgent need in the contemporary church for the Christian maturity of which it speaks. The pressures of

modern life are so great, and the enticements of the world, the flesh, and the devil so subtle, that only mature Christians can stand against them.

1. The goal Paul set

Paul's whole ministry, his proclamation, admonition, and instruction, his toiling, striving, and praying, were all directed to this great end, to "present every man mature in Christ."

This is immediately striking because we are accustomed to think of Paul as the pioneer missionary, the evangelist, the intrepid traveller, who journeyed over sea, swamp, and mountain to win converts, found churches and move on. But no! Paul's overriding purpose was not to bring people to Christ and then abandon them, but to present them mature in Christ. It was not that through the new birth men and women should become and remain babes in Christ, but that they should grow into adult Christian maturity. This is a message for us who are known as evangelical Christians, who believe, love and preach the biblical gospel. We should not be more interested in evangelism than in edification, in converting sinners than in making saints.

But what is Christian maturity? There is a difference between the maturity which may be expected of people as human beings, and that which belongs specifically to Christians. There is such a thing as human maturity which is attainable by people who are not Christians. It is perfectly possible for such to mature physically (in stature), mentally (in wisdom), emotionally (becoming stable, integrated people) and socially (forming adult relationships) without having come to know God through Jesus Christ. This is possible because of God's *common* grace, His continuing care for human beings as their *Creator*, by which children are born and then grow up both physically and psychologically.

But in addition to human maturity, there is such a thing as Christian maturity, which is maturity in relation to Christ. It includes growth in the knowledge of Christ, in faith, love and holiness. It is possible because of the *special* grace of God, His continuing care for His redeemed as their *Savior*, by which they are born again in Christ and then grow up into spiritual and moral maturity. The result of such ripeness of Christian character is stedfastness or stability, so that we are unmoved by the violent pressures of temptation, adversity and false teaching.

2. The means by which the goal is attained

"*Him* we proclaim..." If Christian maturity is maturity in Christ (in knowing, believing, loving and obeying Him), then it is essential to know this Christ in relation to whom we become mature. So Paul proclaimed Christ.

A summary of his proclamation of Christ is given in the verses preceding my text. Jesus Christ is set forth as "the image of the invisible God" (who entered time, space and flesh in order to make God's invisible nature visible) and "the firstborn of all creation" (its source and heir, beginning and end). For, Paul continues, all things were created through Christ and for Christ, and hold together

in Him, their principle of cohesion. Further, He is the head of the Church as well as of the universe. It is God's will that Christ should be pre-eminent in everything, for "all the fulness of God" was pleased both to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things by the cross.

Thus Paul passes in a majestic survey from the unique person of Jesus Christ to His unique work as the one and only divine agent in both creation and redemption. The Christ Paul proclaimed was no "gentle Jesus meek and mild," no harmless little ethical teacher, no ignorant Palestinian carpenter, but the supreme revelation of God and the ruler of the universe and the Church.

This vision of the greatness of Jesus Christ is essential for Christian maturity. The meaner our view of Christ, the meaner our Christian lives will be. The loftier our vision of Christ, the more mature in Christ we shall become. When we see and know Him, as He is proclaimed in the pages of the New Testament, we shall see the folly of disbelieving or disobeying Him, and our faith, love and obedience will blossom.

So sure was Paul that the proclamation of Christ was the means of reaching maturity in Christ, that he gave himself without reserve to the task, using both warning and instruction, "toiling and striving" with the self-discipline of an athlete, willing to suffer (he was in prison at the time) and to labor in ministry and prayer. He set a high standard for every Christian minister and lay leader. Responsibility for the pastoral care of the church does not rest with the ordained ministry alone, nor does it consist of public teaching alone. There are other ministries than public teaching (both group work and individual counseling) and other people than ordained ministers. Indeed, Christian care is the responsibility of every Christian.

3. *The people for whom Paul was concerned*

Paul had no favorites. There was no small elitist group on whom he concentrated, in his desire to present people mature in Christ. On the contrary, he makes this abundantly plain by his threefold repetition of the words "every man": "warning *every man* and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that we may present *every man* mature in Christ."

The historical reason for this emphasis is the particular heresy which was troubling the Colossian church. The false teachers were evidently Gnostics, who taught a form of religious exclusivism. They distinguished between faith (which was elementary) and knowledge (which was advanced). The common herd of Christians were mere believers, they taught, but there was a small and aristocratic group who had been initiated into knowledge and were thus "mature."

Paul vigorously denies this pernicious teaching. Maturity is not restricted to a minority of initiates; it is open to every Christian believer. Everyone who is "in Christ" should become "mature in Christ."

We must apply this first to *our own maturity*. Of course we are all different. Some have particular handicaps of body, mind, temperament or circumstance. And in any case full maturity is unattainable in this life. Only in the next shall we be freed from all our handicaps and limitations, and be made perfect in Christ. In-

deed, Paul's verb to "present" every man mature in Christ looks forward to that great day. Nevertheless, we must set this goal of maturity before our eyes and not accept spiritual mediocrity as a norm or lapse into complacency. It is easier to lower our standards to match our performance than to raise our performance to reach our standards. The fact that complete maturity is unattainable in this life is no excuse for giving up the quest. As Bishop Ryle wrote: "There is more of heaven on earth to be obtained than most Christians are aware of." Still towards the end of his life Paul was confessing that he had not attained or become mature, but was pressing on to make Christ's purpose his own.

Then there is the *maturity of others*. We all know that it is our responsibility to bear witness to Christ. Are we equally clear of our calling to serve believers in their spiritual pilgrimage and quest? We are our brothers' keeper, must bear one another's burdens and care for one another in love.

We should, therefore, set this goal of Christian maturity before both ourselves and others, and above all seek to know Christ better, in whom alone Christian maturity may be found.

[Preachers observe that while the preacher's text is only a little more than one sentence, all 3 of his main points come from that text. Also—and this is especially important in textual sermons—note that in his 2nd point he sets the text in context by referring back to a number of earlier statements in the same chapter.]

* * * * *

AN EXPOSITORY SERMON:

Your Father Knows

John R. W. Stott

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. (Matthew 6:31-33, RSV)

Anxiety is forbidden to the children of God. Yet how common it is. Millions of people fret and fuss and fume. Some are afraid of sickness, unemployment, disaster or death. Some make themselves sick with worry, cannot concentrate by day or sleep by night.

1. THE CHILD OF GOD IS FREED FROM ANXIETY

Three times in this passage worry is forbidden in the words "do not be anxious" (verse 25, 31 and 34). And twice a question is asked, which shows the futility of worrying (verses 27 and 28).

First, *anxiety is incompatible with worldly wisdom*. Verse 34: "Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day." J. B. Phillips renders this "One day's trouble is enough for one day," and the NEB "each day has troubles enough of its own." So why anticipate them? Besides, as we say in other proverbs, "Don't worry, it may never

happen" and "Fears may be liars" (they often are!). There is here, in fact, a double argument of worldly wisdom. If what we are worrying about does not happen, we have worried once for nothing; if it does happen, we have worried twice (in the anticipation and the event) instead of once. In both cases our worry has been stupid. Worry doubles your trouble. Worry is a waste.

Secondly, *anxiety is incompatible with Christian faith*. This is the real argument of Jesus, and He elaborates it twice. He argues both from the greater to the lesser, and from the lesser to the greater.

Verse 25: "Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" In other words, God sustains your *life*; can you not trust Him to supply the food necessary to nourish it? God sustains your *body*; can you not trust Him to supply the clothes necessary to cover it? If He does the greater work, can you not trust Him to do the lesser?

