

A MINISTER'S OBSTACLES

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"My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord, Prepare thy soul for Temptation" Eccl. 2:1.

'Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted' HEBREWS 2:17, 18,

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. HEB 4:14-16.

I

The Specter of Professionalism

"God has a definite life-plan for every human person, girding him, visibly or invisibly for some exact thing which it will be the true significance and glory of his life to have accomplished". HORACE BUSHNELL.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world . . ." THE LORD CHRIST (JOHN 18:37)

". . . it was not you that sent me hither, but God ." JOSEPH, IN EGYPT (GEN 45:8).

" .. who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" MORDECAI TO ESTHER (ESTHER 4:14)

I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness . . ." CHRIST TO PAUL (ACTS 26:16)

"There was a man sent from God. . ." SPOKEN OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (JOHN :1:6)

TO PROMOTE THE highest ends of the ministry the servant of God must begin with himself. A ministry which is uncertain of its own power is a travesty of the sacred calling. Ministers are, first of all, men. It is easy to cosset self and forget that the messenger is important with the message and methods. A man must be "a man of God" (I Timothy 6:11). He may be like Apollos, deficient in spiritual light and life (Acts 18:25), or exercising a ministry like Thomas Chalmers of Scotland, "with a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," or like John Wesley waiting for that experience of the "warmed heart." In the atmosphere of hurry in which we live day by day, we are in danger of losing our souls and the secret known by Paul-"to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). The routine of the years may bring us sometime to the verge of perfunctory automatism and that first call of the Spirit may seem faint and far away. The specter or wraith of this temptation comes with devastating effect upon a man in mid-life. There is a "destruction that wasteth at noon-day."

We should be sure of the divine compulsion which carried us into the ministry of the word.

We need to realize that we must be good men, for the office does not sanctify the person but the person the office. And the innermost secret of personal life is the certitude that we obeyed the heavenly vision. Have we a sense of vocation? Without it a man enters the sacred profession

at his peril. Compare the solemn words of Jeremiah (23:21): "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to bear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."

To be "in Christ" before being "in the ministry" is foundational and indispensable. How can we be blessed to others unless we ourselves are monuments of sovereign grace? There is a natural religion and there is a revealed religion, but the only soul-saving religion is the religion of personal and spiritual experience. Paul speaks of being separated and called by the grace of God, who revealed His Son in him (Galatians 1:15, 16). The science of personal religion, the science of the inward spiritual life, is by far the most important, the most universal, the oldest, and the most fruitful of all the experimental sciences. The deeper the search into Holy Writ, the more do we discover ourselves in our sinfulness and in God's salvation for us. Well did Paul say to young Timothy that he must "save himself also" (I Timothy 4: 16). The "here am I" of Isaiah followed a sense of the divine majesty and glory when the prophet knew the compelling love of God and he could do none other but respond.

"On Christmas Day, 1884, between three and four o'clock", writes A. E. Garvie, principal, New College, London, "I was reading Stalker's Life of Paul, and there came home to me the world's need of the preacher. As though I had heard a voice, the words possessed my mind - Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." I sat down at once and wrote my decision to my Father."

The old question put to probationers in Scotland, "Are not zeal for the honor of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire to save souls your great motives and chief inducement to enter the at function of the holy ministry?" was not answered by a bow of the head. Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Peter, and Paul feared to answer us that except by divine constraint. Let no one at any time think of a better living, but only of a holier life. A sincere and right intention is necessary. We need to watch our souls lest we are undone in the realm of motive.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon used to say that no man should enter the ministry who could keep out of it. Preaching must become a passion, and ministry a sacred calling, or else it will be a very humdrum affair. Yes, and a soul-destroying experience "Charles," said Coleridge to Charles Lamb, "have you ever heard to me preach?" "My dear Coleridge," was the answer, "I have never heard you do anything else." The old fisherman will not discard his rod, and the man called of the Spirit never is anything else and never ceases to be a preacher of the everlasting gospel.

"Despise not the ministry," said Thomas Goodwin, "for God had but one Son and He was a minister."

We should be sure of the divine commission which is never revoked..

There is no ghost like this, that a man feels he has somehow of lost his commission. Amid the daily round and ceaseless labor, we who feed others need to be replenished. A man of God must constantly recall the glow of that dedication hour and move to richer experience of the grace of God in Christ.

There is a Word of God which says, "But when the time had fully come . . ." (Galatians 4:4). Then God sent forth His Son, but Paul thought also of the setting apart of man for his life-work. He saw every event, small and great, converging upon one far-off happening wherein a solitary man is set apart for sacred ministry. It was a tremendous day in the experience of Arthur J. Gossip when Alexander Whyte inducted him to his first charge. He comprehensively surveyed the past years of that church's life and work alongside of his short life, revealing that every providence of God had led up to that particular moment when Gossip, by the grace of God, was there as the pastor of that flock. The hour strikes for every servant of God so that he may say that all the contingencies, happenings, events of his life are contributory and preparatory to this conviction, that it is this authenticating experience which gives one a sense of vocation. Do we know such an hour?

The preacher who has this must be continually receiving the grace of God. He is a transmitter of truth and thereby open to the peril of familiarity in holy things. To be alive to truth and to God, the divine revelation must pass through his heart and mind before it is passed on to others.

What a man sees and feels will be of value to others. We traffic in holy things, eternal realities, it is ours to make them communicable to our people. We are not paid to preach; we are given an allowance to be free to preach, We are not in the employ of the church, but the servants of God and your servants for Christ's sake." And there is a nobility and dignity of office which a man finds when he is experiencing the sufficiency of his commission now.

It is reported of the late John Robertson of Glasgow, a preacher for forty years, that he was a backslider for a long time. The glow had gone. He decided to resign, and one morning prayed, "O God, Thou didst commission me forty years ago, but I have blundered and failed and I want to resign this morning." He broke down as he prayed, and in between his sobs he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "John Robertson, 'tis true I commissioned you forty years ago; 'tis true you have blundered and failed; but, John Robertson, I am not here for you to resign your commission but to re-sign your commission." That re-signing was the beginning of greater and new things for the preacher.

Is not our need to know more of this abundant life in the soul and to become incarnate with divine power? In this are the marks of the true minister. Not by intellectual power or social gifts or personal witchery do we become channels of grace, but in the plenitude of the Spirit. It was David Brainerd, whose brief but marvelous ministry was surcharged with divine power who was used to transform the Indians of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. His experience of grace and prayer influenced Henry Martyn to "burn out for God." William Carey caught the holy contagion also, and later, that missionary enthusiast, A. J. Gordon, declared how his torch was kindled at the altar of Brainerd's unquenchable devotion. And then Andrew Murray, saint of South Africa, was moved by Brainerd's Journal to a richer ministry. Each in turn had that divine dealing with their souls, so that Murray says, "God has no more precious gift to a church or an age than a man who lives as the embodiment of His will, and inspires those around him with the faith of what grace can do."

The New Testament is full of this deeper life, and further illustrations of that experience are found in the lives of J. Hudson Taylor, Charles G. Finney, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Samuel Rutherford, Andrew Bonar, Tauler, and Dwight L. Moody. Moments of high altitude of the spirit like these are sufficient to lay the specter of any sense of "professionalism" which might creep in to rob us of the certitude of our commission and ordination by the pierced hands.

We should be sure of the divine calling in the pressure of God's service.

The temptation to the minister is besetting when he sees little return for his effort; or when he is challenged by the critical or censorious one who makes sport of such work. Then it is not easy to be a voice for God. A Reformation minister was challenged about his authority in preaching. He handed his Hebrew Bible to the objector with these words: "There, read it if you can!" How many of us can read our title deeds? Are we certain of the calling wherewith Christ has called us? A fastidious preacher was challenged by a layman because he boasted of his qualifications. The layman said,

Why, see now,
Without your gown ye dare not preach;
Without your book ye could not preach;
Without your pay ye would not preach!

That is a severe indictment, but the test is—Are we in this service because it is our passion and life-blood, or are we hirelings? A true man of God will preach and serve without any of the supports mentioned. To lose this conviction of the divine imperative—"... woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" (I Corinthians 9: 16,) - is to be devoid of usefulness. Power for service lies, not in intellectual gifts or training or ability, but in a gift of God, an overwhelming sense of the presence of the Most High, a heightened awareness of the grace of Christ, mighty to save. John Wesley for thirty-odd years was a failure. He did not lack for opportunity or education, but he knew not God's will for his life. When that experience came to him he became the man whose

name is written across the habitable globe. He said to his preachers, "Your business is not to preach so many sermons, and to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can." That passion for souls was in the sage counsel and holy ambition he brought.

Alas! Sometimes this lack of conviction pervades many ministries. Henry van Dyke once said that on spiritual matters this is preeminently an age of doubt; its coat of arms is an interrogation point rampant above three bishops dormant, and its motto is Query. Indeed, the general tone of this generation is uncertainty rather than certitude, scepticism rather than conviction, hesitancy rather than dogmatism. But the man of God must know where he stands.

If we have any doubts as to whether the gospel of Christ is equal to the great task which He claims for it, then we should not enter a pulpit. If we think it played out, or effete, we ought to go and do something else. If afraid of the faces of men or a slave to their opinions, we should take up some other profession. The hour demands intrepid men who will say, as Seneca's pilot to Neptune, "You may sink me or you may save me, but I will hold my rudder true." I like that of Martin Luther, who, after he reached Worms, and was on trial, said, 'Here I stand! I can do no other! God help me! Amen!'

We have gone forth unfit for the task, seeking to heal others when we needed to be healed. We have urged others to run in the race, and our own feet have been heavy. Our souls have been imperiled because we have been professional and middlemen caught between man's judgment and self-pity instead of being flaming messengers of the Evangel of Grace. But we learn, and like the preacher of old, we can say, my heart had great experience . . . (Ecclesiastes 1:3.6). Out of the Word of God and from Christian biography we find much to wound and to heal. David Brainerd's testimony was:

"Afterwards I was much assisted in preaching. I know not that ever God helped me to preach in a more close and distinguishing manner for the trial of men's state. Through the infinite goodness of God, I felt what I spoke; He enabled me to treat on Divine truth with uncommon clearness; and yet I was so sensible of my defects in preaching, that I could not be proud of my performance, as at some times; and blessed the Lord for his mercy!"

It is in this deeper sense that we learn to become a student of priorities, discovering in the ministry that a man's first duty in the study of the divine strategy is to know what we are in God's scale of values, the supreme aims and His most priceless tools. I like Benjamin Jowett's saying, "that a man's final stadium of labors ought to be his best when he pulls himself together, surveys his experience and what it has taught him, and commits himself to God once more for the fulfilment of his vocation." Our minds can always leap forward in the spirit of that couplet which stirs imagination:

There are hills beyond Pentlands,
And firths beyond Forth.

We may be perfectly sure that the one thing which we all know about the craft or mystery of the ministry is our sense of failure in it. The ideal allures us to ever-increasing attainment and the well which is deep is within every godly life, and daily we may keep on drinking, from that living water of the Spirit. A cistern contains, but a fountain overflows. Here is the secret of divine affluence, being "filled with all the fulness of God."

What shall we say about doubt? One of life's tragedies is the man beset with doubt and unbelief. The lapse from faith or from righteousness will undo the man of God. The effect of doubt depends upon the kind of doubt. There is a doubt which is a challenge to the sincere and the devout. That is the questioning of truth in the way of finding the truth. But the insidious danger of doubt is that of intellectual unbelief. A man with a broken sword is not likely to wield his strength in the battle. And there are those who lack certainty and conviction concerning much in Biblical revelation. To essay a ministry under such conditions is to court disaster. Better to depart honorably or find certitude of Christian truth before continuing in the fight.

Much of the unrest of the ministry today is the result of an unsettlement in theological thought

with reference to those essential doctrines of the faith of apostolic Christianity. A man is unmade if he is not sure, and the acceptance of a minister's position without a true minister's conviction of truth is the repetition of forms devoid of meaning, with the benefit of allowances for sustenance under seemingly false pretenses. A preacher in the New Testament meaning is one who is there to magnify the office, an ambassador for God, and it reveals a lack of conscience if a man has not the spiritual and intellectual honesty for such a holy trust.

It is not inconceivable that a man may lapse into scepticism concerning the very foundations of his faith. In the uprising of doubt, common reasons may fail. Then some stronger restraint must be forthcoming to deliver us from infidelity. There have been those who have known this storm of temptation and questioned awhile whether they were indeed a Christian or a hireling and reprobate. Here the way of deliverance lies in digging to the very foundations and seriously examining the reasons of Christianity and giving a hearing to all that may be laid against it, that so faith might be indeed our own through the grace of God. When a man rises through faith and reason to rest in the validity of Christian experience of the love and mercy of Christ in his own soul, nothing is so firmly believed as that which sometimes has been in doubt in intellectual struggle.

Christian experience is based upon the Bible. One of the results of Thomas Chalmers' evangelical conversion was his new attitude to the Bible, his new interest in it, his new study of it. He was enthralled by it. In Dean Burgon's *Lives of Twelve Good Men* he has a sketch of Dean Mansel, Christian philosopher, and one striking sentence is that he "prostrated his reason before the Word of God." Scholar and student as he was, this was his experience. And John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding* says, "I was never out of my Bible." This is the mark of the true saint.

That which will best help us to weather the blast of this temptation is an inner life which has its roots in the obedience of faith to our Lord and Savior. Private communion and personal commitment are the bases of devoted ministry. If a man lacks this background of experience to sustain him under the trial of faith, he is being forced to examine his heart about his motives in giving himself to the high calling of God in Christ. How tragic to be a clergyman without Christ, a preacher without power! The shame and sorrow of a lifeless profession tell of the primary neglect of personal, heart-experience of Jesus Christ. Our destruction is of ourselves! The arrow that wounds us was feathered from our own wings. Of the priesthood it is asserted rightly (Hebrews 5:4) that "no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God . . ." and the word applies in its fullness to the Christian preacher who, without a true sense of vocation, cannot discharge his ministry.

Considering medicine as a calling, the Greeks set the standards in 400 B.C. by the Oath of Hippocrates. In that document is set forth that the doctor's one business is to heal, and that, accordingly, any knowledge acquired by him which promises health for men may not lawfully be kept a secret for gain. Since he enters a house only to heal, he is there on honor; he must not use his opportunities to corrupt or seduce, and he must not publish what has been told him in confidence. What is distinctive in the profession is its noble simplicity of aim and its exacting code of honor. A like rule applies to the minister, whose gospel is to match a worldwide disaster.

Exacting demands are made upon the preacher and pastor, and he who enters upon its calling at his ease, thinking only of advantages and not of obligations, is false to the very meaning of his calling.

In the measure that we know the mastery and Lordship of our Savior, whose we are and whom we serve, we shall watch for our own souls, and then for the souls of others. We shall then have a "sense of vocation."

The Vice of Sloth

"Almighty God, in whose hands are all the powers of man; who givest understanding, and takest it away; who, as it seemeth good unto Thee, enlightenest the thoughts of the simple, and darkenest the meditations of the wise, be present with me in my studies and inquiries.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not lavish away the life which Thou hast given me on useless trifles, nor waste it in vain searches after things which Thou hast hidden from me.

Enable me by Thy Holy Spirit, so to shun sloth and negligence, that every day may discharge part of the task which Thou hast allotted me; and so further with Thy help that labour which, without Thy help, must be ineffectual, that I may obtain, in all my understanding, such success as will promote Thy glory, and the salvation of my own soul, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen"

A PRAYER BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, NOVEMBER, 1752.

"GO TO THE ANT, thou sluggard; consider her ways (Proverbs 6:6). The wise servant of God will not fail to attend to an examination of this peril. Sloth, or accidia, has been defined as a raw, gloomy state of mind, inclining to melancholy. The Greek word from which the Italian word accidia comes, means that state of listlessness and indifference to good, that dull sadness which takes away any healthy interest in either mental or bodily activity.

In his *Personne's Tale*, Chaucer calls it a "rotten sinne" and gives a list of vices springing from it: negligence, tardiness, slackness, coldness, sluggy undevotion. Dante, in his masterpiece *The Divine Comedy*, places it midway between the spiritual and fleshly sins-pride, envy, anger (vices of the spirit), avarice, gluttony, sensuality (vices of the flesh) - partaking of the evil of both.

The Word of God is replete with warning that the man of God should brace himself, gird up the loins of his mind, run the race patiently, and Paul speaks of receiving a ministry. But we are never exhausted as we possess the infinite resources. The danger, then, is real. It appertains to the ministry and the whole Christian life.

The Greek lexicon indicates that the adjective for "easy" originally meant to do things with ease. Then it came to mean to take things easy, to do wrong things, to play the rogue. A transition from ease to evil is always our peril as we make full proof of our stewardship of time. It is easy to recline.

Spiritual lassitude is a sin we have forgotten to tabulate nowadays, but the early Christians recognized it. Bishop Paget, writing of this sin of accidia, said: "It may be called a weariness or distress of heart; it is akin to sadness; the homeless and solitary hermits, those who live in the desert, are especially assailed by it, and monks find it most troublesome about twelve o'clock; so that some of the aged have held it to be 'the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday,' the *daemonium meridianum* of the Ninety-first Psalm. But the most striking part of all that Cassian has to say about accidia is the description in the second chapter of a monk who is suffering from a bad attack of the malady. When the poor fellow is beset by it, he says, it makes him detest the place where he is, and loathe his cell; and he has a poor and scornful opinion of his brethren, near and far, and thinks that they are neglectful and unspiritual. It makes him sluggish and inert for every task; he cannot sit still, nor give his mind to reading; he thinks despondently how little progress he has made where he is, how little good he gains or does-he, who might so well direct and help others and who, where he is, has nobody to teach and nobody to edify. He dwells much on the excellence of other and distant monasteries; he thinks how profitable and healthy life is there; how delightful the brethren are, and how spiritually they talk. On the contrary, where he is, all seems harsh and untoward; there is no refreshment for his soul to be got from his brethren, and none for his body from the thankless land."