Then in verses 26-31, Jesus commands us to consider both the birds and the flowers, and uses an argument from the lesser to the greater. "Are you not of much more value than they?" He asks. If then God cares for them, even for grass "which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven," can you not trust Him to care for you who are much more precious? In a word, God is our Father. He is not the Father of birds and flowers. If He cares for them, although He is only their creator, can we not trust Him to care for us since He is our Father?

2. THE CHILD OF GOD IS NOT FREED FROM TROUBLE

God clothes the grass, but it is cut down and burned in the oven. God feeds the birds, yet Jesus knew (as we do) that many die of starvation in the winter. God protects sparrows ("not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father"), but sparrows do fall to the ground. "Do not be anxious about tomorrow," Jesus says, not because trouble will not come, but because tomorrow's troubles are enough for tomorrow. It is plain, therefore, that God's children suffer from adversities like the rest of men. To become a child of God is not to take out an insurance policy against misfortune. Although it is true that He feeds and clothes His children, it is also true that we are suffering today from world hunger and poverty on an unprecedented scale.

Why and how, then, can we be free of anxiety if we are not free of trouble? The answer is that we know God to be a God of providence. He has so ordered life on this planet as to provide for the creatures He has made. There is food for birds and clothing for flowers. This is how He "feeds" and "clothes" them. He has arranged things this way and Himself controls the scientific processes which men are increasingly understanding. There is wherewithal to feed and clothe us also. The earth and the sea are well able to produce food for the whole population. Hunger and poverty are not due to God's inadequate provision, but to man's inequitable distribution. The same Jesus who says that God will feed and clothe us, told us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked ourselves.

The second reason why we may be free from anxiety, although not free from trouble, is that this God of providence is our heavenly Father. If misfortune comes, we have the assurance that this too is within His permission. If not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him, we may be certain that not one of His children falls without Him either.

3. THE CHILD OF GOD IS NOT FREED FROM PRAYER

Some people ask why we should pray if "your Father knows." If He knows what we need before we ask Him, what is the point of praying? Surely prayer is superfluous, even impertinent?

But no! In the same Sermon in which Jesus tells us that our heavenly Father knows our needs, He also tells us to pray. He gives us the Lord's Prayer in which the first petition is for the very daily bread which He assures us God will give us! He adds: "Ask, and it will be given you" (Mt. 7:7).

Being a child of God does not dispense with the need for prayer. What it does is to change the character of prayer. It makes true prayer possible, namely the prayer of a child to a heavenly Father. Since our Father knows what we need, prayer is not a means of informing Him. Since He cares about us, prayer is not a means of persuading Him. Prayer is rather an acknowledgement of our dependence on Him, a recognition that all good comes from Him, and that our expectation is from Him alone.

4. THE CHILD OF GOD IS NOT FREED FROM LABOR

The Authorized Version translation "take no thought for the morrow" is very misleading. The Greek verb means "be not anxious." What is prohibited is not forethought, but anxiety; not work, but worry.

Even birds (although they have no expertise in agriculture, "they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns") yet go foraging, scavenging and hunting. Even flowers (although they have no spinning and weaving factories) draw nourishment and clothing from the soil and the sun. Thus faith is not inconsistent with the use of means. God does not cast all of us in the role of Elijah and supply food for us miraculously through ravens by the brook or an angel in the wilderness! Hudson Taylor learnt this lesson early in his missionary career. On his first voyage to China in 1853-4, while off the Welsh coast, the ship was caught in a tremendous storm. He had promised his mother that he would wear a lifebelt, but he now felt it would be dishonouring to God to do so, so gave it away when all hope of being saved had been abandoned. But he saw his mistake and wrote: "The use of means ought not to lessen our faith in God, and our faith in God ought not to hinder our using whatever means He has given us for the accomplishment of His own purposes . . ."

So the Christian farmer, trusting God for a good harvest, yet ploughs and sows and reaps. A Christian, trusting God for health of body, yet goes to the doctor when he is ill. Trusting God for the necessities of life, the Christian still goes to work to earn them. And a Christian worker, trusting God for blessing, still engages in witness-

ing, visiting or teaching. We trust God; but we also keep our powder dry. The two are not incompatible, but belong together.

We have seen that, because our heavenly Father knows, we His children are set free from anxiety, but we are not free from trouble, prayer or work.

The fundamental distinction between the children of God and the rest of mankind is that being a child of God alters your ambition. What you "seek" is different, what you recognize as being the supreme good. The Gentiles "seek" material things; they give themselves up to the pursuit of treasures on earth. But not so Christian people. We pray for material necessities. We work for them also. But these things do not engross us. We do not fret and fuss about them, because God is our Father, who knows and cares, and supplies our need. Instead, we seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. We recognize that the supreme good is the establishment of His reign and the spread of His standards of justice and holiness. As we put these things first, everything else is added. It is getting his priorities right which gives the child of God his calm confidence, his freedom from anxiety.

[Preachers, notice that though only verses 31-33 are printed, this was actually an exposition of verses 25-34. Also observe that in unfolding the passage, Stott dealt with verse 34 before verses 25ff., since he wanted to emphasize the latter.]

* * * * *

A Case For Expository Preaching

C. Dennis Kaufman

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of attending one of our brotherhood's annual fellowship weeks. I was particularly delighted at the program and anticipated the sermons with pen and paper in hand. The sermon titles as well as the assigned texts lent themselves perfectly to the preaching of expository sermons. However, in nearly every case, the preacher seemed to select a key word or two from the text and bolt off on a topical message, leaving the text itself all but untouched.

This left me somewhat puzzled, wondering if perhaps we needed to be reminded of the power and value of expository preaching. Since that time, I have continued to listen with an evaluative ear, and am convinced that my original hunch was correct.

Let me begin by defining expository preaching. Haddon Robinson, in an excellent book entitled *Biblical Preaching*, states

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.

At the core of this preaching style is a sermon that begins with the Bible text rather than a topic. It involves deep study of the selected passage until it yields its treasures. Then the preacher, himself being

moved by the Word, designs the message to be persuasively communicated to his audience.

Let me hasten to say at this point that there is a place for topical preaching. If done well it can be as effective as any other preaching style, but there are weaknesses in it which exposition tends to eliminate. So much topical preaching sounds as if the speaker has selected a topic, scanned a concordance or chain reference Bible, assembled many passages into a loose outline form, and commented briefly on each verse until the list is exhausted. There are several difficulties with this approach.

First of all, the sermon can easily begin to sound like an encyclopedia article. There may be much information, but when is the last time you were deeply moved by an encyclopedia? Sermons with this broad topical approach tend to be spread too thin, which produces the "we've heard it all before" phenomenon.

The most powerful sermons are those that penetrate like a single rifle bullet, but the kind of topical preaching one often hears is more like the spray of a sawed-off shotgun. A sermon's power, like that of an automobile engine, is often determined by its compression. A topical message that is too broad or that involves dozens of scripture texts is often doomed to shallowness and a lack of compression.

The advantages of exposition are many. This style often involves preaching through an entire Bible book. It requires in-depth study of passages that might otherwise never be selected for a topical sermon. This requires a new level of discipline, but every expositor has known the thrill of seeing a text take on a whole new dimension when seen for the first time as a part of the intricate whole.

Expository preaching keeps us off of our hobby horses. We tend to preach what we know most about, and if we are not careful in our topical approach, we will find ourselves sounding like a broken record. In addition to balancing our subject matter, preaching through a Bible book alleviates the weekly terror of, "What am I going to preach?" Even the smaller New Testament books such as Philippians and James provide four or five months of preaching material for most expositors.