In those good hours of the mind, those hours in which we strengthen ourselves to make high

resolutions and to face grave dangers, we realize that we are masters of our own time. No one demands that we be at an office by a certain time, and the public and our people have no means of checking on our use of those precious hours. We are trusted to invest in the preparation of ourselves. If we are making progress in the economy of time we are learning to live. A Turkish proverb has it, "A busy man is troubled with but one devil; the idle man with a thousand." And a Spanish proverb, "Men are usually tempted by the devil, but the idle man positively tempts the devil." In a holy life there must be control of time. We must discipline the hours and bend them to God's purpose. The late James M. Gray, president of The Moody Bible Institute, was wont to say, "Push your work." The slippered life does not befit the minister of Jesus Christ, who ought to be always on the alert, always about his Master's business, ready to put himself at the disposal of the Holy Spirit. If the hours are frittered away by secondary interests and calls, we are succumbing to the vice of sloth. Laziness through religious fussing about with trifles is an idleness for which God will bring us into judgment.

Out of his ripe experience, the late J. H. Jowett counseled ministers to be as systematic and as businesslike as the businessman. He said: "Enter your study at an appointed hour, and let that hour be as early as the earliest of your businessmen goes to his office. I remember, in my earlier days, how I used to hear the factory operatives passing my house on the way to the mills, where work began at six o'clock.... The sound of clogs fetched me out of bed and took me to my work.... Shall the minister be behind them in his quest of the Bread of life? In offsetting sloth there must be a wise conservation of the hours."

Patient preparation means permanent power. Here is a preacher's workshop where he sharpens and uses his tools. First of all, there is his use of and attitude toward the Bible. This is our textbook, above all others. It is not for us to spend hours with commentaries and a few minutes with a text. We should be men of one Book! Let the Word of God be central as the hub of the wheel, and then we shall place other works at the proper circumference and in their true perspective.

Reading plays a large part in our lives. If sloth besets us and we lose our appetite for the Bread which comes from above, then our hungry people will not be fed. If we settle on our lees, we need not be surprised if they turn away, soured by our presentation of truth. Truth which we mediate will be as an idle tale unless we smart under it and are quickened by it. Robert Browning speaks of "the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin." That is the peril, for we can make an outward show of respectability when we are indolent.

There is also the reading of other useful works. John A. Hutton, editor of *The British Weekly*, said, "Never read without taking notes. All other reading is self-indulgence and an occasion for sleep." If the newspaper is read standing, we are not likely to spend a disproportionate time with it.

In the furbishing of the mind and the quickening of the spirit a servant of God needs contact with the outstanding works accessible. We must work harder than any member of the congregation. By our reading and meditation we are preparing ourselves for sacred ministry. Let a rumor pass through a church that the pastor is a slacker, or sits at ease, or is not diligent, and he is finished!

A useful discipline of study in feeding our souls on the Word of God is to read a book at a sitting. A few have specialized in this kind of study with lasting profit, such as James M. Gray, G. Campbell Morgan, and W. Graham Scroggie. But it is open to all. To rise to the mastery of a book after repeated reading of it is to survey some large mountain range. There will be occasions when we return again and again to particular books in the Bible, and classic works of devotion will claim our interest. Dr. Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, writing to Lady Airlie, said that he had just finished Boswell's *Johnson* for the fiftieth time; and Charles Haddon Spurgeon was wont to say that he had read John Bunyan a hundred times. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, said he had read James Fraser of Brea, and could run Jowett and Spurgeon bard! Fraser was the Scottish Augustine in the seventeenth century. In his *Book of the Intricacies of My Heart and Life*, he says, "I was too lazy to roast what I took in hunting."

That is one of the snares of sloth. Reading a masterpiece of spiritual worth, we are exhilarated by it and delighted, but we do not get up for notebook or Bible to mark. And so we lose much of that which we have to enrich our ministry. Without roasting, and all the other operations and processes connected with roasting, you cannot eat so as to take your needed strength out of what you have hunted. "It must be added," said Canon Mosley, "that Cardinal Newman did the same. He drew up a summary and an analysis of any book he read." Sloth in the spiritual life is the last sin to be wholly overcome. "The sloth and unprofitableness of my life," wrote Cardinal Manning, 'are only equaled by my vanity and self-complacency."

We need to read only the best books and to select the best for our library. Naturally, a minister will build up a library. Richard Baxter, of Puritan fame, had his books covering tables, chairs, and floor, as well as walls with shelves well laden. It is not the collection, but the selection which is determinative. Books, however, were the one luxury which Baxter counted a necessity. He thought no money wasted in the purchase of them. No place was more dear to him than His study! It was his workshop, His oratory, and (largely) his living room, and he always left it with reluctance. We may not be able to do all we should like in garnering the wealth of literature, but it is possible with little to make every year a year of growth for the mind and heart. Even the company of one great writer or teacher will add cubits to our spiritual stature. The horizon widens, and preaching is enriched in proportion as we learn to group all knowledge around the Name which is above every name. Pity the minister who never reads anything and who has no passion for reading.

We may not be like the father of the late Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who, out of a stipend of about \$1,000 a year, accumulated a library of 17,000 volumes. Such a collection, it was said, could have been made only by depriving his family of the necessities for health and comfort. But the famous son never spoke a word of criticism of his father. Thus one of the largest private libraries in Scotland was built out of nothing, and a minister and writer who had enriched the whole church of God was given to the world. We may not attain to the objective of Nicoll's father, but we should not be without some choice treasures of the mind and spirit.

' . . . I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15). The minister of the gospel must be a man of knowledge, and if he has a good memory he is helped to face the demands of the hour. But even with a poor memory, he can toil to make good that deficiency. Discipline is possible for the culture of the spiritual life if we would save ourselves, and them that hear us (I Timothy 4: I.6). Thomas Shepard, Pilgrim father and founder of Harvard University, worked hard early in the week at his sermons, and on Saturday he prepared himself. Read his word: "God will surely curse that minister who lumbers up and down the world all the week, and then thinks to prepare for his pulpit by a hurried hour or two on Saturday night. God knows, Saturday night were little enough time in which to weep and pray and to get his sinful soul into a fit frame for the approaching day."

The temptation to recline in prayer is a peril of the privileged. We deal in sublime things and stand in the holy place continually. When we have read and studied, worked and visited, we imagine we are ready for rest. We say that "labor is prayer," when the reverse is true-"prayer is labor." Because it is labor, an exercise, perhaps that is why we are prone to indolence in this respect. Haven't you discovered a reluctance and resistance to this spiritual duty? To pray aright and to pray enough is to face difficulties, especially our sloth. "Oh," cried John Calvin, "what deep-seated malice against God is this, that I will do anything and everything, but to go to Him and remain with Him in secret prayer." Our danger is that we are always "on the run," and neglect the culture of our souls in private. This discipline is needful in order to ward off sloth. Browning's Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister should be read.

I have heard of a minister who gave this judgment after a long ministry: "I have not failed to study; I have not failed to write and meditate; but I have failed to pray.... Now, why have I not prayed? Sometimes because I did not like it; at other times because I hardly dared; and yet at other times because I had something else to do. Let us be frank. It is a grand thing to get a

praying minister.... I have heard men talk about prayer who never prayed in their lives. They thought they did; but when you have heard them, they made their own confession in a ruthless way.

In the days of His flesh, Christ "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears . . ." (Hebrews 5:7). It was a holy and costly business. We are not the men we might be because of this lack and the inertia which too readily besets us. Eternal vigilance must be fostered if we are to succeed. Sloth here is like the action of the termites which destroy the life and strength of wood, causing it to crumble in dust when it is put under the pressure of use. Our prayers, even when we pray, are not at the flood. There may be much phrasing and little passion. Better to have a little less in other things and more experience in the school of prayer than to miss the power of the secret place. It is not found in the college curriculum.

Sloth in the spiritual life can overtake us when we imagine we are zealous. As Robert Murray McCheyne found in Dundee, his times of solitude were often times of greatest temptation. With open Bible and prayer purposed, he found there was little communion. He it was who cried out, "Oh, my lifeless spiritual Mondays!" and he mourned. His plan of the spiritual life was carried through in the spirit of Jeremy Taylor's advice, "If thou meanest to enlarge thy religion, do it rather by enlarging thine ordinary devotions than by extraordinary." The daily regularity of devotion kept his soul refreshed by the stream of God. The wise man will remember the spirit of his Lord-the zeal of God's house consumed Him: ". . . he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). As the cases of lawyers are won in the chambers, so we win our battles in private before we wrestle without.

Let us not deceive ourselves, imagining we shall never be tempted after one victory. In mid-life sloth will appear again. Amid the pressure of labor we can lose the zest and thrill of aspiration. Charles Haddon Spurgeon knew something of this, for in one of his sermons he said: "In this world, is it not a weary business to be a minister of Christ today? If I might have my choice I would sooner follow any avocation, so far as the comfort of it is concerned, than this of ministering to the sons of men, for we beat the air. This deaf generation will not hear us. What is this perverse generation the better for years and years of preaching? ... The world is not worth preaching to."

In the spiritual pilgrimage of the years there is a loneliness; but thank God for the discipline of His service wherein we can grow. Napoleon said, "I may lose battles, but no one will ever see me lose minutes, either by overconfidence or sloth." If we are not to flee the Christian ministry and resign, we should not ask for a life of ease, but hardship, for our symbol is not a cushion but a cross! We shall have to fight against this sort of thing all our lives, but Christ is our ally in the work and the fire can ever be kept burning on the altar; it need never go out.

Idleness is rust and death,
But Work-hard, exhausting, rigorous labor,
Is God's good gift of life in action.

Save us then, Lord,
From this shameful disease of sloth,
From its living death.

Grant us the glory of Work,
Whose weariness is the crown of achievement,
Whose monotony is solid success,
Whose end is the end of a soldier,
Harness on back and face to the foe.

Use us, Lord, in Thy work:
Use us remorselessly:
Grant us ever the guerdon of Work, of harder

and sterner work.

Use us with pitiless rigor,
Wear us out for Thyself,
Till we pass from this feeble and
 stumbling activity
To full sharing at last in Thine
 own eternal Work.

John S. Hoyland, Indian Dawn

He who goes sauntering and dawdling to his work has not known the secret of "We must work the works of Him that sent us while it is day" (John 9:4). The Christian life has been described as a battle, a race, a struggle to enter in at the strait gate, and the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. He who drifts along with a languid mind will be like a flower in the garden which has blight on it. When leaves turn yellow and sickly and come dropping off, something is wrong. Our frailties and our temperaments will not do as excuses. We are to "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

The Dry Rot of Covetousness

"Not like a hireling for his selfish gain
 With backward glances and reluctant tread,
 Making a merit of his coward dread,
 But cheerful in the light around him thrown
 Walking as one to pleasant service led."

" ... he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep". JOHN 10:12- 13.

DRY ROT IN TIMBER is a disease which occasions the destruction of the fibers, and reduces timber eventually to a mass of dry dust. It occurs most readily in a warm, moist, stagnant atmosphere. Wet rot is the result of the exposure of wood to repeated changes of climatic conditions. What is true in nature is found again and again in the ministry. Without spiritual "seasoning" or "preserving," a man is in danger.

An Old Testament story illustrates this (cf. II Kings 5): Elisha had succeeded Elijah and taken Gehazi as his servant. In all probability, Gehazi would have become Elisha's successor. He was called to that prophetic task, trained for it, and already assisting his master. But he had carried with him seeds of decay and had never completely broken with his past life. When Elisha followed after Elijah, he burned his old tools and cut clean away from the former employment. But nothing of this is suggested in the case of Gehazi, and the commercial, bargaining spirit was present throughout his association with the prophet, until, in a crisis, he was unmasked and undone. Even the New Testament knows something of the same sin within the church, and the names of Ananias, Sapphira, and Judas are not unfamiliar.

A man engaged in the prophetic office is not immune from the temptation, and Gehazi's words are striking: "I will run after him, and take something from him" (V. 20). Self-interest was the dominating motive of his life, and although God had given to Naaman cleansing from leprosy without charge to display His grace, this small-minded soul must make capital out of him. The Tenth Commandment still stands: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant.... nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17,). Elisha under God helped Naaman gratuitously, but Gehazi's act marred a gesture of grace and detracted from the glory of God. And God is jealous for His glory!

When Gehazi said, my master hath spared Naaman ... in and not receiving at his hands that which he brought . . ." (V. 20), he was questioning God's way of blessing. He who would revise the method appointed by divine strategy sets himself up as greater than the gracious Giver. Discontent with his position and false aim about "getting on in the world" led Gehazi into this pernicious attitude. He little realized that a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things possessed. Of course not, when you think of it! Life is independent of properties and dividends. Life is a trust and a probation, wherein character is eternal worth, and where spiritual dependence brings temporal independence.

It is to be noted in the same connection that this man referred Naaman as "this Syrian." There was gathered up in that reference all the contempt of a foolish spirit intoxicated with

aggrandizement. Such an epithet finds echo in others when men and nations refer to some of their fellows with disdain, or treat another people as less than human by their aggression and conquest, ruthlessly. Gehazi proves that dry rot in character corresponds to the deterioration of tissue in wood. All the evils of life are not from without; some are from within, even covetousness.

Gehazi was a small man, devoid of those great moral qualities which mean strength. Hypocrisy and misrepresentation followed his act and soon there was a nemesis of judgment. He pretended to be what he was not, and acted a part when he glibly assured Naaman that "All is well. My master hath sent me" (V. 22) For a while his position seemed assured with his ill-gotten gains, but his master's simple question about duty came and he stood unmasked (v. 2.5). Then followed Elisha's stem rebuke and searching indictment of the servant of God who thinks solely in terms of rewards or material possessions divorced from stewardship and sacrifice. "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" (v. 26,).

That Gehazi went out leprous was but a fitting expression of his inner self: he was contaminated within. His motive in service was not disinterested. There is no wrong in possessing material things or handling the coinage of this world, but a spirit of acquisitiveness will wreck the finest life. A visitor to the casino in the south of France has said he was profoundly moved by the sad faces of those who gambled.

To turn from Gehazi is to scrutinize our own lives. Christian men are not immune from this sporific. Servants of God have been known to be lax in the handling of money and possessions.

It should be an axiom of the Christian life that no man of God goes into debt; he should not owe his people anything, and he should live always within his income, however small. Here we should be above suspicion and wholly trustworthy in handling money. Money is not an evil in itself; it is used for good or evil. But the greed of pelf is a deadly disease. Is the charge unwarranted that certain of the brethren are noted for their large fees, and not for the sanctity and blessing of their ministry? Naturally, expenses must be met, but no one should ever make a charge for his services in preaching the gospel. Sometimes generous expenses are given; sometimes very little is offered, to the shame of the contracting people who have benefited and the pecuniary embarrassment of the minister. But a man of God must learn to serve without reference to imposed conditions of fees. The blight is noticed, too, in churches estimating by the remuneration expected the value of a minister whom they would like to call. Some men are in one class and others in another. Here can be seen inequalities of allowances, and there seems to be room for a more practical display of Christian brotherhood in this regard (cf. II Corinthians 11:5-12).

It has been wisely counseled to young men about to give themselves to the work of God that they should not be salary-hunters. We are not free to bargain or negotiate in the way of the businessman, whose value is computed in terms of dollars or pounds. No ministry is to be reckoned on a cash basis, but in moral and spiritual investment which will give dividends of character and souls for the Kingdom of God. When God transmutes our stewardship and service into the coinage of heaven, who is sufficient to judge by the use of temporal canon? The richest scope for the whole range of a man's powers is in Christ's service. Our devotion to this vocation is not to be determined by any financial return. The covetous spirit is crucified. When the Reverend J. P. Struthers, of Greenock, left the University of Glasgow in 1870 to engage in theological studies for the ministry, Professor Caird offered him a chair of Greek in Australia at six hundred pounds a year. This was a high emolument in those days, and the offer was one which few students in his circumstances would have refused. But Struthers did refuse it, to the surprise of his teacher. The professor learned that day that the spirit of the Covenanters was not yet dead. "Will you," asked Caird, "reject this offer to become a Cameronian minister at eighty pounds a year?" "I cannot help it, sir," Struthers replied. "I have made up my mind to be a minister." To read the Life and Letters of J. P. Struthers is to thrill at the strength of a great trust which this man kept untarnished by a spirit devoid of covetousness.

Gehazi is not alone as a warning; every under shepherd knows the tragedy of Judas. Our Lord chose him to be with Him, yet with all his finer qualities his mind was like a mint grinding out money. He had a materialized conception of the Kingdom and at heart he was avaricious. This evil passion warped his abilities and induced him to pilfer what was in the bag. What should have been given to the poor, Judas kept for himself. From that hour he was a lost man.

John Bunyan has upon his stage Mr. Hold-the-World, Mr. Money-Love, and Mr. Save-All. These had been schoolfellows in their youth, under the tuition of Mr. Gripeman, a schoolmaster in Love-Gain, which is a market town in the country of Coveting, in the North. (A rather sinister suggestion is in that little phrase "in the North"!)

This schoolmaster taught his pupils the art of getting, either by violence, flattering, lying, or by putting on the guise of religion. Christian could not be persuaded by the enticements of a Demas, gentlemanlike, to leave the pilgrim path, but tells him that Gehazi was his grandfather and Judas his father.

Gehazi is the symbol of evil leprosy worked by covetousness in a man's nature, and Baalam is another warning against avarice as the one black spot which Scripture points out in a man of religious genius. Baalam did not love unrighteousness, but he loved the wages of unrighteousness, and he did the unrighteous thing. So with Achan, who brought defeat and shame upon his people by his yielding to this subtle temptation. In a day when this evil was prevalent in Israel, Samuel the prophet vindicated himself from all suspicion (I Samuel 12:1-6).

It is worth noting that we do not overcome this temptation by asking for poverty, as do some monkish orders. A better prayer is:

Give me neither poverty nor riches,
But a heart at leisure from itself.