For those who may be unfamiliar with expository sermon preparation, let me walk through the process with you. Everything begins with a powerful approach to the text. While some preachers like to work with very small units of Scripture, most find a paragraph of Scripture (about 4-8 verses) provides about the right amount for a good sermon. Perhaps this is the appropriate point to mention that an expository sermon is *not* a running commentary. This is the most common criticism of this type of preaching. The sermon does not take verse one and explain it, then move to verse two, and so on. That could be less effective than the shallow topical sermon. Rather, after reading the text several times, studying the key words (in the original language, if possible), considering the context, and consulting commentaries, one must determine the key point of the text. I often try to convey this major theme in my sermon title or purpose statement. This is of utmost importance. Every sermon should have one main objective that you can put into words. The main points of

your sermon are simply vehicles to help you obtain this objective. I have been preaching expository sermons for seven years and I have yet to find a passage of Scripture that cannot be presented in this way.

For example, let's say I have come to 1 John 3:1-3 in a series that encompasses that entire epistle. Both 3:1 and 3:2 are oft quoted verses ("What manner of love hath the Father bestowed upon us," and "When Christ appears, we shall be like Him"). A topical sermon might send us off on subjects such as, "The Love of God" or "Christ's Second Coming," but a closer look at the text and the context indicates that John is primarily discussing the fact that we can become children of God. Thus, a powerful expository outline might look like this:

Title: We Can Become Children of God (1 John 3:1-3)

- I. God's Incredible Love Moves Him to Adopt Spiritually Handicapped Children
- II. We Then Grow into The Likeness of God's Firstborn Son
- III. Our Sonship Becomes our Greatest Motive for Purity

This outline can then be expanded by material from the text itself, a few other parallel verses, and illustrative material from the adoption and sonship model. This message can be well compressed and thus reach the audience with power and persuasiveness.

Some may say, what do you do when you approach a passage that seems to yield insufficient material for a sermon? It is not a crime to skip over a section, or you may want to expand the number of verses for the message. But, often if you simply view that section as a particular challenge and really dig in, you may discover why that passage is in the Word. In preaching through Colossians, I recently came to the final verses of the letter which involved many personal references to Paul's friends and co-workers. These sections of Scripture can be extremely difficult to preach upon, but with some extra effort, this developed into one of my better sermons. The title and outline looked like this:

Title: The Importance Of Building A Ministry Team (Col. 4:7-18)

- I. Paul's Prison Experience: The Potential for Loneliness
- II. Paul's Team of Friends: An Unlikely Group Brought Together in Christ
- III. Two Are Better Than One.

This passage would likely never be touched in a topical sermon, but the expository approach allows us to touch some superb themes of our day such as loneliness, fellowship, and team work. It encourages us not to give up on any passage too soon. Anything the Holy Spirit saw fit to inspire is purposeful and valuable for sharing with our hearers.

It is my hope that this article has whetted your appetite for more information on this subject. If so, let me refer you to the following excellent books:

1. Haddon Robinson—*Biblical Preaching* (Baker Book House)
2. Grady Davis—*Design For Preaching* (Muhlenburg Press)
3. John Stott—*Between Two Worlds* (Eerdmans)

Preacher, Beware

A. W. Tozer

Some occupations have built-in hazards, such as that of the coal miner, the deep-sea diver, and the steeple jack. Everyone knows that the men who follow these pursuits are in at least some degree of danger most of the time.

Contrasted with these, the work of the ministry would appear to carry with it no danger at all. For physical hazard the ministry stands just about at the bottom of the list, and the minister is considered one of the best actuarial risks any insurance company can handle.

Yet the ministry is one of the most perilous of professions. The devil hates the Spirit-filled minister with an intensity second only to that which he feels for Christ himself. The source of his hatred is not difficult to discover. An effective, Christlike minister is a constant embarrassment to the devil, a threat to his dominion, a rebuttal of his best arguments, and a dogged reminder of his coming overthrow. No wonder he hates him.

Satan knows that the downfall of a prophet of God is a strategic victory for him, so he rests not day or night devising hidden snares and deadfalls for the ministry. Perhaps a better figure would be the poison dart that only paralyzes its victim, for I think that Satan has little interest in killing the preacher outright. An ineffective, half-alive minister is a better advertisement for hell than a good man dead. So the preacher's dangers are likely to be spiritual rather than physical, though sometimes the enemy works through bodily weakness to get to the preacher's soul.

There are indeed some very real dangers of the grosser sort which the minister must guard against, such as love of money and women; but the deadliest perils are far more subtle than these. So let's concentrate on them.

There is for one, *the danger that the minister shall come to think of himself as belonging to a privileged class*. Our "Christian" society tends to increase this danger by granting the clergy discounts and other courtesies, and the church itself helps a bad job along by bestowing upon men of God various sonorous honorifics which are either comical or awe-inspiring, depending upon how you look at them.

Seeing whose name he bears, the unconscious acceptance of belonging to a privileged class is particularly incongruous for the minister. Christ came to give, to serve, to sacrifice, and to die, and said to His disciples, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." The preacher is a servant of the Lord and of the people. He is in great moral peril when he forgets this.

Another danger is that *he may develop a perfunctory spirit in the performance of the work of the Lord*. Familiarity may breed contempt even at the very altar of God. How frightful a thing it is for the preacher when he becomes accustomed to his work, when his sense of wonder departs, when he loses his solemn fear in the presence of the High and Holy One; when, to put it bluntly, he gets a little bored with God and heavenly things.

If anyone should doubt that this can happen, let him read the Old Testament and see how the priests of Jehovah sometimes lost their sense of divine mystery and became profane even as they performed their holy duties. And church history reveals that this tendency toward perfunctoriness did not die with the passing of the Old Testament order. Secular priests and pastors who keep the doors of God's house for bread are still among us. Satan will see to it that they are, for they do the cause of God more injury than a whole army of atheists would do.

There is the danger also that *the preacher may suffer alienation of spirit from the plain people*. This arises from the nature of institutionalized Christianity. The minister meets religious people almost exclusively. People are on their guard when they are with him. They tend to talk over their own heads and to be for the time the kind of persons they think he wants them to be, rather than the kind of persons they are in fact. This creates a world of unreality where no one is quite himself, but the preacher has lived in it so long that he accepts it as real and never knows the difference.

The results of living in this artificial world are disastrous. There are no more casual conversations, there are only "conferences"; there are no more plain people such as our Lord loved so well, there are only "cases" and people with "problems." The simple, unaffected candor that should characterize all relationships between the Christian and his fellow men is lost, and the church is turned into a religious clinic. The Holy Spirit cannot work in such an atmosphere, and this in the end is calamitous, for without Him the work of the ministry becomes wood, hay, and stubble.

Then there is always the danger that *the minister may suffer detachment of sympathy and his attitude become abstract and academic*, so that he loves mankind without loving people. Christ was the exact opposite of this. He loved babies, publicans, harlots, and sick people, and He loved them spontaneously and individually. The man who claims to follow Him cannot afford to do otherwise.

Another peril that confronts the minister is that *he may come unconsciously to love religious and philosophic ideas rather than saints and sinners*. It is altogether possible to feel for the world of lost men the same kind of detached affection that the naturalist Febre, say, felt for a hive of bees or a hill of black ants. They are something to study, to learn from, possibly even to help, but nothing to weep over or die for.

Where this attitude prevails it soon leads to a stilted and pedantic kind of preaching. The minister assumes that his hearers are as familiar with history, philosophy, and theology as he is, so he indulges in learned allusions, makes casual reference to books and writers wholly unknown to the majority of the people who listen to him, and mistakes the puzzled expression on the faces of his parishioners for admiration of his brilliance.

Why religious people continue to put up with this sort of thing, as well as to pay for it and support it, is beyond me. I can only add it to the long list of things I do not and probably never will understand.

Another trap into which the preacher is in danger of falling is that *he may do what comes naturally and just take it easy*. I know how ticklish this matter is and, while my writing this will not win me friends, I hope it may influence people in the right direction. It is easy for the minister to be turned into a privileged idler, a social parasite with an open palm and an expectant look. He has no boss within sight; he is not often required to keep regular hours, so he can work out a comfortable pattern of life that permits him to loaf, putter, play, doze, and run about at his pleasure. And many do just that.

To avoid this danger the minister should voluntarily impose upon himself a life of labor as arduous at that of a farmer, a serious student, or a scientist. No man has any right to a way of life less rugged than that of the workers who support him. No preacher has any right to die of old age if hard work will kill him.

Perhaps it should be said, however, that some men of God have learned to labor in the Holy Spirit and have thus escaped both idleness and death by exhaustion, and have lived to a great age. Such men were Moses and Samuel in olden times and men like John Wesley, Bishop Asbury, A. B. Simpson and Pastor Philpott of more recent times. These wrought mighty deeds without injuring their constitutions, but not every man has been able to find their secret. Charles Finney taught frankly that a man of God could hasten his end by carrying the burdens of a back-slidden church, and he exonerated the preacher and blamed the church. Whether we agree with him or not, he is still a man whose convictions are not to be taken lightly.

Again, the usefulness of any minister may be greatly impaired by either of two opposite sins—*too great flexibility or too great rigidity*. Between these two rocks there is a deep, clear channel, and blessed is the man who finds it.

To bend to the wishes of an unspiritual congregation on matters of morals or doctrine is a dark evil; to modify the sermon to please a carnal deacon is a deep sin; but to refuse to compromise on trivial matters reveals a spirit altogether out of harmony with that described by James in the third chapter of his epistle: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The evil of too great rigidity was noted by Thomas a Kempis: "True it is that everyone willingly doeth that which agreeth with his own liking, and inclineth most to those that are of his own mind . . . but if God be among us we must sometimes cease for the sake of peace to adhere to our own opinion. Who is so wise that he can know all things? Be not therefore too confident of thine own opinion; but be willing to hear the judgment of others."

Two other perils to the man of God should be mentioned, and these also are opposites. One is *to be elated by success*, and the other is *to be cast down by failure*.

These may strike the reader as being trivial, but the history of the Christian ministry will not support this conclusion. They are critically dangerous and should be guarded against with great care. The disciples returned to Christ with brimming enthusiasm, saying,

"Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," and He quickly reminded them of another being who had allowed success to go to his head. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," He said. "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

The second of these twin dangers need not be labored. Every minister of the gospel knows how hard it is to stay spiritual when his work appears to be fruitless. Yet he is required to rejoice in God as certainly when he is having a bad year as when he is seeing great success.

It is not my purpose here to accuse or belittle, but to point out dangers. We are all objects of the malicious hatred of the devil, and we are safe only as we are willing to humble ourselves and accept help from each other, possibly even from one who is as weak and who stands daily in as great peril as this writer.

* * * *

HEROINES OF FAITH:

The PW

Martha Carmichael

[The following article is excerpted from a paper written for a class, "The Role of Christian Women," at the School of Biblical Studies, in Louisville. The author is married to Jerry Carmichael. They minister at the Tell City, Indiana Church of Christ.]

At an early age I wanted to be a "preacher's wife" (hereafter referred to as PW). Then, twenty-one years ago, I jumped in with only the knowledge that Jerry was the one the Lord was guiding me to marry.

I tried asking questions of our pastor's wife the week before leaving for our first pastorate, but all I got was, "The Lord will teach you as you go." Today I still lack self-confidence sometimes in my role as a PW, so when the opportunity came to do this paper I jumped at the chance. I hope it will help me and also others along the way.

There are many questions that should be asked by the girl contemplating marriage to a young man preparing for the ministry: Why do I want to marry a minister? Can I handle criticism? Am I willing to live in a "fish bowl?" Can I share him with everyone, sometimes having my needs wait until others are helped? Do I have a servant's attitude? Are we both mature enough spiritually and emotionally for such a responsibility? Am I willing to move whenever and wherever he thinks best? Can I live "on a shoestring" if necessary?

Expectations — Yours and Theirs

Different churches will expect different things of you, depending on their experiences with other PW's, the area they live in, and the church itself. Do not set out to "show them," do not refuse to fill the role of PW. Just grab your sense of humor (you will need it), and jump in. Perhaps you should pray to see and remember the funny side of things in this life.

Important traits church members *want* are: friendliness; genuine love; caring; being yourself; being patient, humble, and cooperative; willing to work; and loving your husband and family. Traits they do *not* want are: being critical, gossipy, or withdrawn; being inactive in church affairs; and dominating your husband.

Do not carry false guilt because of what you think the church wants of you. Do not feel guilty because you are not perfect. Lucille Lavender wrote this description of a PW in her book, *They Cry Too*. "A minister's wife should be attractive, but not too attractive; have nice clothes, but not too nice; be friendly, but not too friendly; educated, but not too educated; down to earth, but not too much so; capable, but not too capable; charming, but not too charming."

Do not allow yourself to compare your present church with past ones. Remember, you do not want to be compared to past PW's. This causes pressure and criticism. Many times your job will be to listen because you will hopefully be unbiased, neutral, and unprejudiced. Learn to be silent and *never* betray a confidence.

Emergencies and Resources

There will always seem to be emergencies popping up in the parsonage. Here are some helps for those times. Stay calm, for you can not help if you hyper-ventilate. Be a good listener. Sometimes just talking helps the person see the solution. It is not necessary for you to give an answer. God gave us two ears and only one mouth, so listen twice as much as you talk. Learn to "Weep with those who weep, and laugh with those who laugh." Help the person help himself. Do not put him off. Help is needed now, not when the preacher gets back. Keep on hand kleenex, Scripture, and a caring spirit.

This is a time when your devotional time will be drawn upon. It is an absolute must in your life, not only for your own sake, but because you are called on to give out so much. You have to have a time of feeding too. You need to be prepared to give to those in need. Without your relationship to the Lord, you will not have anything to give.

Maintaining a spiritual life in the parsonage can sometimes be difficult. Between the door bell, telephone, doing the bulletin, ironing the shirts, changing diapers and wiping runny noses, where do you find time to read the Bible with any understanding, and pray? It is important for the couple to study God's Word and pray together. Each day should begin with a prayer of commitment and surrender. Be open to the "energy of God," the Holy Spirit. Pray for the peace and strength only He can give. Now you are ready to at least get out of bed.

"Spiritual anemia" is life-threatening to anyone. The PW is at great risk for this disease because you have heard the sermons before. Therefore you only hear the mistakes or you see only the crooked part in his hair. Learn to listen with spiritual ears, not just for mistakes.

Friendships

Even though you must be friendly to everyone, there is always a woman or two in each church willing especially to befriend you, and that's the way it should be. It may be a good idea to be casual with her/them in church and use this time to greet and meet all the others.

Everyone needs the attention of the leadership of the flock. Yet there is no reason you should not have a special friend or two in the church family. Even Jesus chose three special friends.

Sometimes your husband may be the center of some woman's attention. Do not worry a lot about this. Just be attractive at home, make him and your home happy. Be available when he has to visit or counsel a woman, or suggest that he see these women only during office hours, while the secretary is present and his study door is ajar.