God may make us stewards of wealth-What then? By active and systematic benevolence we are saved in the hour of peril; but not by a display of giving, lest we fall into the same condemnation of coveting the praise of men. Then, verily, we have our reward. Yet we can be liberal without niggardliness in the spirit of our giving. The avenue of temptation is in the love of position, the lure of the larger salary, the easier and more indulgent life, and denial of faith in the providential care of God.

The late Arthur T. Pierson knew something of the struggle between greed and grace. As a student he very early learned a lesson in giving. In the possession of his first one hundred dollars as the result of summer work, and with board and lodging provided, he felt free to "salt down" the precious gold against a day of future need or indulgence. Greed had unconsciously begun to tighten its grip upon him. For the first time in his life he tasted the luxury of hoarding money, and the taste was sweet. But just then a personal friend came to the same seminary to begin his theological studies. Pierson learned accidentally (or was it providentiary?) that he was in need and had come from a home of poverty. His hoarded one hundred dollars began to trouble him and the battle between greed and grace began. After much thought and prayer, he decided to give his friend one half of the money as a loan. It was the beginning of his discipline in the school of faith. God supplied his own need, and this first lesson in the handling of money was never unlearned. It relaxed the giver's love for gold and taught him how to transmute material things into spiritual power.

Another instance in the life of the same Christian stalwart may be cited. At the age of fifty-two years, a period when many men have laid aside something for old age and a few begin to think of the day of retiring from active service, he was not without temptations to accept position which afforded earthly comforts and called for a less heroic exercise of faith in God. On one such occasion, when he had found his financial responsibilities heavy, he recorded in his diary: "I was approached to consider a call to the church, but I felt moved to discourage it. The temptation was the greatest I remember to have undergone. Here are riches, a soft nest, a kind people, a life tenure and provision for disablement or for widowhood of wife. But over against this is my long testimony against large salaries, wealth and worldliness in churches and the conviction that this ease would be purchased at the cost of my wider work for missions. I feel called to self-denial for Christ.... I purpose to separate all considerations of money, so far as is possible, from the

interests of the Kingdom of God. I record my confidence that all needful good will be added to us according to God's promise." The next twenty years were the most widely useful of his life.

Often character in the Christian man rots because of yielding to the trap of covetousness. "What shall it profit a servant of God if he gains-but to lose his own soul?" Leanness of soul is a terrible price to pay for this blight. We are saved if we do not speculate and if we honor God with our substance. John Wesley, who died childless, warned parents against leaving a fortune to their children. His use of money was such that, out of the wealth received for his publications, he died leaving a couple of silver spoons! William Carey ranks high as one who refused to be dazzled by the evil eye of greed, and although a government gave him a princely salary as a professor of languages in India, he used most of it for the cause of missions, ever remaining the true missionary.

It has to be confessed that some men have abandoned the ministry for the sake of expecting a larger salary in a different field of labor. If a man is called of God, that sidetracking would be an injury to life and influence.

When we think of the world's scale of values, we are thus tempted. The boxer, the baseball player, the successful businessman, and others have their ratios far above the allowance offered to preachers. But remember, a Milton received only \$50 for Paradise Lost, a Beethoven lost \$100 in producing his Ninth Symphony, and Sir Ronald Ross, who discovered the secret of combating malaria, had to sell his papers in the eventide of life to provide modest comfort for himself and his wife. The ministry is a stewardship of the grace of God, and out of seeming limitation there is poetry, and without a fortune a preacher can enrich thousands and prepare them for the final audit. The minister is a fool in this realm as in others, but let him know that he need not covet any man's possessions, not even his library or his church or his stipend or his popularity, for, with our limited opportunities and slender resource, we can, under God, be wealthy in the spirit of the sacrifice of the cross.

In greed, which is the plain, blunt way to speak of this temptation and sin, we are caught in a modern society which intensifies this. We live in the affluent age with its good life of material plenty (at least in the English-speaking world). D. R. Davies in his *The Sin of Our Age* calls attention to this "dogma of increasing wants." The Tenth Commandment has this stab and thrust in that it forbids the state of mind which toys with covetousness. Our Lord did not teach that we should seek poverty, but He warned against the moth and the rust which would spoil character if greed dominated. In the context of our use and enjoyment of much that is material we do well to handle and hold things lightly. The minister is a perverted man who is caught in the grip of this fell disease.

Robert Murray McCheyne visited in the Holy Land, and William Buhis ministered in his absence at Dundee, Scotland. Great spiritual blessing came to the church; it was then McCheyne rejoiced in Buhis' gifts and opportunity, without covetousness. Paul lists as one of the sins of the spirit this vice of which we have been speaking and calls it by its true and inward name, idolatry.

We are to keep ourselves from it, lest it destroy the bloom or mar the beauty of the cluster of graces by the Spirit of God. To yield to it is to know suspicion, hatred, sorrow, heartache, and unrest; for which lust of possession there is deterioration of character. We who are marked off for scrutiny in the community must needs live before the world without fault or suspicion in money matters or we are marked down as money-grubbers. Covetousness can sharpen our wits until we become time-servers and live by our wits. And that is the denial of faith. We are shown a more excellent way-the royal law of level

The Bane of Jealousy

". . . If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness " Matt 6:33

In the Arena Chapel in Padua, the pioneer of fresco painting, Giotto, has given allegorical representations of the Deadly Vices and their opposite Virtues, facing each other in pairs on opposite walls. Envy is a female figure (Charity is likewise.) who has long, wide ears to catch every breath of rumor that may hurt a neighbors reputation; out of her mouth issues a serpent tongue, swift to poison all things sweet and tender; this serpent coils back on itself and stings the eyes of the envious one to blindness, and the figure stands in flames, representing the fierce fire that consumes the heart that takes pleasure in other's injuries and is made bitter by their prosperity.

". . . what is that to thee? follow thou me" John 21:22

IN THIS SPIRITUAL clinic for the man set apart, we refer to Numbers 12, wherein is deposited a story of tragedy and heartache. From this and other extracts from the Bible is mediated to us a mirror in which we see ourselves. The question of the nature of sin, in its evil principle, is of interest not only to the theologian and philosopher, but to all who would understand human life. This particular malady is set forth in relation to the priestly and prophetic offices of Old Testament days.

The sins of the flesh are often gross and repulsive, and merit condemnation, but the sins of the spirit deserve the same judgment. Sin is lawlessness in any form, and God's displeasure is indicated in this story by the resultant nemesis of leprosy. Miriam, sister to Moses, occupied an important position in Israel. Yet, throughout that journey of the ancient people, she was not content with God's permissive will. Her circumstances of life narrowed her view of the divine plan, and in a distorted vision she betrays a lack of confidence in God and her brother. A secret dissatisfaction possesses her as she compares her place with the places of Moses and another. In discontent against God and envy of another's position, she was smitten with jealous regard for selfish ends and excused herself under the guise of religion.

Tracing the whole story, verse 1 indicates why Miriam spoke against Moses. Fault-finding, evil-speaking, and a censorious judgment found expression. She considered that she had been badly treated and felt slighted because of the place she had occupied in the nation's life. Before his marriage, Moses had Miriam alongside as companion and counselor. She was the first woman in Israel and was conspicuous as leading the women of the nation in singing as they crossed the Red Sea. But now another woman is in the confidence of Moses, and Miriam is suspicious, fearing displacement altogether. She eyes her sister-in-law as a rival, seeing the mote in another's eye but missing the beam in her own. Her murmuring is an expression of selfish thought for herself. She loses a single eye in service to binder any further cooperation with those whose lives are linked with hers. Thus the critic is born with a sneer of bitterness. No healthy constructive criticism this, but sinful jealousy. It blights life and work. She saw nothing good in that marriage, and natural affection was quenched. It is true that one cannot sneer and pray or bless at the same time.

The hiss of the serpent is heard once more in Miriam's "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?" (V. 2). Here is doubt and denial of God's authority and questioning of His choice of a servant. Moses was God's appointed man, but his sister would despise him. Was he slow of speech (Exodus 4: 10) ? Was not she a prophetess (Exodus 15:20)? Were not Aaron and she

equally as important as Moses? This family quarrel disrupted the harmony of service for God. Moses was a man of meekness, but his sister was jealous, revealing lack of control and a spirit not submissive to the divine choice and will. ". . . jealousy burns like fire" (Psalm 79:5,). ". . . jealousy is the rage of a man" (Proverbs 6:34,). ". . . jealousy is cruel as the grave (Song of Solomon 8:6,).

This embittering flame consumes character and destroys the bloom of beauty. God's judgment under Miriam was leprosy. "We have sinned, we have done foolishly" is the language of Miriam afterwards. No wonder she was ashamed and thought herself as good as dead (vv. 11-14)! If God be sovereign, why envy another's place and be jealous? Israel did not progress for one week until Miriam was restored. Her jealousy and leprous judgement hindered a whole nation! Jealousy is usually focused here - in the same circle, not above it. How terrible is the condemnation of God upon any servant found guilty of this sin.

Nowhere is a man more tempted than just here. The minister moves in a circle of special influence and fellowship, and cannot be free from appraising values in one life and another. Now, the Bible uses the word "jealousy" in two senses. There is that which is good and that which is bad. Good jealousy is in the word "for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God . . ." (Exodus 20:5,), or Paul's "Would to God ye could bear with me a little.... For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy" (11 Corinthians 11: 12,). The commendable sort is the zeal of love; not self-love, but love for others. It is devotion at white heat.

But the jealousy which besets God's servants, as in the case of Miriam, is that which is poisonous and foul, born of self-love. When someone else in Christian service receives more approbation and attention than we attract, there may be the stirrings of this evil spirit. When others congratulate the favored one we are coldly silent, and if anyone should stumble and fall, we are secretly glad". How dangerous is this lust to the preacher! It is not that we should compare ourselves with a Spurgeon or a Moody or any other great one, but rather with someone on our own level and in our class. The minister of the gospel will readily acknowledge the uniqueness and qualities of those outstanding men of God, and no jealous discontent is aroused.

But when we measure someone's attainment slightly above our own, then we are prone to fall into the pernicious snare. Jealousy feeds on fine distinctions and the evident success or blessing enjoyed by another is to us gall and bitterness. Our own place and opportunity of service is not bringing to us satisfaction and we are like the Haman of Esther's day as he thought of one Mordecai: ". . . all this availeth me nothing, so long as . . ." (5:13,). Yes! So long as another is prospering and we are not sharing the same reward, we are easily soured. By the tone of the voice in deprecating the other, by our sneer and question about the quality of the work done, or the depth of the character, or the reserve for the task-by these innuendoes we reveal our prejudices in judgment and the taint is there.

I have read of a fable wherein the devil once was crossing the Libyan Desert when he met a group of small fiends who were tempting a holy hermit. They tried him with the seductions of the flesh; they sought to sour his mind with doubts and fears; they told him that all his austerities were nothing worth. But it was of no avail; the holy man was impeccable. Then the devil stepped forward. Addressing the imps, he said, "Your methods are too crude. Permit me for one moment. This is what I should recommend." Going up to the hermit he said, "Have you heard the news? Your brother has been made the Bishop of Alexandria." The fable says that a scowl of malignant jealousy clouded the serene face of the holy man. This is not uncommon in the ministry. Self-seeking, wire-pulling, official-tugging inculcate this spirit of impish cruelty. Thus a useful life is blasted. We must be done with comparisons with our fellows; we are in the same fellowship and in the same service. We need to focus our eyes upon Jesus our Lord. "The Master praises; what are men?"

Does not our Lord speak of "an evil eye" (Matthew 6:23) perverting the moral nature of man so that it looks with disfavor - or bitterness upon another's good fortune or honor? "Saul eyed David from that day forward" - when the dancing maidens chanted, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Samuel 18:9, 7). The chief sphere of this vice is

among rivals for popular favor. A doctor or lawyer or minister does not look with jealous mien upon the success of a businessman or teacher or politician. But that colleague in the same circle who is prospered may be the object of this baneful scrutiny. The heightening of interest and usefulness in another may mean - in our eyes detraction from our own reputation. Rivalry in schools and in sport is permissible, but among families or groups of spiritually related lives it is mischievous. The jealousy between Judah and Israel was the more bitter because they were of the same racial blood. We are not monopolists in this realm, but we corner much of the market by our regrettable investments in this way.

It is related of the late F. B. Meyer that when he first went to the Northfield Conference, he attracted the crowd. People thronged to hear his special addresses. But, later, G. Campbell

Morgan came to Northfield, and the people were lured by the brilliant Bible studies to desert Meyer. Meyer confessed a liability to jealousy as he ministered to a smaller group. "The only way I can conquer my feeling," he said, "is to pray for him daily, which I do." Magnanimity is the grace which can bloom if nurtured like that; in this way a Christian man triumphs.

Shakespeare has called attention to the soul-destroying force of this unclean spirit, particularly in his Othello where it is the dominating passion. Othello, true poet and romantic lover, grows coarse, hurls insufferable taunts at gentle Desdemona, calls her filthy names, strikes her, and in the end murders her. Thus happiness is wrecked, beautiful and noble lives are ruined, and evil triumphs. Jealousy distorts the nature and lets loose the hell within:

The mind is its own place, and of itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
John Milton, Paradise Lost

Is it because we have a feeling of inferiority that jealousy of another is possible? Is it a consciousness that we have not received our due reward? Is it that we are more concerned about the approval of a congregation, which might easily prefer some other voice, than we are for the Master's acknowledgment of faithfulness? Is it that we do not care what reflects upon the service of God, that we are not consumed with a jealous regard for His glory? There is a salutary warning which counsels us against yielding to this inward deterioration. Close akin to envy, jealousy will leave a man with heavy heart, pale and palsied, with lean soul and lowering visage. A minister in the mesh of this evil desire becomes bad-tempered, nursing worldly delusions, finding no good in others, never rejoicing with his brethren. This is a sin against all virtue and all goodness and a sin against the Holy Spirit. Such livid transformation of character is a tragedy in a servant of God.

In Henry Varley's Life Story mention is made of a neighboring pastor, specially gifted and qualified as an expositor of the Scriptures. His ministry was attracting some members of Varley's congregation. He missed them frequently. Henry Varley did not like this. To his intense self-loathing, he found that the "green-eyed monster" of jealousy had its claws upon his soul. "I shall never forget," he said, "the sense of guilt and sin that possessed me over that business. I was miserable. Was I practically saying to the Lord Jesus, "Unless the prosperity of thy church and people comes in this neighborhood by me, success had better not come"? Was I really showing inability to rejoice in another worker's service? I felt that it was sin of a very hateful character. I never asked the Lord to take away my life either before or since; but I did then, unless his grace gave me victory over this foul image of jealousy." The suggestion inevitably arises of the possibility of vacant pulpits if preachers jealous of other preachers' success were to pray to die, and their prayers were answered!

This love of self brings unhappiness to life, and Sir James M. Barrie was surely right when he declared in his characteristic way that he often felt that it was not love of money that was the root of all evil, but rather jealousy. Evidently he had witnessed the evil effects of it in many instances in which men, brooding over their fancied wrongs, had turned sour, and had lost their peace of mind. This bane is a possible corollary of ambition, distinction, and a desire for fame.

The man who is free from the curse is the one with the healthy mind and heart.

We need to guard well our ambitions, lest they be selfish. When a man identifies himself with such a cause as Christ's, when he devotes his life to it, he is apt to expect a reward. That may be natural in the affairs of the world, but let us look not for earthly recognition as a paramount motive of service, or else we shall be consumed by jealous regard in estimating one another. Love for Christ should be the motive, and where love is, self passes out of sight. Envy not the place or the possessions or the success of others, lest we are ensnared. The late Dinsdale T. Young said that jealousy was the dominating temptation of the ministry. Alas! that it should have to be said. It is irrational as it is irreligious. Why should not we rejoice in another's gifts? Remember, God in Christ gives His gifts to His redeemed church in the sovereignty of His holy will (Romans 12; I Corinthians 12). Thank God for all who so notably surmount this evil bane! Thank God for all the generous souls who never miss an opportunity to encourage and honor a brother minister! They are like roses beautifying a wilderness.

Envy raises its ugly head with the hiss of the serpent when ministers talk together. How easy it is to speak of other brethren in disparagement and disdain. "He is a good preacher but he struts." "He gets the crowd, but does he practice what he preaches?" "If I had his salary, think what I might do." The Sixth Commandment deals with killing, but this is not confined to the body. How many characters have been killed in ministerial circles? A man is not given a call to a church because someone poisoned the committee's mind concerning him and no one investigated the truth or falsity of the charges. Slander, vindictiveness and prejudice are nowhere found so acutely as in the church among those who traffic in lives.

Richard Baxter, The Reformed Pastor, calls our attention to the blight of jealousy when he says: "Will any workman malign another because he helpeth him to do his Master's work? Yet, alas! How common is this heinous sin among men of parts and eminence in the Church! They can secretly blot the reputation of those that stand cross to their own; and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms they will do in malicious intimations, so that it is their ordinary practice to keep down the estimation of any they dislike.... And some go so far, that they are unwilling that anyone who is abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest he should be applauded above themselves. A fearful thing, that any man that bath the least of the fear of God, should so envy God's gifts, and bath rather that his hearers were unconverted and the drowsy not awakened, than it should be done by another who may be preferred."

Are not these words true in this modern age? Is not this one of the sins of the ministry? Some characters have been besmirched, and lives of usefulness have been bruised and broken because of the spiteful gossip and the evil innuendoes of "brethren" prating dark things against the conscientious, the devoted, and those who have sought to keep their souls clean by high ethical ideals in Christ.

Well has the Apostle Paul included this baneful spirit in his list of evil things which beset the Christian life: ". . . envyings, . . . strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults" (11 Corinthians 12:20,).

The Paralysis of Pride

"Self-love is that master-passion in every human heart. Let us give self-love the first place in the inventory and catalogue of our passions, because it has the largest place in all our hearts and lives. . . . It is out of self-love that all our other evil passions spring. The whole fall and ruin and misery of our present human nature lies in this, that in every human being self-love has taken, in addition to its own place, the place of the love of God and of the love of man also. We naturally now love nothing and no one but ourselves. And as long as self-love is in the ascendant in our hearts, all the passions that are awakened in us by our self-love will be selfish with its selfishness, inhuman with its inhumanity, and ungodly with its ungodliness. And it is to kill and extirpate our so passionate self-love that is the end and aim of all Gods dealings with us in this world. . ." ALEXANDER WHYTE.

"NO MAN CAN bear witness to Christ and to himself at the same time. No man can give the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is mighty to save." These words suitably framed faced me in a vestry of a church in Scotland before entering the pulpit. They searched the heart in preparation for the sacred ministry about to begin. Ever since that day they have been found on the first page of my Bible, and indelibly stamped upon my conscience. It was Professor James Denney who sent forth these words to bring a salutary truth home to those who stand in the holy place. In the place of privilege is found our greatest peril.

The sin of Lucifer is not necessarily associated with those who are near to God, and yet it is in the traffic of holy things where it is unveiled. The Old Testament mirrors for us many characters struggling with this temptation, for it acts as a diseased patch in life to undo the service of the best. A servant of God may have the impulse to offer himself to minister, but if he is unable to become a channel of grace, this may be one of the explanations valid to experience. We see it illustrated in the life of Uzziah, King of Judah (II Chronicles 26). In the kingly office by a divine appointment this man failed by reason of pride.

Uzziah had been blessed by God and prospered during his reign. His armies were victorious in the field, Jerusalem was made strong and safe, and husbandry multiplied throughout the land. For fifty-two years he ruled in equity and honor. The tragedy of the story is that a lifetime of service was spoiled by one act, and the most powerful king of Judah died as a leper! It was God who made him to prosper (vv. 5, 7), and he was marvelously helped (v. 15). This strong man failed in the hour of success and prosperity, and then it was "his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God" (v. 16). Is it true that more men fail in prosperity than in adversity? Self-sufficiency means a static state of mind and a man's boasted strength is weakness.

The poor man failed to realize that his power was imparted, not generated; given, not achieved. So long as he sought God he was strong (v. 5), but when he sought to disregard the will of God (v. 16) by intervening in the priest's office, he lost his power and position. God is no respecter of persons, and Uzziah was cast out of the Temple and cut off from any further usefulness. Such is this insidious peril of pride-malignant, subtle, unbridled, and presumptuous. When success makes a servant of God condescending and arrogant or despotic, he falls through self-will. The true strength of the godly life lies in humility before God and man. But the king was ensnared by popularity and the spirit of the age (vv. 8, 15). So does pride come to grief by its slow paralysis.

When the mind is turned in upon itself to imagine great things of itself, it is an easy target for swift temptation. Uzziah was easily provoked (v. 19), and refused to bear correction by those

who were God-appointed, In his anger he refused to heed the messengers of God who pointed out his transgression of the priest's office and the dishonor it would bring him. Truly, "the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride . . ." (Proverbs 14:3,), a man's speech betraying him at this point. And nothing is more deceptive than pride of heart (cf. Obadiah 3). Spiritual pride is most noxious, and that haughty spirit of aloofness which refuses wise correction in love is doomed to destruction.

When a man's spirit is thus ruled, the sharp punishment of God is nigh. ". . . the leprosy even rose up in his forehead . . ." and Uzziah hastened to go out of the Temple (v. 19). Pride is often associated with a certain swelling of the head. Significantly, the diseased patch was localized here. Uzziah who kept company with an Isaiah and a Zechariah was brought low in judgment through "the pride of life" (I John 2: 16). Because it is not of the Father, it well merits this rebuke. How far removed it is from the mind which was in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5-9). Whatever the form of pride thus disclosed, its essence is an intellectual spirit which sets itself up against God.

Alas! for the poor king. He whose reign opened in glorious hope and was sustained by the blessing of God undid in a moment the work of years. He never humbled himself before God in the hour of temptation, and the paralysis overtook him. The leprous life went to its inevitable end.

The solemn task of self-examination is never easy, but is always necessary. The man of God is not exempt from this bewitchery of pride. From the moment of his dedication to the holiest and highest of all works, throughout the years of his devoted service and until the completion of His ministry, he will be beset continually to yield to pride. For one thing, a Christian worker lives in the glare of publicity which may well dazzle him. Here he is met with the adulation of the world, the foolish, and the well-meaning, who each in turn bring their contribution to feed the fire of self-admiration and esteem. It is right that we see ourselves in relation to this peril.

Of the many deadly sins, the theologians have reckoned this to be the worst. Augustine held it to be the deadliest of all. He believed that obstinate pride was the unpardonable sin itself. Dante spoke of it in his Divine Comedy, and the Apostle Paul has shown the better way of love, which "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (I Corinthians 13:4,). Our Lord has vividly portrayed the selfsame spirit in the Pharisee who prayed with himself in the Temple, and in contrast pointed to the publican who humbly smote his breast. Pride creates barriers of class, sect, family, and peoples. It is paralyzing and deceiving, because it impinges on the things which are good and right and legitimate. Good things of life are heightened in mind, and, distorted out of perspective, lead us to condemning pride.

The minister is the prey of pride because he traffics in holy things and is in danger of familiarity with sacred elements of truth and life. Pride goes with us frequently to our studies and there sits with us and does our work, chooses our subject and words and ornaments, and even accompanies us into the pulpit. The insidious peril of pride is that "it persuades us to paint the window, that it may dim the light." The sermon should be the best possible expression in language and style, but pride opens the way for too many flowers and the biding of the cross. The tendency to spiritual superiority is present. There is a pride of attainment and achievement in the spiritual life which might easily lead us to forget the secret of strength. The grace of humility better fits the servant of God.

Years ago Edinburgh was shocked by the disgrace and imprisonment of one of her prominent citizens. In his vestry the next Sunday morning, Alexander Whyte heard the church bells ringing, and he turned to his assistant minister and said, "Do you hear those bells? He hears them in his prison cell this morning. Man, it might have been me." It was the same Alexander Whyte who was an example of the grace of God in humility that with the crucifixion of pride he could speak of having met the greatest sinner in the city, namely, himself. Doubtless, we acknowledge a good honest pride, what Milton calls a modest pride, as proper to our human make-up. We alone judge that spirit which makes men hard against their own flesh and blood and against God. The Bible has much to say about it, from the story of our first parents,

through Cain, the history of Israel, to the temptation of our Lord. The truth of it is seen not only in the Bible but in great literature, for it is grounded in human nature as well as in Biblical literature. Pride is a root of sins. John Bunyan discerned its evil by speaking of Mr. Heady, and Mr. Highmind, also Mr. Loth-to-stoop.

That master of the heart, Thomas Goodwin, knew this snare at the university. Though preserved from gross immorality he was living for himself, laying up stores of information for his own glory. In youth he labored that he might obtain high preferment in coming years, and was especially ambitious of becoming an eloquent and popular, rather than an evangelical and useful preacher. He was never unfaithful to his religious convictions, but they became feeble in his fond endeavor to obtain literary distinction and professional eminence (cf. *Memoirs*).

Goodwin's pride showed itself in his love for fine sermons, and the desire to preach them he regarded as his easily besetting sin, of which he had to repent before God. As soon as he was taught by the grace of God to "mortify his master lust," his love of applause, he was never so much as tempted to put in any of his own withered flowers which he had gathered. His master lust was no immoral propensity, as men regard immorality, but a desire to obtain distinction and honor by eloquent preaching. By his conversion and spiritual experience of grace, Goodwin at last could say: "I freely renounced for Christ, when God converted me, all those designs of pride, and vain glory, and advancement of myself, upon which my heart was so strongly set that no persuasion of men, nor any worldly considerations, could have diverted me from the pursuit of them. No, it was the power of God alone that prevailed to make me do it. It was He alone made me willing to live in the meanest and most afflicted condition, so that I might serve Him in all godly sincerity. I cheerfully parted with all for Christ, and He bath made me abundant compensation, not only in the comforts and joys of His love, which are beyond comparison above all other things, but even in this world. What love and esteem I have had among good men, He gave me. He alone made my ministry in the Gospel acceptable, and blessed it with success, to the conversion and spiritual good and comfort of many souls."

The centuries pass and preachers today can be proud of their sermons and preaching rather than declaring the whole counsel of God. In this realm of preparing the messages from week to week we need grace, lest we fall into this pitfall. The late Arthur T. Pierson had to trim his life in this regard. On November 12, 1875, he was convinced that the great obstacle to his spiritual growth and power was his ambition for literary glory. This conviction had been slowly growing, but he had almost unconsciously fought against it. Now he asked God to deal with this ambition in His own way: "I saw that my life had been full of self-seeking and idolatry, such as I had never realized.... From that day I was conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life and work in a way that I had before never known. I saw that all the glory was to be His, not mine ... From that hour I nailed my ambition for literary honors and applause to the Cross of Christ."

Pomp and pride do not befit the ministerial office. Yet we are tempted to vanity and to display our gifts. The temptation to shine, according to David Christie in *The Service of Christ*, will be ours. The pulpit is a unique place and there we stand between God and men. How tragic if the cross cannot be seen for the flowers of our adornment. What if our paltry self intrudes in speech and in manner until the hungry are not fed and the disciples miss the vision of the Lord? Sometimes the flattery and admiration of a few will feed our vanity until we are lifted up in pride to our destruction and become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. We need to pray for naturalness controlled by the Spirit of God and a wise self-forgetfulness in our ministrations.

A rare person is one who is content to be anonymous. Robert E. Speer was one who shunned publicity, according to a friend. It was difficult to secure his photograph and he was asked that no biography be written of him. One was! This friend recalls a remarkable address by Speer given to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at Tulsa, Oklahoma. After it was delivered he saw Speer walking down the alley to his hotel. This was in order to avoid the praise of men.

In our pastoral office we must not lord it over the flock. An unsanctified pride of office is nowhere more repulsive than in a Christian minister. Yet, by virtue of his post and vocation, a

measure of dignity invests his counsel in spiritual affairs. But be must beware of pride of office: "I'm the minister"-yes! and we are also men among men, needing the same grace of God. Apollo could be taught by Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus (Acts 18:26). The scholar and eloquent preacher was instructed in spiritual deeps by two humble people of plain craft. In our visitation we shall discover that we have much to learn of the grace of God in suffering-patience, of spiritual insight, and of large faith. Benedictions will rest upon a pastor who without pride of office humbly "sits where others sit."

The swelled head that we speak of is a malady of youth, but it has been known to attack the mature and even the venerable. That excellent and once-popular causeur, Claudius Clear, wrote a letter in which he drew attention to this infection. Its manifestation is noted in the pride of the man who seeks seclusion from the vulgar herd. You do not make contact with the great one except through many intermediaries. One of the signs is that of "pose or what is called side." Your friend does not cut you, indeed he is willing to have speech with you, but there is "unwonted majesty in his accent," and other signs in his voice that relations between you are unmistakably changed. Of course, there is the genial form that adds to the gaiety of life in the swagger and bragging, sheer and unadulterated. Such a one will talk about nothing but himself, the compliments paid him, allusions in the papers, his magnetic influence over others, and so on. But the most dangerous form of the trouble is to be pointed out: "The exalted being imagines himself above all rules. He is emancipated." He can discard engagements at will and become careless about clock or calendar. The calling of the man of God is the most exacting of all lives, and the grace of humility is the one disposition to be sought after, lest we slip.

Any "self-review" of one's life will bring to light the odiousness and danger of this sin of pride. We are prone to vain glory, hungering for the applause of men. And the spirit which hates and heaps opprobrium upon others is never far away. In Thomas Shepard (1605 - 49), Pilgrim Father and Founder of Harvard, His diary reveals the abhorring of himself: "One midnight well on toward the end of his life, he was found lying on his face in his study, with a copy of The New England Gazette crushed together in his lockfast hands. The reason was afterwards discovered.

Mr. T. H., Thomas Shepard's bosom friend, was wont to have a sermon printed in the Gazette about time with a sermon of Shepard's and both the manager of the journal and all its readers were well known to Shepard to put his friend's sermons far above his for their eloquence and for their English.... Shepard made no secret to God, and to his own soul how he took it. For the copy of the paper that Shepard had crushed in his hands that midnight contained a specially beautiful sermon of -Mr. T. H.'s. And as Shepard tried first not to see that sermon, and then turned ir. prayer to try and read it, and could not, he quite lost all power over himself and actually fell on his face on the floor as if his New England study had been the Garden of Gethsemane."

In his diary, under the date November 10, 1642, Shepard wrote "I kept a private fast for light to see the full glory of the Gospel ... and for the conquest of all my remaining pride of heart." We must seek for the grace that raises us above such a spirit of vanity, lest our minds become like buckets without bottoms, devoid of spiritual understanding.

Jane Austen, in her *Pride and Prejudice*, speaks of a certain clergyman as a mixture of pride and humility. But that is impossible, for the latter would have cast out the former. By humility she evidently meant servility. Humility is neither servile nor forbidding. But humility to offset pride needs cultivation in the school of Calvary. There we find its beauty in contemplating the love and majesty of God in the face of our Savior. Only humility's flower and print are seen in Him, who was never loftier in spirit than when He girded Himself and washed the feet of His disciples. That act was perfectly natural to Him. He who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart," revealed His greatness by His voluntary stooping in life and death. If we are to be like Him we must shun the feeling of superiority over our fellows, and, in love, serve. We shall be ready to stoop to their help and how in the presence of goodness, without exaggerating our own importance, for God can do without us. "He buries His workmen, but carries on His work," said John Wesley. Only a genuine zeal for the glory of God and a passion for the winning of men to

the mastery of Jesus Christ will suffice to keep a minister from this paralysis which disrupts the spiritual life.

Teach me, O Christ,
Thy full humility-

May I rejoice that my friends are better than I,
May I seek, and find, some lowly and humble service,
Obscure and remote.
And there may I lose myself in the need of the men around me.

Teach me, O Christ,
Thy full simplicity:

May I be glad in the gifts Thou hast given,
Desiring no more:

May I deny myself:
May I believe in men,
Till by power of faith in their better selves
I help to make them what Thou wouldst have them to be.

Teach me, O Christ, these Thy great lessons, and hard:
Thine own humility,
Thine own simplicity.

John S. Hoyland, Indian Dawn

The Evasions of Preaching

According to John Bunyan, Legality and Civility and Morality are all good and necessary in their own places; but he is a cheat who would send a guilt-burdened and sick-at-heart sinner to any or all of them. The Wicket Gate first, and then He who keeps that gate will tell us what to do, and where next to go; but any other way out of the City of Destruction but by the Wicket Gate is sure to land us where it landed Evangelist's quaking and sweating charge.

"I am convinced that the welfare of mankind does not depend on the State and the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought, where a deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field upon the greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the Gospel of Christ" WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE.

THERE ARE MOODS of the soul. There is a time when the preacher wonders if his work is worthwhile. Spiritual exhaustion is the periodic lot of one whose life is given in the service of God. "Virtue going out of a man" means the expenditure of moral and spiritual reserves to bless others. Paul reminds us in 11 Corinthians 4:1 that "as we have experienced mercy we do not lose heart." In this connection there is the charge to us that we do not adulterate the word of God. We commend ourselves in our vocation in the measure that we bring theology into living experience by the sincerity and steady habit of expounding the Book for every man. But sometimes no response is found to the message which clamors for consideration. Deaf ears and unattuned spirits are all around, and preaching seems not to touch any chord. In this state of mind the preacher is the prey of uneasy thoughts; questions run riot in the mind concerning the place of preaching today. There is the temptation to lose heart and succumb to a dull routine of other "good works," imagining that by this subterfuge we escape from our obligation to continue faithful in holding forth the word of life.

In comparison with lecturing or essay reading or the oratory of the statesman or the propaganda of the radio expert, the task of the preacher seems almost trivial. But we need not suffer any eclipse. No one commands audiences like the preacher. Where is the politician who would have the same constituency of interested people week by week, year after year? The politician's message is passing, ephemeral, but ours is eternal. No, preaching is a glorious thing, and to conjecture that people no longer relish preaching is a popular fallacy. In our age more "preachers" are heard than ever, and they reach multitudes throughout the world. By means of radio, books, magazines, newspapers, and even highway signs, their message reaches men. Not that every preacher is a preacher of the everlasting gospel. Long ago Ezra, in the days of Nehemiah (8:3-8), "read the word of God in the presence of the people. . . . He stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; . . . he opened the book in the sight of the people . . . and they read in the book, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." And our Lord at a later date "came preaching." Magnify, then, the office and technique of preaching; it is divine and sublime work!

There is a tendency to forget that to trim the message to suit people's fancies and wishful thinking is the way of degeneracy of spirit. We must determine needs and not wants as we seek guidance in the choice of the Word to be proclaimed. We are purveyors of truth and therefore need not live in a groove. Some have no difficulty in preaching and teaching along certain lines; they arrive with suspicious unanimity at certain conclusions agreeable to this class or church or party. It is easy to criticize the ways of others who do not speak or act as we do, and such criticism may be our own moral condemnation. Then we may be unreal and insincere, because we know the truth from the Word of God is challenging and calling us to a new word to be

emphasized, and yet we omit it. We read and live and preach in certain favorite portions of Holy Scripture but evade the great stretches of revelation awaiting our mental and spiritual sweating in labor. When did we last preach concerning the decrees of God, His majesty as well as His mercy, or the message of the prophets alive for our contemporary scene, or the work and ministry of the Christ in His present eternal office and state, to mention but a few much neglected themes in the pulpit?

That prince of expositors, Alexander McLaren, has called attention to the truth that we are neither priests nor lecturers, but heralds. He says: "The Christian minister's business is to be ever learning and ever teaching more and more of the "manifold wisdom of God." He has to draw for himself from the deep, inexhaustible fountains; he has to bear the water, which must be fresh drawn to be pleasant or refreshing, to thirsty lips. He must seek to present all sides of truth, teaching all wisdom, and so escaping from his own limited mannerisms. How many ministers Bibles are all dog-eared and thumbed at certain texts, at which they almost open of themselves, and are as clear in most of their pages as on the day when they were bought."