Trust is a must in your marriage. Give him freedom to do his job and to be himself. Your attitude is part of the key. Be fun, be his source of love and pleasure.

Show an interest in his work, but never tell him how to do it. Nor try to do it for him. You can play the devil's advocate at home, criticize the sermons and ideas he shares with you, but be gentle.

Rewards, Now and Later

There are many special rewards built into your job as a PW. Some you will gain now, others you will not receive until that great Day of rewards. One thing you will probably have is acceptance, in church and even to a certain extent in the community. You will be able to travel, maybe only to other cities but sometimes farther, even to other countries. You may get to meet dignitaries (either in God's point of view or in the world's). Most of all, recognize that God and the Lord Jesus can and will fulfill the needs of your life.

* * * * *

Questions Asked of Us

Carl Kitzmiller

I am concerned that there is a lack of preachers among us and that some of those who once preached have turned almost wholly to secular employment. When one of our churches needs a preacher they likely "rob" another congregation in securing one. Not many of our young men have any inclination to preach. What can be done about this situation?

Placing blame merely to excuse ourselves is not a very profitable endeavor, but honestly and properly analyzing a situation so as to seek out a remedy is. I suspect that no one segment of the people are wholly to blame for the apparent shortage but that there is a contribution from several sources.

Probably one of the first needs is for many of our people and churches to be convinced that there is a legitimate need for what we might call a full-time, trained preacher. Quite a number of our churches have got along either with appointment preaching or with a man who has had to provide a good portion of his income from some other source. There seems to be a rather prevalent idea that the man who does not have other such interests and who has "nothing to do except preach a couple of sermons a week" is a lazy parasite. We may be in need of some enlightenment as to the value of full-time work. Too many, I am afraid, think that this is a surrender to "the pastor system" of our religious neighbors. It need not be so at all!

Now our purpose here is not to belittle those many good, honorable men who are part-time preachers, who may spend the week

teaching school, for example, and then preach for a church on the week-end. There are a number of variations of this part-time "full-time" arrangement. There are some churches which have prospered under such an arrangement. It may even be said that some of these men are doing a better job than some of those who are wholly supported. I have no doubt it would be a fairly successful arrangement if all our churches were fully organized, working churches with qualified elders and deacons and if the expectations of the society in which we live were somewhat different. We do not reject the idea of "tent making" so long as this is in the will of the Lord. There are a number of churches which for practical financial reasons must use this arrangement.

There is something to be said in favor of the full-time, fully supported man, however. Especially during his early days in the ministry of God's word, a man needs time to study and grow. The older, experienced man may more easily get by on his store of knowledge and his grasp of the scriptures than the young man. It is not a good experience to have been so busy during the week that one has to "come up with a couple of sermons" instead of having found that in God's word which feeds our soul and will feed others. There is a difference between saying something and really having something to say—especially in preaching! Of course the fully-supported, full-time man can squander his time with those things which do not help much. He can enjoy socializing more than spending the necessary time in the study. He can develop too many interests that have nothing to do with his preaching. We are not hereby justifying such a course. What we are saying is that in order to give out regularly with that which is fresh, helpful, and true to God's word, one must take in. A man who is able to speak in public may do a good job of filling in with a message now and then, but that regular, steady drain of regular preaching to the same congregation is another matter! We do not discount the work of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this writer fully believes Him to be a necessary Helper to any worthwhile preaching. But the idea that He will under ordinary circumstances fill our mind with what to say when we have ignored the word of God is pure bunk! The anemic condition of many Christians today is at least partially the fault of a pulpit which has not delivered even good milk from God's word.

Moreover, the full-time man has the better opportunity of extending the pulpit beyond the walls of the church building. His own gift, personality, and preparation may be a factor, but he will have more time for radio work, writing, teaching "from house to house," counseling, etc. He will not be as limited in conducting evangelistic meetings. Not all secular jobs will allow him to be available for funerals—and we sometimes preach to more unregenerate people on these occasions than almost any other. Half a loaf is better than no loaf, but not better than a whole loaf!

How does all of this relate to the preacher shortage? Let us take an example. Some young man begins preaching, largely supported in some other way than by the church. It is often "a hard row to hoe." He may often have to preach or teach partially un-

prepared, and this is discouraging. He probably neglects his family, just like any other "moonlighter." Then a problem arises in the church. Being financially independent, he is more easily able to resign and avoid criticism that has arisen. For a while, then, he does not actively preach. Churches may not invite him, supposing that he has decided this is not his calling. He in turn interprets this as possibly an indication that he is ineffective as a preacher. Meanwhile, his secular job goes well and income increases. His way of life expands. But once again, maybe in a meeting, he is stirred to preach. Now he must take a great cut in income if he goes "full-time," a cut that he "cannot afford," and it takes a pretty good crisis to effect such a re-direction of life. The details may vary somewhat, but in practical terms there is one less preacher. You can say that we are better off without such a man, but that may be harsher judgment than we would be willing to apply if the shoe were on our foot.

All of this has been a sort of preface to help answer the question, "What can be done?" *Churches and Christians generally need to adopt a better attitude toward the encouragement and support of preachers.* No, we do not want to attract those who are drawn only by the money and the prospects, and we do not believe that preachers should be little tin-gods on a pedestal. Only those who have been there know the discouragements a dedicated preacher faces, however, and we ought not (when there is no real necessity for doing so) add the discouragement of half support. Certainly there are those who will make the necessary sacrifice, who will not falter, who will know how to be abased, and who will toil away in spite of the lack of funds. But it may be that there are those who are turned away before they have had the opportunity to develop that kind of character. We can be thankful that many churches have come to regard a preacher as a human being with a family and many of the same needs and expenses as others. There is room for improvement by others, and we suspect the improvements will not necessarily corrupt those who preach.

Even more important, likely, is the need for improvement of attitudes in Christian homes toward preaching as a life work. Yes, God is able to reach down and put His hand on those who have come from broken homes or other most unpromising backgrounds. He has done so. But He often also uses the less unusual method, too. Ours is a materialistic age which declares, "That's nice," when a son in some other Christian home decides to prepare and preach or to be a missionary, but our sons "just aren't inclined that way" (in fact, did not get any encouragement to incline them in that way!). No, I do not believe we should on our own make preaching or elders or missionaries out of our children, but a Christian home should be a place where such a calling would be well received and encouraged under God. What a sad commentary on any Christian home when the young person suspects that such a commitment would not be well received. Unnecessary and unfair criticism of preachers in the home will not do much toward encouraging the choice of such a life by our young people.

Preachers can do something toward encouraging young people

to make a choice of preaching. This may be by a word well chosen on an appropriate occasion. But it may also be by the right kind of "professionalism." Some will object to the use of this term, but it seems to me that, while we reject the wrong implications of the term, there are some good things about it that we want. A bright college student, for example, may be "turned off" by a preacher whose grammar is bad, whose reasoning is faulty, or whose own pet biases dominate his preaching. We live in a world where it is more than ever needful for the man of God to give evidence that he knows what he is talking about. We need some "heroes" among the servants of God, those whom we can look up to as examples, those who are a credit and not a disgrace to their calling. No, we are not advocating the removal of the stigma of the cross or the conforming of the message of God to human judgment. The need is that we not make the case worse than it is. We ought not as Christians and as preachers leave ourselves open to justified criticism of being ill-equipped and ill-prepared for our work.