The preacher stands apart from all men in order to draw near to them with the Word given from the Unseen. He is separated unto the gospel of God in order to seek and to save all who hear his message. And those who listen are asking questions. To what spiritual country does the man belong when he preaches? It is not what college course has he taken, not how capable is he in the methodology of the church, but out of what realm does he come when standing to minister? His ministry may deal with hundreds of items; he will not think his duty undone if he fails to expound every doctrine in every sermon, or suppose that he has not preached the gospel unless he has dealt directly with a particular emphasis of truth. But if he is a man whose native air is that of a redeemed experience of the soul, of which he is a witness and herald, then he will be free to deal with many truths. Whatever his subject or method of approach to others, the listening people will always hear the undertones of the essentials of the faith.

The power of the preaching and the preacher lies in the depth of his spiritual life. No one can really proclaim the mystery of the gospel unless he understands the significance of the divine revelation. In motive and intent, we are not to discuss our own discoveries; we have received something from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Motives are revealing, especially in this vocation, and there will always be about us the air of one who has listened and heard: ". . . the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8,).

The trick of evasion in the handling of truth is in the minds of most ministers; it is sly and slippery unless we live at the heart of the "gospel of the glory of the blessed God." It may find expression in the round of engagements and the sin of overwork to the neglect of the intake of new illumination and understanding of that which has already been revealed. Every theological student and would-be servant of God should be aware that, we are men before ministers. Our Christian life is lived by the same sources of grace as "others. Only we must enter upon a postgraduate course in the spiritual university. Here we do well not to confuse prejudices with our principles. The mysteries of our creed must needs be transmuted into the moralities of our conduct. That will mean a translucent life wedded to concrete convictions of faith.

Robert Browning has succinctly expressed in "Bishop Blougram"s Apology" that

In every man"s career are certain points
Whereon he dares not be indifferent;
The world detects him clearly, if he dare,
As baffled at the game, and losing life.

We traffic in great themes, and are apart from those other "would-be-preachers" already mentioned. We are not dealing with the temporal, the economic, the social, the political, the material things of life, except as they impinge upon the eternal in its application of divine principles for man"s daily life. We must make up our minds upon many themes and relate them directly to the current needs of man. Ezekiel said, "I sat where they sat" (3:15), and truly

nothing is more exhilarating than to find the Word of the Lord "catching the moment" of men's immediate life and thought. Nothing can supersede preaching. A sermonless world would not be a utopia! Phillips Brooks was right in describing preaching as truth passing through our mission and message. We bring the only message of eternal worth to meet the clamant needs of man's social, moral, and spiritual behavior.

Although we deal with Biblical and eternal truths we must continually remind words to convey the message of God. People's minds are full of everyday things and we must appeal to the heart as well as the mind. How to identify ourselves with others when we have been brought up in a different environment culturally or even spiritually? Economic levels, educational levels, social levels all vary and pose their problems for the man who seeks to proclaim the gospel in this generation. The limited vocabulary of "Mr. Average-Working-Class Man;" is such that we must strive to be simple and clear, whatever else we do. It is not enough to find words to express the exact meaning. It is desirable to convey the thought-forms behind the words. Love not logic alone, parable not preachment alone, are required.

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent,
If the unheard, unspoken
Word is unspoken, unheard;
Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard
The Word within a word, the Word within
The world and for the world;
And the light shone in darkness and
Against the World the unstilled world still whirled
About the centre of the silent Word.

T. S. Eliot, Ash Wednesday

In this connection, we remind ourselves that we are undershepherds of Him who is the great, the good, the chief Shepherd. The flock looks to us to provide food and pasturage. We lead and are examples in faith and sobriety, even as we guide them to the one adequate source of supply. Emile Chartier ("Alain"), of France, had spoken of this principle in His essay on Sheep and More Sheep: "Continuing my studies of sheepish policy, . . . I came to realize that the sheep have great power over the shepherd, almost limitless indeed. For if the sheep grow thin, or merely if their wool curls badly, the shepherd is unhappy and that with no hypocrisy. What if the sheep start dying? Straight-way the shepherd seeks out the causes and makes inquiry into grass, water, and sheep-dog. And thus the shepherd would be in no wise a hypocrite were he to utter to his sheep such words as these: "Gentlemen of the sheepfold, you who are my friends, my subjects, my masters, deem not that I can hold concerning grass or wind opinions other than are your own ... I am your memory and I am your foresight, or, more nobly speaking, providence.""

This is an opportune time to stress the Christian message and to exalt the office and dignity of the preacher. People are not sure of themselves now. They are disturbed about the world in which they live. Cultured paganism is not a success. The idea of progress has been exploded. Science is not necessarily the chief benefactor of the human race, for man does not live by bread alone. The return to barbarism is evidence that men have turned away from the springs of eternal life. They have neglected the Bible, the charter of liberty, the foundation of civilization, the chart and compass of moral and spiritual life. This is the time to stress the great tenets and dogmas of the Christian faith. For a number of decades people have been suspicious of dogma and wistful for faith, but now we discover that true faith comes by bearing, and bearing by the Word of God. This postulates the dogmas of Christianity in its unique and solitary claims as the last Word of God. The church has been tempted to dilute the message by throwing over dogmatic preaching to substitute nebulous meanderings and pious uncertainties in a world in quest of certitude. All these excursions have left men in a maze of bewilderment and destitute of authority. And all this time the truth remains unshaken and eternal. True, its garb and fashion

finds infinite variety in expression, but the essential dogmas abide without revision or addition.

Every craft and art of man demands a creed or dogma by which these act and work. The surprising phenomenon in Christendom has been the custom of the church, through her leaders and preachers, to disparage and overthrow creeds. Others have not been slow to seize the hiatus created in Christendom, and the brood of cults, theosophical and unscientific and pseudo-Christian, have rushed in with insistent propaganda concerning so-called truth. In this way large areas of the world's life have been inundated by the flood of dogmas, racial, blood, totalitarian, demanding and receiving wholehearted allegiance of body and soul on the part of multitudes. These paganized creeds challenge the very existence of the Christian faith and its gospel by the religious devotion and sacrificial zeal of their devotees. They are not foolish in disparaging creeds or decrying dogmas!

In an earlier period of scouting credal belief, Robert Browning sought to answer the skeptical friend in his Bishop Bougram's Apology:

Why first, you don't believe, you don't and can't,
Not stately, that is, and fixedly
And absolutely and exclusively)
In any revelation called divine.
No dogmas nail your faith; and what remains
But say so, like the honest man you are?
First, therefore, overhaul theology!
Nay, I too, not a fool, you please to think,
Must find believing every whit as hard:
And if I do not frankly say as much,
The ugly consequence is clear enough.

We put in a caveat, therefore, against this continual discrediting of a Christian dogmatic. We plead for a return to dogmatic preaching-but gracious, persuasive, Christ-convincing preaching. This generation is one in which man's wisdom has failed to find any durable satisfactions and in which earthbound philosophies are bankrupt in saving power. In A Preface to Morals, Walter Lippmann has pertinently said, "The irreligion of the modern world is radical to a degree for which there is no counterpart. The passion to disbelieve is so strong that they are unable to believe, no matter how perfectly their theoretical dilemmas are resolved." How strange that the witnessing body of Christ should find itself stressing what it does not believe, emptying itself of creed and attempting revision of century-tried and demonstrated doctrines of the faith! If ever this age is to regain its moral and spiritual equilibrium, it will be by a revival of the apostolic tenets of the church's faith.

The time is opportune for us to offset this subtle temptation by once more returning to the central themes of the gospel. Probably preaching as a method has been laughed at in a world given over to "power politics" and "earthly wisdom," but a true understanding of the "foolishness of preaching" is the only adequate way out of the present morass. The well-known passage from Paul (I Corinthians 1:18) is not an admission that preaching as a way of speaking is vanity and folly, but a glorying in the power of the paradox - "the sheer folly of the Christian message." That word is the kerygma, the thing preached, and it was that which challenged the thinking and wisdom and religion of mankind then and challenges them now. This central affirmation is none other than the focusing of the gospel in the redemptive passion of our Savior Christ. Here is judgment upon sin, sacrificial salvation, cross, resurrection, and always an enthroned Eternal One active throughout the ages. From the scandal of the cross issues the glory of the gospel.

Every age in history has witnessed a breaking in by God's Spirit in the measure of the emphasis of this heart-message. John Wesley writes in his Journal on May 27, 1742: "We came to Newcastle-upon-Tyne" about six, and after a short refreshment, walked into the town. I was surprised: so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing (even from the mouths of little children)

do I never remember to have seen and heard before, in so small a compass of time. Surely this place is ripe for Him who "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.""

"May 30, At seven I walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of town. . . . I suppose there might be twelve to fifteen hundred before I had done preaching; to whom I applied those solemn words: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed.""

This miracle of grace is set forth in the Shorter Catechism: "God maketh the reading and the preaching of the Word a means of convincing and converting sinners." If this is the aim in the heart of the servant of God he will overcome any evasion of preaching the gospel of grace. And there is every encouragement in reading the Westminster Confession of Faith (1:7), which refers to the Bible as claiming that "those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned but the unlearned in a due use of the ordinary means may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them."

It is expected that every man will proclaim with emphasis this gospel in his own accent and way. As we grapple with the deep mysteries of revelation again and again for our own profit, we shall go forth to our auditors to

.... assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men,

so fittingly lined by John Milton in Paradise Lost. We shall be saved from the snares of substitutes and shun the trivial and passing subjects of the hour. Concentration upon the immortal themes will bring richness of knowledge and power to touch men's heartstrings. That everyone will recur often to special things is evidenced by J. H. Jowett, whose biographer tells how he expressed the gospel by iterating and reiterating the word - "grace". It was the big theme to which, above all others, returned again and again, as if, of all truth, it was the one fact that entranced him. "Grace" was Jowett's sovereign word.

That which will save a man from this sin of evasion of essential truth is that heart-passion for the gospel already experienced in personal life. A workman should step back at times to look at his task. The one to be pitied most is the man who has no love for his high calling. What drudgery! Norman G. Dunning, in his heart tribute to Samuel Chadwick, that soulful Methodist preacher of England, has disclosed Chadwick's secret of greatness: "I have loved my job with a Passionate and consuming love. I would rather preach than do anything else I know in this world. I have never missed a chance to preach. I would rather preach than eat my dinner, or have a holiday, or anything else the world can offer. I would rather pay to preach than be paid not to preach. It has its price in agony of sweat and tears, and no calling has such joys and heartbreaks, but it is a calling an archangel might covet; and I thank God that of His grace He called me into this ministry. Is there any joy like that of saving a soul from death? Any thrill like that of opening blind eyes? Any reward like the love of little children, to the second and third generation? Any treasure like the grateful love of hearts healed and comforted? I tell you, it is a glorious privilege to share the travail and the wine of God. I wish I had been a better minister, but there is nothing in God's world or worlds I would rather be."

The true preacher is one who does not preach about things; he preaches out of the fullness of things because he lives at the heart of truth. As ministers of the Word, we must eliminate the possibility of failure; the ultimate necessity is the summoning of the mind and will to do our duty of handling the Word of God without any deceit or evasion. We may well rise up these days to greater things and leave behind the lesser things. With such a vision of the regnant Christ whose gospel we proclaim as His ambassadors, we need not lose heart with such dunamis and sophia of God.

The Snare of Substitutes

Carlyle said to Emerson as they walked on the moors about Craigenputtock, "Christ died upon the Tree; that built Dunscore Kirk yonder; ay - and it has wrought results of more enduring moment. It is the secret of all that is noblest in the world of to-day, since it is for this cause that men and women are living "not to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again.""

"Man must and will have some religion; if he has not the religion of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan, and will erect a synagogue of Satan WILLIAM BLAKE.

MODERN LIFE HAS produced a plethora of substitute foods. No longer does civilization depend entirely upon the natural products of nature. Scientists have devised ways and means of sustaining life by other chemical combinations. So margarine may displace butter, alcohol from wood pulp serves for power, and synthetic-chemical planning gives to man that which is sufficient for his needs (for a time at least!) when natural sources are short or denied or curtailed by war. Similarly, in the work of the ministry there is the danger of the substitute and the counterfeit for that which is staple and genuine. There are "clouds which bold no water" (Jude 12).

The Old Testament provides a story concerning this snare. We read in I Kings 14:26 : "Shishak took away all the shields of gold, and Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass." The bitter irony of the record of the Hebrew historian lies in the parade of the counterfeit, the pomp-and-ceremony-sealing imitations. King Solomon made three hundred shields of gold (I Kings 10:17), and in comparison with that magnificence, brass is cheap and tawdry. The casual glance might imagine the appearance to be the same, but the substance is changed. Truly, "all is not gold that glitters." Brass instead of gold may be a utility to some, but it is a sign of a lesser value, a debasing of the higher ideal, a cheap substitute for the best.

In the minister's life before God and his fellows, there is this knavery and deception if a man is not watchful in his thinking and devotion. In individual experience these shields are but symbols. When the golden shields of simplicity, purity, truthfulness, love, and reverence are taken away, how great is the fall of that life! It is sadly possible to become unnatural, clever, impure, irreverent, soured-and we become as brass! Deterioration always follows spiritual lapse and backsliding. Then the song dies away, the heart-felt testimony is silenced, fires burn low, zeal is quenched, and the preacher becomes apologetic and excusing instead of speaking with holy boldness. It is sin which reduces the fine gold to brass. it is surprising how people prefer the latter. A few years ago in the Board of Trade returns in Great Britain there was a note about the increase from abroad of imitation jewelry, the reason being that it was cheaper. So tinsel is preferred or tolerated to that which is redolent of glory and nobility. Let a nation go off the gold standard and there is a period of depression. In like manner, the lowering of ideals, the compromise of divine principles, produces the cheaper presentation of Christianity by God's servants. This trap is always athwart the steps of the minister of truth, dealing as he does with the sacred and holy.

The particular pitfall in the ministry is in a man's interpretation of Christ. Here is the crux of criticism and the focus of faith. Devious are the ways in which the Christ has been set forth in our generation. The One who said He would draw men unto Himself implied that this was the result of a lifting up. That He has been lifted up out of the earth into glory and enthroned majesty is a tenet of truth. At the same time we know that He must be exalted, lifted up, in a preacher's life and preaching. But what if the preacher fails in that most blessed of all

ministries? What if he is enmeshed in the nets of doubt and denial, allied to a spurious ecclesiastical superiority? The pew does not thrive on negations or question marks. A ministry of make-believe is evident when a man speaks only of the Teacher, the Example, the Ideal, the Man. They are descriptions in the unveiling of the Christ, but an emphasis upon humanity without deity is a substitute of brass for gold.

A well-known theological professor of this generation tells us, in effect, "that literary and historical research leads us to conclude that Jesus was the Great Venturer. He was, of course, a courageous reformer and a thorough-going rebel and patriotism naturally killed Him" (?). But such an explanation of the crucial and central act of His life does not explain or set out the death of Christ in the light as Christian believers see it. The gold of deity and saviourhood is surely found in the New Testament literature, as typified in that first annunciation: ". . . thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21,). The death of Christ was not that of a martyr; neither was it accidental nor that of a criminal; it was not that of a suicide but a voluntary death; yet to think of it as an example merely does not exhaust the meaning of New Testament teaching. The only adequate interpretation of the death of Christ in the prime of life is that it was a sacrifice. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3).

Read the verdict of James Denney, in *The Death of Christ* (p. 302): "We may begin as wisely as we please with those who have a prejudice against it, or whose conscience is asleep, or who have much to learn both about Christ and about themselves before they will consent to look at such a gospel, to say nothing of abandoning themselves to it; but if we do not begin with something which is essentially related to the Atonement, presupposing it or presupposed by it or involved in it, something which leads inevitably, though it may be by an indirect and unsuspected route, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, we have not begun to preach the gospel at all."

Occasionally the man in the pulpit is tricked into a debasing of Christological values. He may substitute human attainment as necessary for sinning man instead of divine atonement. The philosophy of the schoolmen is not the last word in the sphere of human sinning. There is a philosophy of God and the world in which Christ incarnate is central with His cross at the heart of all things. He is not to be accounted for by human categories in the light of that standard and the achieving of man's redemption. There is no substitute for the Substitute. Because the "acids of modernity" have interwoven themselves with our common life and thinking, there is no occasion to adulterate the eternal truth in Christ by substitutes. ". . . the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light . . ." (I Timothy 6:15-16,) is a description of infinite majesty not to be circumvented by foisting upon a needy world a cheapened or second-rate scheme of what man himself might attempt in order to lift himself up out of the bondage of sin and self.

Again, it is easy to make too much of the letter and miss the spirit in the invitation to the Christian life. To many workers in the ranks of Christendom the forms, ceremonies, ritual, are everything. Conformity to these may have a legitimate place according to the branch of the organized church to which a person belongs, but these in themselves should not take the place of the essential spiritual experience of grace. A tradition of the elders imposing the dead band of a hoary past may cripple the work of God's Spirit in the present. Christ is first before the church, and righteousness is greater than ritual. The preacher's peril is that he is caught in the machinery, excelling in mechanics and all the time missing the dynamics of spirit-filled Christianity.

Or we may preach and teach so as to give the impression that we are more concerned with a humanism in religion instead of a divine revelation. John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, points out that "it is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself." The humanism of the sixteenth century was a wise corrective in that age, but much of the humanism of today is simply the deification and worship of man instead of God.

It finds expression in some quarters in the exalting of the state or a national leader to a superposition of reverence. As in Calvin's point of view, so in the preacher's now, we dare not succumb to the snare of allowing this particular way of, and attitude to life buttress man's thinking as though he could work out his own salvation apart from God. A view of man as a late development in primeval history to become the center of everything is too often the dismissal of God to the circumference of life, especially when man is self-satisfied with his achievements in science, education, invention, or culture. A humanism cradled in a materialistic philosophy of life is a poor substitute for that view of man which the Bible reveals. Revelation postulates the greatness and dignity of man because he is made in the image and after the likeness of the Eternal, but we now view man amid the ruins of his fallen state. And the present hour in history is evidence enough of how man himself is a failure, with all his boasted advance, in his lawlessness, and prides, and the throwing off of moral and sacred restraints. Emil Brunner, in *The Mediator*, says: "A man does not only do wrong, but he is bad, he is a sinner. A sinner is not a being who has sinned a number of times: he is a human being who sins, whatever he is doing. So long as this is not perceived the gravity of sin is ignored, and the point of view remains superficial."

Let the preacher beware lest he lose this Biblical conception of man, for in that alone is the challenge and urge to proffer a remedy at once efficacious and divine!

In any view of life which pretends to deal with the great depths of personality, no word is more overworked than that of "realism." In fiction, art, poetry, drama, and philosophy, this is the trend of emphasis. But what is its connotation apart from the preacher's moral and spiritual vantage point? Realism in the imagination of certain novelists seems to be the emphasis placed on describing certain ugly facts of life more revoltingly, more nauseatingly than is warranted. The result has been an impression that those voices were out of touch with reality. Those things are not the whole of life, and there are more heroines and heroes, more noble and beautiful lives lived in real life than are so described. Self-indulgence instead of self-discipline is brass for gold, and the man of God must meet that challenge as it corrodes youthful and middle-aged thinking.

The realism of the greatest drama ever staged is preferable for exposition to the worship at these baser and lesser shrines. Our faith is not a comparative religion to be placed alongside any of these others; Christianity is the only, the unique way of life, and

There is a Way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:-
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night May dwell in the eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love

Thomas Binney

Then, religious profession may take the place of a genuine Christian dedication. In that time of substitution referred to already, we read (I Kings 14:28) that "as often as the king went to God's house the guard bare the shields of brass and brought them back." As if everything were the same as before! This is the danger of unreality in worship or prayer or devotion. The hypocrite is manufactured from the holy person who keeps up a show. The nominally decent man of today does not object to longer hours for his entertainment, but he demands the shortest hour possible for worship!

A minister is tempted to conform to the spirit of the age too much, for, like worshipers, he too is in peril from the formalities of church worship. Our prayers-How easy it is to lose the sense of

urgency and awe, and become phonographs grinding out some formula! Our preaching-How truly we can degenerate into echoes of other men's thoughts and sermons, and no longer speak with the unction and authority of one who has come from the presence of God! When the message is no longer Bible-centered and Christ-filled, and lacks something of sacrificial cross-bearing, how it can misfire! And an orthodoxy of speech and creed about fundamentals is a poor brass substitute when it is cold and lacks spiritual life and warmth. Then we are dead!

It is here that the Bible is crucial. There has been a tendency to "huckster" the Word of God. Paul says that "we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17,). This reference to the ministry of the gospel brings under review the adulteration of truth in order to make dishonest gain. Closely allied to this idea of the peddler in contrast with the true merchant is the "handling deceitfully" (II Corinthians 4:2). Why is a minister tempted to do this? Perhaps from poverty of material. Instead of reverently studying the Bible until its riches are unfolded to him, he mixes it with foreign material until he destroys its purity. This is degrading, even as it depreciates the nutritive qualities of that which is offered to the bearers. And in deceiving the people there is a corruption of honesty of the preacher. But the sincerity spoken of is that which can bear the exposure of intense light, and indicates a moral and spiritual and even intellectual state in which it is possible to bear searching investigation-"truth in the inward parts"-absolute genuineness. The spurious and the genuine are detected as time passes, and "the day shall declare it, of what sort our work is."

John A. Hutton, editor of The British Weekly, has pertinently written: "Recently there has been a shyness towards the Old Testament which may have had one of its sources in sheer laziness, and an insolence towards the Old Testament which must rest upon sheer ignorance. Here, as elsewhere, the true enemies are those of the household."

The preacher of "substitutes" has been bard put to empty much of the Biblical literature of its glory and worth by re-editing it to suit a hypothesis. Such cleverness has found a reward in the decay of faith and the loss of hunger for the Bible when it is viewed solely as a book of earthly dimensions. And there is also a bibliolatry which is a hindrance as well as the worship of the critical judgment of the human spirit.

We need sane, balanced, spiritually enlightened interpretation of the Word of God. Away with the second-rate method of handling this sublime revelation which is made in life and set in literature for all to read and understand! The Bible, after all, is its own best interpreter. Scholarship can do much for the elucidation of the Book; but imagination and faith wedded to literary receptivity can do more. The preacher can overcome this temptation by treating the Bible as a spiritual unity, which it is, and by expounding its message can inculcate a love for it on the part of his auditors. Best of all, as men discover the preacher's own personal love for it, and his devotion to the Christ who is revealed therein, they will ask for more and yet more of "the unsearchable riches."

Every pastor knows the subtle indictment to his own heart of assuming that social reform is a better way than personal conversion. An example of how leaders and preachers are befogged in an issue is found in the recent conferences concerning a postwar settlement and why we must resist the ghastly terror which stalks openly across the world in totalitarian dress. Let that influential Protestant theologian Karl Barth speak in his pronouncement, A Letter to Great Britain From Switzerland: "I have been struck, on my side, by the fact that in your pronouncements various other conceptions have been put forward as primary and ultimate reasons-such as "Western civilization," "the liberty of the individual," "freedom of knowledge," "the infinite value of the human personality," "the brotherhood of man," "social justice," etc.... The ultimate reason which I put forward for the necessity of resisting Hitler was simply the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.... Our resistance will be built on a really sure foundation only when we resist unequivocally in the name of peculiarly Christian truth, unequivocally in the name of Jesus Christ."

How easy to be sidetracked in our thinking and preaching with those things which must issue

through redeemed lives if only the pulpit would be faithful to those central affirmations of the historic faith!

The trend of the times is always emphasizing the improvement of conditions and the betterment of life through environmental change. No one objects to these things; we believe in them, and they follow the dynamic of the challenge of the Gospel. But how hollow-sounding they are if no new man is created. Some preachers are sidetracked through a social application of truth and by political alliances. A plague on both substitutes, should be the attitude of the man of God! There is no substitute for the recreated life, the regenerated heart. Otherwise there is an emasculated Christian gospel.

Much religion today is religious but not necessarily Christian. "Ye must be born from above," is a categorical imperative of the Kingdom of God. Moral endeavor is commendable but spiritual enlightenment is convincing. The preacher dare not trifle with truth if he is truly Christ's servant, for to suggest any other hope for man to build upon than Jesus Christ's righteousness is a vain hope. The fine gold of that divine standard is sufficient for every man's need, and it is our aim to preach Christ, ". . . warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:27, .28). There is our task and the dignity of our calling and labor. Let us beware lest we are ensnared from the central affirmations of our gospel and preaching. We labor and preach for a verdict from the individual.

We do not read essays or discourse on the subtleties of philosophy or chatter lightly about the current events of the day; we are engaged in a great task of showing man his "sinnerhood" in order to bring to him the Saviourhood of Jesus Christ, and so we plead a worthy cause as ambassadors of God, "beseeching men to be reconciled to God."

One of the lost arts of the pulpit is that of penitential preaching. In the days of Bunyan and also of Thomas Boston (who writes on *The Art of Man-Fishing; The Crook and the Lot*) we learn much about it. Close and bold preaching coming home to the conscience-"to terrify the godly in their too easy and too presuming way with God and with themselves, preaching fitted to keep a sinner once penitent always penitent, preaching that makes the holy law of God to enter deeper every day into the deceitful and corrupt and wicked heart; life-searching, heart searching, conscience-searching preaching"-so far as can be gathered from the sermons advertised or published among us, is all but a lost art. There is intellectual acumen; there is Biblical and other scholarship, eloquence, and great earnestness, of a kind; but preaching to the heart and conscience is the neglected divine art.

Alexander Whyte says of John Bunyan that he felt a fool and an unworthy wretch that he should preach. And then as to his literature: "To the end they never made Bunyan a Doctor of Divinity nor anything else of that honorable sort. But three degrees had already been granted to him that neither Cambridge nor Oxford could either give or withhold. "To wit, union with Christ; the anointing of the Spirit; and much experience of temptation." All of which go to fit a man for that mighty work of preaching the Gospel of Christ, much more than all the University learning that can be had." So says John Burton of Bedford in his excellently written preface to John Bunyan's *Gospel Truths Opened*.

James Fraser of Brea in Scotland says: "The preacher must have a sense of his charge; the danger of immortal souls deeply imprinted on his heart. He that hath but slight impressions of his charge will never faithfully perform it."

John Henry Newman, though he does not use the word "sense," has the very same thing under the word "earnestness": "He who has before his mental eye the Four Last Things [says that master of English] will have the true earnestness, the horror of one who witnesses a great conflagration, or the rapture of one who discerns some rich and sublime prospect of natural scenery. His countenance, his manner, his voice, all speak for him; and that in proportion as his view has been vivid and minute. It is this earnestness, in the supernatural order, which is the eloquence of saints; and not of saints only, but of all Christian preachers, according to the measure of their faith and their love."

Bunyan speaks: "Wherefore I did labor so to preach the Word, as that thereby, if it were

possible, the sin, and the person guilty of the sin, might be particularized by my preaching." "The Lord," says Thomas Halyburton, "did point out to me particulars wherewith to try me. But when I saw that it behooved me to quit these particular sins, then I begged a little delay: Augustine-like, I was willing to be pure, but not yet." And, like Bunyan, out of that experience Halyburton, in his pulpit details, was very homecoming and very heart-searching. And he was wont to complain that most preachers were much too general and much too remote in their application of truth. And Fraser says on the same subject: "I felt called to preach plainly, particularly, and authoritatively; yet courteously, wisely, meekly, and gently; not to speak in a cloud of words, but to say; "Thou art the man!"

There is much more from Bunyan concerning preaching in his *Grace Abounding* - how the tempter suggests and says, when he was about to preach upon a smart and searching portion of the Word, that he should not do so when he was himself guilty; or the temptation to mince it down or water down that living Word.

If this be true, then we are not free from the temptation to replace gold with brass in our thinking and preaching. Ours is a calling demanding the highest and the best; we should not be surprised if this temptation does not beset us constantly. It may not be a sin at first glance, hence its insidious danger and peril if we dally with it. But it is that "sin which doth so easily beset us," having weights to drag us back from those golden heights of spiritual redemption. Its clinging folds wrap loosely around us like a garment to trip us up. So, Christian man, "run ... looking off unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith."

The Fear of the Castaway

In Cardiphonia the difference is discussed between our acquired and our experimental knowledge, or, in other words, between our judgment and our practice. "To hear a believer speak his apprehensions of the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the love of Christ, the beauty of holiness, or the importance of eternity, who would not suppose him proof against temptation? To hear with what strong arguments he can recommend watchfulness, prayer, forbearance, and submission, when he is teaching or advising others, who would not suppose but he could also teach himself, and influence his own conduct? Yet, alas! The person who rose from his knees, before he left his chamber, a poor indigent, fallible, dependent creature, who saw and acknowledged that he was unworthy to breathe the air or to see the light, may meet with many occasions, before the day is closed, to discover the corruptions of his heart, and to show how weak and faint his best principles and clearest convictions are in their actual exercise. And in this view, how vain is man! what a contradiction is a believer to himself!" John Newton (THE UTTERANCE OF THE HEART).

THROUGHOUT THE LIFE and ministry of the best of men this pernicious and harrowing insinuation or threat hangs over like a dark and ominous cloud. Why this should be must remain a mystery in the bundle of life, except that a man confesses in his secret thoughts that he is unworthy at the best and an unprofitable servant. And this is felt to be so in view of the final reckoning. For "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." What if we have too readily accepted the well-known passage from Paul as "a text out of its context-". . . lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27,)?

The context indicates that there is no thought of the loss of or the rejection from the salvation wrought for us in Christ. It is the theme of service which is under review. As in a race one receives the prize-outstripping others-so there are those who are rejected or disproved. The Apostle thinks of that dread possibility at the last, when our service is weighed in the balances and perchance found wanting. Rewards are in view, and quality of service - "of what sort it is" - is decisive. No wonder that sensitive souls have smarted under the introspective imaginings of their own possible rejection at the last! It was this which challenged Paul in the presence of sacrificial service. What if, at the last, he had labored in the wrong spirit, misused God-given opportunities, and had become "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal"? In this connection he points to the need of self-mastery and discipline and finds illustration in the life of his own day. The Christian life is not unlike the life of an athlete, with its contest and striving, its race and persevering activity, its demand of training rules, so that we do not live "uncertainly" or minister "beating the air," rather finding that by strict dealing with all our appetites of body and mind we find fullness and maturity and fitness for the task. That is the only way to offset the fear of becoming a rejected man later. Utilizing the vocabulary and metaphor of his day, the Apostle cites from the background of the stadium and the Olympian games examples of the disciplined life which must be tested if it would triumph. Thus it has been translated, "Every athlete practices self-restraint all round . . . lest, after preaching to other people, I am disqualified myself" (Moffatt). That is the genius of escaping the final cataclysm, a life overcoming those things which lead the soul into the shadowland of uncertainty and doubt concerning the outcome of the final audit. It is well to look at some of those things.

Many good and true men are subject to seasons of depression. After the exhilaration and uplift of days of divine blessing and unction, there may come a day of physical and mental weariness

to react upon the spirit of a man. Or the unresponsiveness of some of our bearers to the truth may cause us to imagine that we are always in the worst period of history for faith. We too readily become an Elijah-under the juniper tree-forgetting that we are not alone and that the ministry of the Word is safe when God has His faithful ones everywhere. If "virtue" - soulstrength - goes out of us, if our ministry has caused us to bleed somewhat, then we need not be surprised at reactions. Should we expect anything else? To engage in spiritual work, with all its exhaustion of spirit, is to be exposed to the antagonism of evil. To carry the burdens of lives and the secrets of the soul in its struggle with sin, to enter into the harrowing experiences of the mentally and morally perplexed, and sometimes to be falsely accused of others, is to be open to days of melancholy, unless there is a lifting up by the Divine Spirit. In such a mood of the soul a man might really be afraid that he is not sufficient for the task and so fear lest his labor is in vain.

Or again, the possibility of drifting in the ministerial vocation is a reality. Day by day, we traffic in those ideals of life touching the basic and eternal. Standing in the holy place we are imperiled by familiarity and lose our sense of awe and reverence. A ship experiencing a breakdown in the engine room when the shaft snaps is one that drifts thereafter. It is not infrequently true of life. Often the fear of the castaway is caused by interior breakdown known only to the individual and not necessarily apparent from without. A moral slump is not unknown, as though a minister is unlike other men and is immune. Nothing is more pitiable than one who has drifted from high and holy ethical ideals of conduct to become as the flotsam and jetsam of life. The failure to dedicate and concentrate ourselves as a living sacrifice to Christ is the beginning of a life of drift. Prayerlessness and carelessness and casualness contribute to those quicksands and the reef whereon at last a ship is wrecked.

Sometimes a young life launching out in the service royal finds a rising tide and a gale upset a boat from her moorings, and a promising life is disillusioned and defeated. That has taken place in the would-be preacher or missionary when he has left a home of piety to face new temptations and tests in college or university associations permeated by a new world of philosophical thought and practice. The new social sphere is turbulent in its storm-test and demands upon well-established standards of right, or the old paths of faith are rudely shocked by the blatant and defiant or the subtle uprising of that which challenges. Let a man of God be yielding and compromising in his ethical and intellectual honesty and he may well end as a drifter, without conviction. This life of drift is a peril and danger to others; a drifting iceberg lowers the temperature all around and is a warning to other ships. That life may be one of lesser loyalties, and soon one is far away from living in the power of saving faith. Thus, in I Kings 13 the younger man is led astray by the elder who comes with flattery and bribe. How damning is the description of the unnamed prophet: the man of God, who was disobedient . . ." (V.26,) !

No wonder the drifter fears the end of the castaway. The damning word in this sort of life is may, but the decisive word in the life of our Lord is must. Only infinite grace can redeem a man in the ministry from the perfunctory and the unspirituality of such a way of living, which ought to be motivated by the spirit of the One who "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).

Another feature is that which confronted Nehemiah during the rebuilding of the wall of the Holy City. The story is familiar, but its setting is revived continually for those who are in God's service. We face the spirit of defeatism and criticism, the sneer, ridicule, and the innuendo against the preacher, as though a minister were a strange species apart from humankind. The best intentions, the sincerest motives, and a sense of dedication are oftentimes imputed to base and unworthy ends. True, "not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Corinthians 1:26), and a sensitive spirit is easily the prey to this kind of attack. Possibly it is not good that any work for God should be exempted from the sneer of a Sanballat. The contrast between the magnitude of the task and the littleness of the instrument for its accomplishment (in his view) is so striking that to the natural mind there is ground for derision.

It is no light thing to possess a conscience void of offense toward God and man.

Misrepresentation may imperil a man's usefulness. Prejudice against holy living and action is still alive. Earnest zeal is called fanaticism, spiritual decision is labeled obstinacy, and nonconformity is put down as pride. Gossip, if hearkened to, is a pernicious channel to be used against the gospel minister to muzzle his message. Intimidation may come with sedulous regularity to impinge upon spiritual resources. There is a place where a man must stand in his lot and refuse to flee from the high calling of God. Better to die in duty than to live in dishonor. To say "nol" in the hour of solicitation is the way of moral victory. We need not flee from the task committed to us; to do so is to allow the brood of evil thoughts full sway which tempt and lure in whispering that we may become as the castaway.