Probably the answer to the question lies *most of all* in the matter of doing what the Lord taught us to do—*praying to the Lord of the harvest for laborers.* This may be laborers other than preachers, but they are included. Christ is building the church, and that includes the providing of those necessary gifts and workmen for the job. He sets the members of the Body as it pleases Him. He enables and equips those whom He calls to any specific tasks. (This does not remove human responsibility to train and use what He gives.) Yes, I believe in a call for a preacher—not the mystical, miraculous direct voice from God, but an awareness and an assurance that "this is where God wants me." The Christian who knows that preaching is God's will for him will not easily be put off by the hindrances and discouragements. So, perhaps we have not because we have not asked—at least, in a serious, continuing sort of way. Or maybe we have asked amiss, desiring preachers who could relieve us of responsibility or appeal to our vanity.

Maybe as an act of judgment God withholds. Sometimes He gives people what they deserve. Refusing to hear those who faithfully declare God's word could surely invite Him to send those who tickle the ears and do not disturb the fleshly lusts. If such be the case, we had better repent... and pray!

VOICES from the FIELDS

Myrna Auxtero

Bohol Island, Philippines

We now have a record high of 94 enrollees at our Bible institute. Those who live in our dorms are 17 young men, 4 young ladies, and 8 couples and their children. We have added 5 more teachers from our own graduates. Nemesio and I still teach full load.

We have upgraded our library. Praise God for those who donate books. The Bible school rice field is being planted again. We pray He will give us enough rain to produce more and feed the students who work for their food 4 hours each morning.

The price of meat and fish has tripled. People are losing hope for a better tomorrow. This creates widespread anxiety, along with the problem of the Communist insurgency.

Jonathan Garrett

Academia Los Pinares

September 18th

Apartado 3250 / Tegucigalpa, Honduras

I have settled into the school year a lot more easily than last semester. I know more of what to expect of my job and more of what to expect of myself. The one way in which I really need to grow this year is efficiency. I often get lost in my thoughts and become inefficient at grading papers or making lesson plans. I have made some progress at this, but desire more improvements. It is important for me to not become over-worked and to stay fresh for my students. There are 20 Hondurans in my class this year with no North Americans and one Chinese. Already I can see some children with big academic problems in my new class, which I hope the parents and I, with God's guidance, can correct before they get too far behind. Please pray that I will pay special, loving attention to these students. Also pray that God will create the right environment in my classroom for my students to come to know Him and grow in Him.

Yesterday was the third Sunday of the month so I led songs for the Sunday club that is held at the house where the Hardins and I live. There were mostly new boys in this group. They live about 100 yards from us in a home for boys run by the Honduran government. The boys are either unwanted or juvenile delinquents. We decided to start a new series of stories using the life of Daniel. Pray for us as we search for effective ways of reaching them with the gospel and teaching them godly principles.

Please pray for me as I discern the Lord's will for next year—another year of Pinares? graduate school at the Summer Institute of Linguistics? or something else?

The Holy Spirit's Power: Conclusions

Alex V. Wilson

Last month we read about the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Peter and Paul, and also heard the testimony of four men of modern times. (It would be helpful, but not absolutely necessary, to review that article.) Let us now draw some conclusions and see what basic principles we can establish.

1. Scripture clearly shows that God has provided His people with supernatural power by the Holy Spirit, so that we might accomplish our task of evangelizing the world. Since we have the same task that the first disciples had, we need the same power for the task that they needed. In the Bible the condition of having this power is often called "being filled with the Holy Spirit," and is different from His mere indwelling, which all Christians have.

2. All Christians, however—not just some special few—can and should be filled with the Spirit. We know this from Acts 4:31, where the entire group of disciples was filled, and from the fact that

Paul's inspired command, "Be filled with the Spirit," was addressed to all his readers, not just the church leaders.

3. Passages mentioning the fulness of the Spirit seem to fall into two classes. Some refer to the *continuing process* of being filled. The Greek word for "filled" means "be completely under the influence of"; I should be fully yielded to the Divine Person indwelling me. It is not that I get more of Him, but He gets more of me—all of me! The verb tense in Paul's command indicates continuing action and could be translated, *keep* filled with the Spirit. The context of this verse is about praising God, and exhorting and humbly serving one another. The context of Acts 6:3 & 5 and 13:52 relate the Spirit's fullness to the characteristics of wisdom, faith, and joy. So when the continuing process of His fullness is mentioned, the stress seems to be on Christian *conduct*: Walking by the Spirit, the *Fruit* of the Spirit (Gal. 5, etc.).

Other passages, however, refer to *special fillings* given at certain times and *related to Christian service*. This experience can be *repeated*, for many who were filled on Pentecost were filled again later, and Peter on yet a third occasion (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 4:8). Finney's testimony was similar, you remember. On all of these occasions the Spirit's fullness was directly related to the proclaiming of God's word to the lost. Nine time in Acts the writer mentions Christians' being filled, and six of those times refer to their receiving boldness and ability to witness for Christ. This obviously was the power from on high which Christ had promised them earlier (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8). He also had distinctly foretold that when the Spirit came He would bear witness of Christ and convict the world (Jn. 15:16 and 16:8), which He did through the disciples He empowered.

So we see that being filled with the Spirit *usually* refers to His enabling of Christians to witness boldly, plus giving their words *power to produce deep conviction* in the hearts of men. Finney wrote, "There is a great difference between the *peace* and the *power* of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The disciples were Christians before the day of Pentecost. They must have had the peace of sins forgiven, but yet they had not the enduement of power necessary to accomplish their work. They had the *peace* which Christ had *given* them (Jn. 14:27) but not the *power* which He had *promised* (Lk. 24:49). This may be true of all Christians, and here is the great mistake of the church. They rest in conversion and do not seek this enduement of power from on high."

4. A number of *Christians through the centuries* have testified that they too received power from on high, and that their experiences were basically similar to those recorded in the New Testament.

From time to time preachers and missionaries like Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, George Whitefield and the Wesley brothers, Barton Stone, Charles Finney, D. L. Moody and Jonathan Goforth—to mention just some of church history's outstanding examples—experienced the Holy Spirit's convicting power working mightily through them. "Sometimes," wrote Finney, "great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power, and the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God.

Strangers passing through the place will be smitten with conviction of sin and in many instances converted to Christ." That may sound incredible to us, but it is exactly what happened in the powerful revivals of the past and present! The First Great Awakening in the U.S. (1730's & 40's, mainly under the preaching of Edwards and Whitefield), the Second Great Awakening which stirred a number of east coast colleges (rather calmly) and also several frontier areas (very emotionally)—especially at Cane Ridge, Ky. starting in 1800 . . . Barton Stone and others were greatly used there, as last month's article recalled: those are two examples of times when God's presence pervaded entire communities, and multitudes were convicted and humbled before His holiness. (Was Acts 9:32-35 something like that?) The U.S. again experienced a mighty spiritual stirring in 1857-59. Interestingly, that awakening centered more around prayer/testimony meetings than preaching services. Historians estimate around one million conversions nationwide resulted from that revival (including many in Restoration Movement churches, which grew rapidly at that period). Wales in 1904, Korea in 1907, East Africa starting in the 1930's and continuing for decades, Indonesia in the 1960's, Korea again in recent years, and China even under the Communists—these are other examples of aweful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, or "times of refreshing from the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

Returning to our main point here, we see that the fullness of the Holy Spirit's power was not limited to apostolic times. It is also for today: our era is "the dispensation of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:8, RSV, NEB).