Another danger leading to this catastrophe is spiritual fatigue. Our Lord said..... men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). These are the alternatives: "fainting," i.e., "caving in through exhaustion," or "perseverance through spiritual renewal." To lose our grip on God and to lose the spontaneity and joy in His service is to become weary in well-doing. Is it that we are too busy and our activities keep us from concentrating upon the main business of the vocation? Oswald Chambers, that keen diagnostician of moral need, wrote: "The natures that make the finest saints make also the most exhausted ones unless they keep true to the life "hid with Christ in God." Our peril is the exhaustion which results from the thousand and one interests and demands-often legitimate, but which sidetrack us from "the ministry of the word and prayer" (Acts 6:4)

We need to reduce these interests to the minimum, for if we are exhausted we may lapse into the mood that fears the end of the disqualified. We need not be worn out if we learn the secret of refreshment. The Holy Spirit of God can endue us with a sense of what is vital.

We have all heard tales of the "stick-it minister." There is a heartfelt story of one which has been laid bare by the Early Letters of Marcus Dods. This great soul spent a few years in the wilderness of a "no man's land" when he was unwanted by any church in Scotland-enough to fill the soul with despair that after years of painstaking preparation for the ministry he should find himself rejected. Yet Dods refused to succumb to the temptation that he must be disqualified finally. He therefore continued his reading and studies privately, waiting for the opportunity which he believed would come in due time. And it did in a most unusual way, in that the Divine Architect was preparing the young man for a wide ministry beyond his dreams. God led him not by the shorter way of a settled charge, but by the wilderness of unsettlement and change, through discipline, to perfect the instrument to be a teacher and preacher to preachers. Have we anything in ministerial biography like those burning sentences from one who wrestled long within himself and who was likely to imagine he might become a castaway?

"I may preach this again, but these people will not hear it again-they are hearing these words but once-let them be so said as to fix and not need to be heard again." "They may possibly never bear any preaching again-I may possibly never preach again." "Why am I preaching, what am I hoping to effect, am I listless or flippant in the utterance of what I hope will save men from eternal death?"

These words of Marcus Dods are a revelation of a tortured soul. But this is no unveiling of weakness-very far from that. Here we have the disclosure of a mind far more sensitive than one imagined it to be, confronting a succession of mortifications and disappointments which, surely, never came before or since to a man so gifted. To the discouraged these letters of Dods must be read. How often are men disheartened by the lack of the popular recognition of their worth, or by the temptation to think that they have wandered from the path assigned to them, and are trying to fulfill duties for which they were never meant.

Paul's incessant fear was that he might run or labor in vain. Suppose his work should be burned up, and he should suffer loss in the final day? Perhaps he feared that some mistake on his part would disqualify him from the "prize" and his work be in vain. F. B. Meyer speaks of The Sacrificial Side of the Christian Life in these terms: "A very solemn enquiry is suggested to us all. Are we running in vain? Are we laboring in vain? Life is full of running to and fro, and

incessant labor, but we may gravely ask whether at the end there will be aught to show commensurate with the energy we have expended. So many days are lived in vain! So many sermons preached in vain! So many books are written in vain! So many philanthropic activities expended in vain!"

It is, however, certain that before any service that we do for God or man is likely to be of lasting and permanent benefit, it must be saturated with our heart's blood. That which costs us nothing will not benefit others. If there is no expenditure of tears and prayer, if that love, of which the Apostle speaks in another place, which costs, is wanting, we may speak with the tongues of men and of angels, may know all mysteries and all knowledge, may bestow all our goods to feed the poor, but it will profit nothing. Let us rather seek to be poured forth as a libation than to do much without feeling the least travail of soul. As the fertility of Egypt in any year is in direct proportion to the height that the waters of the Nile measure on the nilometer, so the amount of our real fruitfulness in the world is gauged by the expenditure of our spiritual force.

It was because Moses was prepared to be blotted out from the Book of God for his people that he carried them for forty years through the desert and deposited them on the very borders of the Promised Land. It was because Paul was prepared to be accursed for his brethren according to the flesh that he was able to turn so many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is when Zion travails that she brings forth her children. No heart pangs, no spiritual seed. The Christian life should be a sacrifice.

John Mark is a New Testament example of a would-be assistant minister who seemed to fail after a splendid beginning. Was it fear or ill health or the threat of bodily danger? Was it cowardice and a haunting fear that he might fail and be rejected? How glad we are that he "made good" in the ministry and wrote for us that graphic, moving, and concise sketch of the supreme life and ministry. To be rejected after a testing experience is to uncover weaknesses and defects hitherto unnoticed. The first Rush of enthusiastic enlistment is followed by the searching test. Every student is tested by the examination, the soldier by the fight, and Christ's servants by temptation. The temptation to surrender to worldly forces is very real, but should such a man as the preacher flee?

Plato said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." Such scrutiny of character is a testimony to the essential worth of life. If an athlete neglected the training and the dietary rules of the games, he would find out his lack and he would be found out, too. Ten months' training seemed a long time of preparation to run a race lasting a few minutes or even an hour, but the goal was that which mattered most. So in the ministry of divine unfoldings we dare not allow the erosion of constant fear of man to break down that which is vital to godliness and spiritual affluence. That is the way of decay, and a day comes when there is an awakening to the shadow of the end of the one who is excluded from divine approbation.

Others have found life intolerable and a burden by reason of what Paul describes as "the thorn in the flesh." Many explanations have been proffered, and each is salutary until we discover our own peculiar trial and affliction. It speaks of a handicap or obstacle impeding progress, and if this is the way of stumbling for some it is possible to find grace to rise above and proceed in the calling of God. There are variations and limitations in knowledge, wisdom, abilities, gifts, physical endowments, and spiritual insights, but these should not lure a man to think he is to be measured by other men and thus lose heart. To God we stand or fall.

Paul, indeed, catalogued many things of pricking and goading, experienced in his full life as missionary and pastor. Read his words in 11 Corinthians 1-1:23-33, as he relates his labors, imprisonments, persecutions, physical sufferings and privations, dangers at sea and on land, the perils and hazards through sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, coldness and infirmity, and all the rest of it. And then there is the pressing business of each day, the care of all the churches. That was the greatest burden of alibis anxious, sympathetic care of the people of God, who needed the generous and sacrificial service of this Great heart. If any man felt weak at times it was Paul. He passed through the crucible of smarting and squirming under the lash of those

situations wherein the leader is the center of humiliation and buffeting. In such a state, when he felt insufficient for the task, he might have dreamed of an hour when all his service would appear as nothing under the great Taskmaster's eye. But the grace of God was abundant, and so he endured.

Everyone who is ever tempted to picture that last accounting, with its dire threat of disqualification in service, does well to ponder that master of the heart, Paul. The correction for a castaway possibility is the overwhelming conviction that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ." (11 Corinthians 5:10,)- In that light we work and serve now, so that the honest, sincere, and dedicated spirit need not fear that snare of the castaway. We should gird up the loins of our mind and endure as seeing Him who is invisible, with whom we have to do.

The Peril of Privilege

"The Christian in name has in recent years been growing cold in his devotion. Our achievement in perfecting life's material apparatus has produced a mood of self-confidence and pride. Our peril has been indifference, and that is a grave peril, for rust will crumble a metal when hammer blows will only harden it. I believe-and this is my crowning optimism-that the challenge with which we are now faced may restore to us that manly humility which alone gives power. It may bring us back to God. In that case our victory is assured. The Faith is an anvil which has worn out many hammers."

JOHN BUCHAN, LORD TRWEEDSMUIR.

". . . let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" PAUL - (I CORINTHIANS 10: 12).

IT IS A TRUISM oft quoted that a church never rises higher than its minister. We may object to the censure, yet in the experience of the culture of the spiritual life we are set as an example. Whenever ministers meet in conference to discuss the manifold problems confronting the church, rarely is the scrutiny of causes carried to the inner life of the preacher. Undoubtedly we are the key to the situation, for what man of us has found himself sufficient for the ministry? As we ponder the lives and labors of those who are given a place in the Bible, there is this noteworthy disclosure, that they were men of like passions and ready to confess their own shortcomings and sins, even as they were identified with the people. Hear Ezra (9:6) pray: "O my God, I am ashamed. . . ." And (10:1): "Ezra prayed, and made confession, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God. . . ." Or Daniel (9:20): ". . . while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God. . . ." These and many others are on record as having a sensitiveness of spirit with reference to themselves, and thus continually were cast upon God for His aid and grace.

The man of God must needs be conscious of that uprising of unrest with himself, his attainments and labors. Do we incline to assume that our work is well established and well ordered, and therefore successful? Are we settled upon our lees? Are we blinded by statistics, numbers, attendances at services, the initiation and maintenance of organizations? We may excel at mechanics and fail in dynamics. We may lose the vision of infinite possibilities and no longer dream our dreams or pray for that tomorrow which ought to lure us on by constant challenge and demand upon our best dedication. Our state becomes parlous when the divine discontent is lost.

Here we touch the aspirations of life. Why do we serve the Christ in this ministry? Alas! it is no longer possible to assume that every man in the pulpit is there because of a sense of vocation.

Other factors have entered to induce some men to give themselves to this calling and service. There may be a humanitarian urge to help the world, or the idea that this sheltered and favored calling is best suited to one's personal gifts and temperament. Are there not students in colleges and universities, as well as some men in the ordained ministry, who confess they do not know the supreme spiritual aspiration of a divine call; know nothing of the divine constraint and urge to preach the gospel; are ignorant of what our forefathers spoke of as a passion for souls, and certainly are never at the heart of Richard Baxter's oft quoted words about preaching "as a dying man to dying men"? A friend of Baxter's, Samuel Corbyn, wrote to him from Trinity College, Cambridge, deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of the ministry in the seventeenth century, and mentioned "the monstrous sin of taking up ye ministry without experimental acquaintance with Christ. 'Tis ye cryinge sin of ye University: for which I who see it could even

breake my heart." Surely it is a damning sin for anyone to enter upon the sacred calling without the Spirit's stirring within.

That awareness of grace in the soul must lead a man to search his motives. Let them be honorable and God-pleasing with a zeal for holy and high ideals in character and conduct; such will enable one to keep watch over the citadel wherein we truly live and move and have our being. Ministerial fidelity and diligence are prerequisites to the salvation of our ministry and them that bear us. There is a girding up of the loins of our mind. Self-denials will be exacted from us, for hard studies, much knowledge, intellectual stimulation, and excellent preaching are but more sinning if the end be not right.

Here is where we must guard against certain moods in which we become unreasonable. These should not be confused with the transfiguring experience of the vision of God and the pity felt with tragic deeps for a lost world today. Moodiness may be temperamental; it is to make us unreliable and lacking in control. Some of us are very touchy. We need to pray to be delivered from the sensitiveness of self-love which is dishonoring to God, even as we pray for the sensitiveness of spirit which are able to sympathize with the suffering and sinning. What if our moods are just bad manners after all? Moods have been classified with respectable vices because they make many good folk unlovely and useless in the witness of the ministry. By sulking at life a minister is lacking in this self-criticism which is the spur to spiritual progress.

A luminous example of genuine progress through the "divine discontent" was Paderewski, the eminent pianist. His biographer informs us that the master's life was a story of power realized through self-discipline. His spirit chafed from an unease of which he suffered all his life. It was his own limitations that drove him on. He grew in the art and knowledge of his profession. He was never done searching for new tone depths in the interpretations of the masters. There was the impulse to go back to work and perfect himself. What of our ministry?

We do well to consider that we are not laboring like other men in the markets of the world, but are freed from that in order to labor the more assiduously at our heavenly craft. What privileges are ours! We talk with the learned and the spiritually favored, when others must be content with lesser lights. We have a week of sabbaths in which to feed upon the glories of the Christian way, whereas others have but one day in the week for worship and meditation. We have the seclusion of our study or sanctuary in which we share the stimulus of choice spirits through a library and find delight in delving deeply into the treasury of truth revealed by God. Truly, we are men set apart, so that our opportunities bring us the greater responsibilities. It is James who warns against the self-seeking of becoming a teacher: we stand in the greater condemnation.

With these privileges lies the danger of worldliness attacking us. This is not something of gross action without, but of subtle atmosphere within. The environment of heavenly things is too readily invaded by the miasma of the spirit of the age. It is a lowering of the spiritual sense, that check on spiritual vitality, even as we engage in the exposition of the spiritual. It is an enervation of spirit due to the lowering of high standards and principles for the questionable canker of slackness and perfunctoriness. A man may be worldly in preaching the gospel! Ours is the inestimable privilege of a life apart in studying and preaching Christ, to search into God's mysteries and to be daily considering His works and ways in the souls of men. We surely need to live "in the Spirit" as the antidote to the spirit of this age.

As we engage in the outward exercise of proclaiming the evangel, habits of life count. There are vital moments preparatory to all service and public work. Paderewski's custom as a master musician is revealing and in line with our plea to give our best and defeat temptation. For many years it was his custom to retire immediately before a concert to the dressing room of the stage where he appeared, there to remain undisturbed for a space of time, that he might collect himself, compose himself, prepare himself in absolute silence and solitary self-communion for his performance. Habit of years made this period of collection twenty minutes. In that twenty minutes he relaxed from all thoughts that would intrude upon the task before him, withdrew from every outward distraction, summoned all his inward forces to focus on the music he was about to play. In like manner, the minister may realize that his life is "bid with Christ in God"

(Colossians 3:3,), and that his task demands a like attention in habit, making possible the presentation of a body and mind and spirit as the fit vehicle of spiritual grace and illumination.

That "our sufficiency is of God who makes us able ministers of the new covenant" (II Corinthians 3:5), is evident when we are confronted with these temptations. We must prove the sufficiency of our Lord and Master. Richard Baxter writes in *The Reformed Pastor*: "Too many that have set their band to this sacred work, do so obstinately proceed in self-seeking, negligence, pride, division and other sins, that it is become our necessary duty to admonish them.... How can we more effectually further a reformation (which we are obliged to do) than by endeavoring the reforming of the leaders of the Church?"

Our Puritan mentor of the seventeenth century is admittedly correct in urging that the shepherd of the flock must be an exemplar to others: ". . . all churches either rise or fall and the ministry doth rise or fall-not in riches or worldly grandeur-but in knowledge, zeal, and ability for their work." Yes, and also in experimental heart-knowledge of sin and its remedy at the hands of the Divine Physician. The New Testament is clear and emphatic that "sin shall not lord itself over us" with the provision made in Christ. What is the meaning of those sublime utterances?-. . . woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Corinthians 9:16,); "I have been crucified with Christ . . ." (Galatians 2:20); ". . . it pleased God, who ... called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him . . ." (Galatians 1:16,). A mysticism is postulated, but it is not mistiness, for here is the testimony of one who is "far ben wi" Christ, knowing the plentitude of power as the index of our spiritual resources.

There will always be tests and temptations, but the experience of the abundant life guarantees a sufficient mead of divine grace to purify the heart, cleanse the motives, control our aspirations, that we might be "filled unto all the fulness of God." Through prayer, self-mortification, repeated humbling, there will come an hour when a baptized intellect is made to catch fire with Christ as Lord. This is the key to the situation in the ministry and in the church-better men, men overcoming the subtle temptations of our calling, men who go forth endued with spiritual unction and power, men who "sanctify in their hearts Christ as Lord" (I Peter 2:15). If this be the hub of the wheel, the center of conviction, a man will not fail to appropriate the adequate resources in Christ, and he will not be sidetracked.

The writer can never forget the wise counsel at his ordination given out of ripe experience. Among many outstanding things were these: "To keep the motives pure, the faith strong, the aim high. To be responsible first and last as a servant to the Lord. To remember the experimental knowledge of Christ, which counts as well as any intellectual knowledge. In preaching Christ, to preach to the people the most exalted things concerning this life and the next, concerning sin and grace, concerning impenitence and judgment, concerning Christian character and service. To preach the great things: feeding the people with the finest of the wheat. Not to consider what they want, but what they need, for in all likelihood, their wants will largely correspond to their needs. And to expound to them the great eternal verities of the Christian faith."

If we are proving the adequacy of Christ in this sage counsel, then the confession of *The Reformed Pastor*, by Richard Baxter, will not be ours. We note it by way of warning: "How few ministers do preach with all their might! . . . Alas, we speak so drowsily or gently, that sleeping sinners cannot bear. The blow falls so light that hard-hearted persons cannot feel it. . . . What excellent doctrines some ministers have in band, and let it die in their bands for want of close and lively application. O Sirs, how plainly, how closely and earnestly should we deliver a message of such nature as ours is, when the everlasting life or death of men is concerned in it.... There is nothing more unsuitable to such a business than to be slight or dull. What, speak coldly for God and for man"s salvation . . . If you give the holy things of God the highest praise in words and yet do it coldly, you will seem in the manner to unsay what you said in the matter.... The manner as well as the words must set them forth. If we are commanded, whatever our hand findeth to do, to do it with all our might, then certainly such a work as preaching for men"s salvation should be done with all our might-that the people can feel us preach when they hear us."

The preacher's task is a superlative task. We are to make people know, for a little at least, something wholly different from, and something infinitely better than, even the best that ordinary life can offer them, something which they have known is, but which they have not been able to touch, to grasp. We must make them aware, for a little while anyway, that man is a spiritual being. We must challenge them, strike at them, hurt them with the hurt of spiritual consciousness, spiritual growth; we must make their souls inside the crusted chrysalis of mere existence stir toward light. We must soothe them too, after the hurt; heal them, excite them, exalt them, bathe them in the refreshment of luminous effulgence of harmony with God; open their inner eyes and make them see themselves in the presence of Christ, the Son of God.

Because this is our task, we dare not trifle with the temptations which so readily meet us in the ministry. The day of accounting will come for us, the final test of character and service. What then? Only the discipline of grace in the constant culture of our spiritual life will temper the present in the light of that hour. We live and labor, work and witness in that holy light. The day shall declare of what sort is the service we render. Then we shall realize that the true waste of life is the life we have not given, the service we have not rendered, and the sacrifice from which we have drawn back. It is well to believe that we are even now serving before that judgment seat of Christ and that the Head of the church moves among those who are the messengers of the churches.