5. We should not try to imitate someone else's experiences in this matter. *God uses great variety* in dealing with His children. We have differing temperaments and backgrounds. We find ourselves in various situations, and are called to various types of work for the Lord. For example, last month we saw that Moody had a stirring emotional experience, but Carroll none at all. Moody's call was primarily to evangelize, but Carroll's call is to strengthen Christians. Not many of us are called to be Peters and Pauls, Stones or Finneys or Moodys, though all are called to witness. But note that in the early church (Acts 6:3) a man had to be full of the Holy Spirit in order to be qualified to take care of the poor! So whether God has called you mainly to care for the needy, or teach His word, or praise Him via song-leading, or to the work of "helping" (1 Cor. 12:28), or to preach—ask Him for the fullness of His enabling power. But do not seek to copy some unusual experience He may have given another person.

As Frank Mullins wrote, "At least nine times in the book of Acts, disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit . . . but in no two instances when they were filled did the same thing occur."

6. Being filled with the Spirit does not guarantee what men call "success" in God's work, nor will it make things easy. Great outward results may not come, though in many cases they will. Note that Stephen, a Spirit-filled man (Acts 6 & 7), was stoned to death by the mob to whom he preached. God may call us to the "unsuccessful" work of being martyred! Or He may send us—as He has others—to

preach for years to people with unresponsive, rock-like hearts. We are not accountable for the response of others, if we are truly working by the power of God rather than obstructing or neglecting His power. Paul said, "I labor, striving according to *His* working, which works in me mightily" (Col. 1:29); can you and I say the same?

7. What shall we do in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Much could be said about this, yet the basic thing is—we must want God above all else, seeking Him as the deer pants for water after the chase. God's Old Testament promise of the Holy Spirit was made to the *thirsty*, and when Christ renewed this promise it was again based on that condition (Isa. 44:3; Jn. 7:37-39). Note how Peter urged his readers not to be self-satisfied but to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord. Listen to Paul's heart yearning to know Christ and His power and sufferings. Note Moody's words: "I really felt I did not want to live any longer if I could not have this power for service!" See how Finney and also Carroll at times set aside an entire day for prayer and fasting. All these men thirsted for God's fullness, and they would not be satisfied with anything less.

Many people today lack such thirst because they do not realize that this fullness of power is both *possible* and urgently *important* to them. R. H. Boll has some searching comments here. Writing on "Be filled with the Spirit" he says: 1) It must be *possible*—for God would not urge it upon us if it were not for us to attain. 2) Manifestly it is God's will: *He* wants us to be filled with the Spirit. 3) It is clear that this filling is not dependent exclusively on God; it must depend on some step or attitude of ours. The command is addressed to us. 4) It follows that if it is possible, if God wants it, and if it devolves on us whether we are 'filled with the Spirit' or not—it is a great failure for a Christian to go through life without it."

This fullness is a gift of God's grace. Our thirst of heart does not earn it in any way. Yet God's grace operates to the fullest only in those who seek Him and His will and glory above all else. This is our responsibility. God forbid that we be like the people described in these words: "We want God, it is true, but we want something else more. And *we get what we want most*." Nay, rather: "let us know, let us follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (Hos. 6:3). May the showers fall soon.

A MAN WITH A GREAT GOD

Gordon R. Linscott, 1924 - 1989

The Editor

The story is told of a well-known preacher who was given a flowery introduction. Several times the man introducing him called him "a great man of God." When the preacher finally got up to speak, he said, "You would be far more accurate if you rearranged your words. You should say I'm 'a man with a great God.'"

Gordon Linscott, former editor of this magazine, would say amen to that. He was always eager to exalt his Lord and tell others of His

wonderful love. He lived in an attitude of worship (see his article following this).

Gordon attended one of the more legalistic Church of Christ colleges. He got the impression that preachers had a better chance of reaching heaven than non-preachers did, and that missionaries had an even greater chance! So he became a missionary, though achieving salvation was not his only motive, no doubt. He and Ruth, whom he met and married in college, spent three and a half years in Italy. It was there that he came to appreciate salvation by grace. The realization stunned him: we are saved not by our work for Christ but by His work for us—at Calvary. He was never the same after that. Amazing grace became one of the major strands of his preaching and teaching. Out of his own experience he warned others not to place confidence on their orthodoxy, zeal, service or sacrifice, but on Christ alone. (It is interesting how his experience along this line was very similar to that of Martin Luther, John Wesley and Carl Ketcherside. I wonder if they've been comparing notes up in the Glory!)

Gordon was a man of many and great capabilities. He preached for various congregations, including the Mount Auburn Church in Dallas and the Fisherville Church near Louisville. He worked for radio stations, including Dan Richardson's WAYRadio in Jacksonville, Florida. He taught several different subjects, all with excellence, at Portland Christian High School, where he wielded a great influence for Christ in the lives of students. He later taught and was a counselor in public schools in Louisville, feeling the Lord wanted him to shine in the darkness of that secular environment. And at the same time he edited *Word and Work* from 1962-75, writing many fine articles on the grace of God, the enabling power of "Christ in you," holiness, fellowship and unity in Christ, "mutual edification," the authority of God's word, and other important topics.

He was bold in speaking out where he believed the Lord's will was clear, yet he was loving and gentle, not flashy. Someone recently commented, "Gordon did a lot of good to a lot of people in a lot of places, *quietly*." How true.

Gordon had Parkinson's Disease for the last twenty-seven years of his life, and it was terribly difficult to see its growing effects on his body and mind. But the next time we see him, ah—what a difference! His mind will be razor sharp again, his step firm, his body vigorous, his smile radiant . . . as before, but even more. Hasten that Day, Lord Jesus! Till then, may God's grace sustain Ruth (they were married almost forty-eight years), and their children Dora and Carlo. And may the memory of our brother continue to cheer and challenge all of us who knew him. He was indeed a man with a great God—and it showed.

Inside Out Church

Gordon R. Linscott

A sudden gust of wind catches an open umbrella and turns it inside out. The damage is not serious. A child puts on his socks in-

side out. No harm is done. An "inside out" church is quite another thing. This is a condition which is not always readily apparent, and it always incurs great loss.

In the mount of God, Moses received the pattern for the tabernacle and all its furnishings, as well as for the service pertaining to it. He was warned, "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount." This pattern was not just a pattern of physical things, but a pattern for worship (see John 4:24; 1:17). The tabernacle and its trappings were not an end in themselves, even in that day. Their purpose was to "bring us to Christ"—to show the worshipper the way to God.

Just what was the pattern God showed Moses? The details are given in Exodus 25-40. The thing that engages our attention just now is the order in which God names and describes the tabernacle's parts. This is the same order Moses follows in the actual construction (Ex. 40). In both cases, God starts with the ark of the covenant. The last thing is the ordering of the service of the priests. This order takes on a special meaning when we consider the significance of the ark of the covenant and the holy of holies which housed it. This was nothing less than the place of the very presence of God (the Shekinah). "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Ex. 25:22). The presence of God was the whole purpose and end of the tabernacle and its services. Years later, when the ark of the covenant was taken in battle, it was well said, "Ichabod"—"the glory has departed." The physical tabernacle was unchanged, but God was no longer among His people. Later yet, Ezekiel saw the glory of God depart from the temple, an event that presaged the complete desolation of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem. Whatever the circumstances, without the presence of God the priestly service is meaningless and the tabernacle (or temple) is nothing.

The temple in Jerusalem has long been gone. God has a new dwelling place on the earth: the assembly of the saints (1 Cor. 3:16, etc.). The purpose of this temple is no different from that of the former. "Ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). For this pattern revealed in the mount is still valid. The beginning point of construction is the presence of God; the final, the ordering of its service.

Here is where we sometimes see evidence of an "inside out" church. The doctrines and ordinances are perfect, the service is flawless, but alas, "Ichabod." Where is the presence of God? Perhaps much care has been taken to "build according to the pattern"—except that the order is reversed. Such care has been used in ordering perfectly the visible trappings that no one has thought to inquire whether or not the glory of the Shekinah rests within. Such was the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2), and such we fear are many which profess to follow "the pattern." To really follow the pattern from above means to reproduce the details, indeed, but it also requires equal faithfulness in following the order of construction.

Many object that doctrine should come first. Even though this is a popular position held by a variety of sects, we see little practical

evidence in its favor, and even less from the Scriptures. Consider the Psalmist: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." "My soul waiteth in silence for God only." "O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee." These are the expressions of the true worshipper, who is more conscious of God than he is of persons or things around him. What will be the practical outworking of such devotion? Will it not be a "man after God's own heart," who will earnestly seek out His will to do it? The prophet Isaiah is another example. After he had been terrified by the vision of God, after the majesty of God had been indelibly impressed upon his soul—then he was a willing, qualified messenger (Isa. 6). Certainly we—whether individuals or congregations of Christians—can never be "right side out" until we recognize that our calling is primarily and above all to be the dwelling place of God—not a mere repository of doctrine.

In practice, this calls for positive, conscious direction of our will toward God—not just toward His commandments, or His church, or His work, but toward Him. God is seeking worshippers (John 4:23). There are plenty workers and organizers and promoters, but no one can fill any useful place for God unless he is first a worshipper. To be a worshipper means to be concerned with God Himself—apart from all else. We most nearly approach true worship when we completely lose sight of our aches and pains and our many needs, and stand in awe before the breath-taking splendor of our God. To the average person this experience comes only by earnestly seeking, as the Psalmist did, God Himself. Not His gifts, His favors, His mercies, but Himself. Many have found the inspired Psalms to be a great help.

Perhaps an illustration, though somewhat crude, may help to clarify the nature of worship. Suppose that you, returning home, are greeted by your dog. With great joy he runs to meet you, jumps all about you, rolls on the ground, and goes through every other antic of which he is capable. Why? Is he looking for a bone? Or is he just now remembering the bone you once gave him? Very unlikely. He's just glad to see you. He's overjoyed to be with you. This is the attitude of heart that God so desires to find in His redeemed ones. He wants us to desire Him more than we desire His gifts, or even His salvation.

In our public worship, true worship cannot "just happen," there must be conscious seeking for God. This requires that every detail be prayerfully submitted to the Holy Spirit for His leading. Much that is commonly included in a "worship service" is not at all conducive to worship. Evangelistic singing and preaching, for example, is not worship, though necessary and good in its place. It would be difficult to worship without praise, yet praise is not identical with worship. The making of distinctions could be carried to an extreme, but it seems that the more common fault is in making no distinctions at all. Many of our brethren are careful that each meeting be for a specified purpose (worship, evangelism, prayer, teaching, etc.); others have possibly not given it much thought. Consequently, it would appear that the call for worshippers still has top priority with our Lord. Regardless of how others may or may not respond, what will you do? Only those who truly worship are really prepared to work.

NEWS AND NOTES

"They reported all that God had done through them"

Waldo Oar's Homegoing

Waldo Oar, a veteran preacher among us—especially in the Linton/Dugger, Ind. area—died Sept. 29 and was buried Oct. 2. His wife died earlier this year.

An Interesting Publication came from Louisiana the other day. Called "The Newsletter," it is edited by Chris Schenk & has articles by Don McGee, Glen Baber, Miller Forcade, and Bryan McReynolds. It is put out quarterly & has 12 pages, including news and prayer-requests from 8 churches in La. plus 3 in nearby states. For a sample copy, write Chris Schenk, 1300 Bullard Ave., Metairie, LA 70003.

Portland Church, Louisville: We recently bought a 55-minute video called "Witnesses of Jehovah"—an exposé of the founding, errors, high-pressure tactics, and many unfulfilled prophecies of the Jehovah's Witnesses cult. Any church wishing to borrow this may arrange to pick it up.

Southeast Church of Christ, Jeffersontown, KY:

Junior Worship begins Sunday, Sept. 10! Children in grades 2-4 are covered in this program during the fall. Children in grade 1 join the program in January. Junior Worship is a worship service which is conducted basically the same as the adult worship. It is geared for this particular age group with an emphasis on understanding the meaning of worship. Children participating in Junior Worship are to remain with their families in the adult worship service until after communion has been served. Then they will be dismissed to make their way downstairs to the Fellowship Hall. An adult will be waiting for them at the back of the sanctuary to escort them. The first Sunday of each month is designated as family Sunday. Junior Worship will not meet on this Sunday in order that children in this program may worship with their families.

Henryville, Ind.:

NEW BIBLE: There is on display on the table in the vestibule a new International Children's Bible. It is a new

translation made especially for children. You can look it over as you like. There is also a brochure telling about those who worked on this special translation. It is in language true to the original and for children. It would be a nice gift for a parent or grandparent to give to children from 6 years and up. The cost is \$9.99.

Johnson City, Tenn.

Some fun from the Locust St. Bulletin:
Patient: Doctor, I'm having trouble in that I snore when I sleep.
Doctor: Is this a problem because it is disturbing your wife?
Patient: My wife? It disturbs the whole congregation!

Winchester, Ky.:

We have been blessed with the addition of several "new" children for our Sunday services, for which we are very thankful. These children have not yet been introduced to prayer parents, and need adults to temporarily sit with for a Sunday or two. If you happen to see an adult with more than a half-dozen children sitting with them, let me assure you that you will not offend the adult if you ask some of the children to sit with you for the opening exercises of the Worship service. The children will never know that you personally love them with the Love of Jesus unless you make a real effort to be with them for the few minutes before they go to the children's worship downstairs.

Gallatin Church of Christ

In our Sunday morning series on "The Grace of Giving" we stated: "The Lord Jesus gave Himself in death and resurrection, not in order to save us from sacrifice, but rather to teach us how to give ourselves and our substance in continual sacrifice."

Linton, Ind. Revival News

Bro. Richard Lewis spoke on the following topics October 15-20: **The Church rejoicing:** In Marriage; In Our Children; In Prayer; When God is Present; In Christ's Second Coming; In its Mission; When Love Abounds.

Next Month—several obituaries: Fond memories, sad goodbyes.

MRS. HOLLIS BROWN
2118 MARYLAND AVE.
LOUISVILLE, KY. 40205

HLD

**15th Annual
Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship**

November 13 - 16, 1989

GLENMORA, LOUISIANA

THEME: GREAT THEMES OF THE BIBLE

MONDAY

Evening: 7:00	Redemption	Richard Ramsey
---------------	------------	----------------

TUESDAY

Day: 10:00	The Love of God as seen in the Covenants	Carl Kitzmiller
11:10	Bible Exposition—1 John 4	Antoine Valdetero
1:15	The Effective Church	Julius Hovan
Evening: 7:00	Justification	Paul Estes

WEDNESDAY

Day: 10:00	The Love of God as in the message of the Prophets	Earl C. Mullins, Jr.
11:10	Bible Exposition—1 John 4	Antoine Valdetero
1:15	The Effective Church	Julius Hovan
Evening: 7:00	Reconciliation	Dale Offutt

THURSDAY

Day: 10:00	The Love of God as revealed in the Messiah	Don McGee
11:10	Bible Exposition—1 John 4	Antoine Valdetero
1:15	The Effective Church	Julius Hovan
Evening: 7:00	Sanctification	Earl C. Mullins, Sr.

Hospitality Committee: Dennis and Melva LeDoux, Phone (318) 748-4243

COMING NEXT MONTH:

Into the '90's – What lies ahead?