There is no discharge in this conflict with sin. As long as we are engaged in the work of the ministry we shall be tempted, even as all Christians, and that with subtlety and acuteness. We must live like others and yet live differently. We must move in society, buy and sell, marry and bring up families, just like the rest of men, and at the same time be thought superior to the world. Our problem will be to live a really unworldly life in an age which will not suffer any marked external separation from the world. This generation will test us through the temptations connected with our private and public lives, and note, not without triumph, how we fall short.

The world has its own estimation of the clergyman: Fielding's Parson Adams, Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, Scott's Dominie Sampson, Dickens's Chadband and Stiggins, Thackeray's Honeyman, Eliot's Amos Barton, Hawthorne's Dimmesdale, and Lewis' Elmer Gantry. Caricature and truth are realistically portrayed across the pages of literature that we know full well.

To lose sight of the redemptive mission of Christ, to lose our evangelical passion, to become self-satisfied in our calling-this is the way to lose the clean hands, the righteous lips, and the pure heart. It is by the discipline of the struggle within our own hearts that we learn to become helpers of others to whom we would minister. And in humility of spirit we proceed with our work; we plod on and still keep the passion fresh. One day we shall be satisfied when we have finished our task.

The Crux of Criticism

". . . his ministers a flame of fire" HEBREWS 1:7,

"God has kindled a flame in my heart to make me a worlds beacon" II CORINTHIANS 4:6
(ARTHUR S. WAY)

"Now let me burn out for God!" HENRY MARTYN

"Nought in their heart or hand they took, Save love of God, and holy Book" THE MORAVIANS

IN THEOLOGICAL STUDY there is a higher criticism and a lower criticism. The meaning and purpose of each is well known. But there is another which is more important than either. When the last word has been uttered concerning the problems of the history and literature of the redeeming revelation, there yet remains the final criticism of that same word upon the life of the reader and auditor. The Biblical literature is waiting to be read and expounded and applied to life. Disbelief and unbelief have a terrible power of arresting spiritual intelligence and hindering spiritual affluence. Doubt dims the vision and distrust dampens the spiritual fire until the pulpit loses its dynamic and ceases to be constructive and compelling. A knowledge of the philosophy, science, history, and theology of Biblical studies will be no compensation if we lack the skill to use the Book in its central truths to meet the needs of sinning souls. It may be well to study the structure of the bow and arrow, but it is more important to learn to be a good archer and hit the mark. We are to "search the scriptures" and "preach the gospel." The intake will determine the output.

By searching we shall find, and finding, we shall be able to proclaim glad tidings. The hackneyed phrase and oft-quoted injunction to "preach the gospel" was not meant to narrow the range of our witness by running our appeals in a rigid rut. It is inclusive of all revealed truth which bears on redemption as a divine scheme or a human experience. "He who fixes one arm of his compass in the Cross may sweep them over as wide a circle as the other arm of them will allow" (Alexander McLaren). In this regard there is a criticism of the truth itself bearing upon our lives. God has given us a verifying faculty by which the truth becomes available to reason and conscience, and the Divine Spirit grants illumination of that which has been revealed and recorded as we are obedient unto the heavenly vision. It is no light thing to handle this God-breathed Word, which in itself is "quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4: 12). This is the final criticism in the Word finding us, discriminating and passing judgment on our thoughts and judgments.

Many mistakes have been made by the minister in allowing these relative questions in study to crowd out the essential message of the Bible, and people have turned away dissatisfied. Let a man criticize himself; let him bring his study and knowledge and philosophy into the Light of lights. The scrutiny of the Divine Spirit is the way of illumination upon the sacred page, and more light breaks forth. Why should we be sidetracked? Why grope in the miasma of local and time-horizoned things when at our hand is this universal and eternal Word adequate for our generation? Why not "find the Book" once more in a new re-reading, obedience, and devotion? The critic is easily soured and his world is out of joint; the criticized preacher under the searchlight of truth is stabilized, for he knows that he no longer squints at truth, but is a dispenser of the Divine Word, "which liveth and abideth for ever." And that Word "never returns void."

In his immortal allegory, John Bunyan depicts with spiritual illumination various aspects of the ideal ministry. Here we have Evangelist, Interpreter, Great heart, and the Four Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains (Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere). Consider that well-known description from the Interpreter's House:

"Christian saw the picture of

1. A very grave person hung up against the wall; and this was the fashion:
2. Eyes lifted up to heaven.
3. The best of books in his hand.
4. The law of truth was written upon his lips.
5. The world was behind his back.
6. He stood as if he pleaded with men.
7. A crown of gold did hang over his head."

The statue of John Bunyan at Bedford sets forth the Biblical idea of a Christian minister. His own words are inscribed on the back of the pedestal. It speaks for itself in these days of multiplied demands and interests. The speaking man is eloquent when he expounds the Book in holiness of life, pleading with evangelistic passion for the souls of men.

The preacher is counseled to read Professor James Denney's very full and searching article on "Preaching Christ" in the Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels (Volume 2). Here it is assumed that to preach Christ is the preacher's function, and the intention is to show what such preaching involved in the beginning, and what it must include still if it is to be true to its original. There must be a vital continuity or rather identity in the substance which is preached. How refreshing to find Denney underlining the most positive and pointed word, that "there is no such thing as preaching Christ unless it is the preaching of One who lives and reigns. If Jesus is at the right hand of God-if he is behind every revival of spiritual life in the Church-then He is the Christ, and can be preached as such; but if not, not."

Others have known something of this peril of missing the mark in their ministry. Some of their testimonies follow:

"I have for some time especially felt that there is something as yet unknown to me that makes my ministry less awakening than that of almost any minister, at least among my friends that have been blessed. Indeed, I have been coming to the conclusion for some time past that I have been far less use in any manner than I used formerly to hope. I see now that there is nothing which another cannot carry on exactly as I have done, and probably with much more success, for there is something in my ministry that is wanting. I feel willing now at once to depart and be with Christ that I may serve Him in His presence in any capacity with a perfect heart and without any secret sin, and no blight upon what I do. Or if he keeps me here, I feel that there must surely come from Himself to me some new communication of grace, some new endowment of His Spirit. I once thought of myself somewhat, and I suspect that the sorrow of want of success is in my case very much the mortification of self, being thrown aside as not needed by God. Indeed, there is much of self in all our hours of sorrow, at least in mine" (Andrew Bonar, Diary and Letters). "He went about his public work with awful reverence. ... In the vestry there was never any idle conversation; all was preparation of heart approaching God; and a short prayer preceded his entering the pulpit. Surely in going forth to speak for God, a man may well be overawed When one asked him if he was never afraid of running short of sermons some day, he replied, "No; I am just an interpreter of Scripture in my sermons; and when the Bible runs dry, then I shall." There is a wide difference between preaching doctrine and preaching Christ.... He sought to hang every vessel and flagon upon Him.... He often expressed a dislike of the phrase, "giving attention to religion," because it seemed to substitute doctrine, and a devout way of thinking, for Christ Himself" (Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne).

"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me; and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he bid me" (Isaiah 49:2).

"There is an altar in men - a deep and majestic place where the soul transacts with its God,

and life is cleansed and kindled with unearthly flame. . . . It is the altar that makes the man" (E. Herman).

That spiritual experience is not a thing of the past ages, read the witness of a recent pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London, W. Graham Scroggie, who in private has given forth this heart searching word: "Will you permit me to say that I can never forget that day nearly forty years ago, and some thirteen years after my conversion, when my whole life and ministry were suddenly challenged-when it was revealed to me that I was little more than a middleman, between my books and the people when I was given to see that I was more anxious to be a preacher than God's messenger, that my master-passion was not the accomplishment of the will of God at any cost, and that my ruling motive was not the love of Christ.

"In that hour the edifice I had been building lay in ruins about me, and for a while all was dark despair. But, "into the wood my Master came," and, finding me there, in His mercy He brought me out, out into newness of life, out into fulness of service; and although I blush to think of much that lies between that hour and this, yet I gratefully bear testimony that His coming then, and in that way, has been the determining factor in my life."

G. Campbell Morgan also put his finger on the pulse of ministerial efficiency before God: "No man can go unless the Spirit call him. That is the high doctrine of the ministry; not even the Church, nor her theological halls. He must be called of the Spirit. Unless he hear that call sounding in his soul, ringing like a trumpet night and day, giving him no rest until he is compelled to say, "Woe is me if I preach not," then in God's name let him stay where he is, in his present calling. But if he hear the call, then let him remember that it is his business to go forward within the fellowship and guidance of the Church" (Commentary on the Acts).

Ecclesiastically far removed from these we have just quoted is John Henry Newman; yet he, too, insists upon the same vital things at the crux of our vocation. "While, then, a preacher will find it becoming and advisable to put into writing any important discourse beforehand, he will find it equally a point of propriety and expedience not to read it in the pulpit. I am not of course denying his right to use a manuscript, if he wishes; but he will do well to conceal it, as far as he can. . . . Preaching is not reading, and reading is not preaching. Definiteness is the life of preaching. A definite hearer, not the whole world; a definite topic, not the whole evangelical tradition; and, in like manner, a definite speaker. Nothing that is anonymous will preach; nothing that is dead and gone; nothing even which is of yesterday, however religious in itself and useful. Thought and word are one in the Eternal Logos, and must not be separate in those who are His shadows on earth. They must issue fresh; as from the preacher's mouth, so from his breast, if they are to be "spirit and life" to the hearts of his hearers" (The Idea of a University).

We believe that this definiteness and personal passion is found in the heart-knowledge of the Christ who is central in the preacher's message. Is not this the crux of all criticism of self?

The ministry is not a life of irresponsibility. It is one of decision, calling for action and the determination of the will. The man of the one talent in the parable took no risks and forfeited everything in doing nothing. Christ's man will hazard his life for the truth and the service of souls. The "Why?" of temptation bothers us, yet it is a mark of our worth and value that we are tempted. Our fitness and strength of character are revealed thereby, and we learn by experience.

John Bunyan, in Preface to *Grace Abounding*, lights upon the inner significance and meaning of our antagonisms: "Temptations, when we meet them at first, are like the lion that roared upon Samson. But if we overcome them, the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey within them." We might well introduce a beatitude and blessing on trouble. We should never be startled at the temptations that assail, or the trouble through which our life passes. These experiences are the predestined teachers of those deeper lessons for which men are waiting and which we can learn only by suffering and conquering.

Some of our temptations are from without, but others arise within ourselves. The ministry demands from a man his best and utmost in service. What is more natural than a healthy ambition? Thackeray says that temptation is a most obsequious servant, and will follow a man into the loneliest desert, as readily as it will follow him to church. We do not live in the desert,

but within the church, and it is the hardest thing in life to say "no" to that which we love. If there are some temptations common to the hours of despondency and failure, there are others at the time of success and achievement. A preacher, then, is prone to think he is above the ordinary laws of ethical demands. You dare not legislate for the great "I." This passion of ambition may easily and insidiously lead a man to the dangerous hour of the shortcut. Our Lord knew that when He was tempted with the possession of the kingdoms of the world. That was the purpose of His coming and the passion of His heart, but the self must not outstrip God's time and way, or else there is disaster. The will of God and the cross were rightly chosen. So the minister must learn the way of identification with his Lord, denying self for selfish ends, and working on in the doing of that supreme will at all costs.

We need to guard the "self-life" with sedulous scrutiny, watching against the peril of egoism and hypocrisy. There is a saying that the devil has his opportunity when there is an unstable equilibrium. We need to forget ourselves in dedication to Christ and His service, that with resolution we shall go forward as "seeing him who is invisible." That is the secret of endurance and our best. The wise corrective and antidote is to know that our life and work are known to the Presence in the midst. Our Priest-King (Revelation 1:3) is in the midst of the churches, marking what is passing in each community and holding in His hand those who are His messengers at His disposal and will. That is the picture of the true man of God. The intimate knowledge of the Christ is revealed and that eye of flame detects whatever is wanting or amiss, the sharp two-edged sword falls heavily on all insincerity, indolence, impurity-on every error, whether of doctrine or of life. Thank God for the sovereignty of His love, tender and gracious, that we repent and do the first works if our life has lost the zeal of the first! This is the crux of our need, self-criticism before word-criticism, and Christ is the crux of criticism!

The Vanity of Cleverness

"You do not have to be anything in particular to be a lawyer; I have been a lawyer, and I know. You do not have to be anything in particular, except a kind-hearted man, perhaps, to be a physician; you do not have to be anything, nor to undergo any strong spiritual change, to be a merchant. The only profession which consists in being something is the ministry of our Lord and Savior-and it does not consist of anything else. It is manifested in other things, but it does not consist of anything else" WOODROW WILSON.

"No sir, the ministry is not an easy calling, and I do not envy the man who makes it easy" SAMUEL JOHNSON.

IN CONSIDERING the subtle puffing up of mind which is easily contracted by the minister, we should remember this may be the excess of virtue. High traits in the character of men in our craft are the virtues of magnanimity, humanity, and humility. These are marks of true greatness. But there is the peril of contentment with something less of an exalted standard. In our handling of truth it is tragic if we exalt the little and nonessential at the expense of the great and noble themes. Imagining that a certain position and dignity confer rights in personal speech is too often the undoing of a man.

The Pauline exhortation runs: avoiding profane and vain babblings . . ." (I Timothy 6:20,). Believing that divine revelation is to be preferred to human speculation, we shall not fall into the snare of the cheapjack and charlatan. Buffoonery and sensationalism are signs of a carnal mind and the craving for religious stimulants. The gladiatorial sport is one of the hallmarks of antiquity and a stage in the evolution of man's seeming advance, but it is unbecoming to find the minister stooping to the jejune and the blighting of reverence. "Devotees of the old overrate this or that because it is quaint and unusual; devotees of the modern overrate this or that because it is new and startling." What really matters is the absolute value; and the ultimate test of a ministry is its power to sustain and satisfy through the regular channels appointed of God.

There is an intellectual snobbery which is an offense to God and a stumbling block to man. The parade of human achievements as a basis of "getting on" or being successful in the ministry is to be condemned by good taste. The mental discipline given through youth and manhood in preparation for the life-work-if exceptional and above the average-should not give us the idea that we are superior in our utterances of truth over those who have not been thus led. God prepares His servants in a variety of schools, as the Bible well illustrates, and an Amos is a mightier preacher than certain priests of Bethel. We discover that it is not in the letter but in the spirit that truth is diffused effectively, and a dedicated personality is the final criterion of devoted service and usefulness. The perfecting of the instrument and the sharpening of the tools may be in other ways than by a university course, and it is "vanity of vanities" to presume that we can minister effectively with that alone. It takes Arabia and its solitude to bring the mind of Paul to know the mind of Christ. We need to pray to be delivered from this vain show and puffing up of the flesh because of any academic privilege. With or without it we need the passion of

Oft, when the Word is on me to deliver,
Lifts the illusion and the Truth lies bare

F. W. H. Myers, Saint Paul

in order that we may become self-forgetful and empowered in spirit as we go forth with "Thus saith the Lord!" The school does not make the preacher. Let a man be "hydropic with a sacred thirst" and he will grow in grace and in knowledge.

The man of some gift is tempted to cover up that which is vital because of the spirit of the age. The reproach of foolishness is laid to our charge and so we think we shall become "smart" men. To preach our Savior crucified-unto the religious, a stumbling block, and unto the irreligious, foolishness-is to become contemptible in the eyes of philosophers, scholars, even priestly ecclesiastics. This Christian redemption seems nonsense to the ears of the natural man who cannot understand the things of the Spirit, and he who would contact the intelligentsia will find a certain supercilious attitude toward the central themes of our faith. Then a man is tempted to become popular by sacrificing truth in the interests of theories and wandering down bypaths of secular preachments. If we are sometimes disdained by the ultra literary, we need not object but prosecute our ministry to them as well as to others. A reading of Romans 1 and I Corinthians 1 will reveal how dark is the mind without spiritual illumination. Our peril is to ape the schoolmen in a way that dethrones our message. They need to be "born from above," even as we. The cross was God's answer to the wisdom of man. It is the same today (I Corinthians 1:18).

One of the false and seductive temptations of the minister is that of intellectualism. The "world by wisdom knew not God" said Paul in I Corinthians 1, but some have not believed this. Well-educated people today still become vain in their imagination, and professing themselves to be wise they become fools. What if the preacher deceives himself in thinking intellectual sophistry is the way to present truth? Of course the mind must be fed and disciplined. Knowledge and education are necessary for the ministry, but a true scholar is devout and humble so that truth comes through him by the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that no men of intellect are on the side of Christianity. There are scholars and philosophers, devout and dedicated. But the world spirit seems to ridicule or sneer at the gospel as being "simple" and not for thinkers. A travesty of truth, surely, for the gospel is so profound that no one age has yet exhausted its fullness through the study of the greatest minds of history. So we need not try to be clever, only clear. There is no need to change the gospel in this generation. Mr. Worldly-WiseMan is not far away in every ministry to sidetrack us by the delusion of the subtleties of cleverness.

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (I Corinthians 3: 18,). Our true wisdom is the centrality of the sacrificial gospel, everlasting in its quality and appeal and power. This paradox of power is more to us than the arts and flatteries of men who sidetrack power by love, love by sacrifice, sacrifice by death, and death by the cross. This is the crucial issue of the hour. The man who acknowledges his weakness is strong indeed, for thereby he discovers in his limitations of knowledge and insight that through the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus God has the means of filling up that which is lacking.

A luminous story is given us in the New Testament concerning a preacher who was saved out of his imperfect experience (Acts 18). The life of Apollos is the story of a cultured, devoted man. Socially, he had the advantage of a university city, with its educational opportunities and life. In intellect he was disciplined to handle the Scriptures with learning and skill. He was a mighty moral influence in the community and did not lack zeal and enthusiasm to set forth his discoveries of the way of God revealed in the Bible. Wedded to these things were gifts of eloquence as an orator of the gospel, sharing with Paul the place of leadership in the church and having many people waiting upon his word.

But there you have the revelation of a man who was clever with dedicated gifts, yet proclaiming an imperfect message. All his thinking and teaching were pre-Pentecost. His ministry of truth was limited to the message of the reformer, John the Baptist. He was competent after the standards of the church, but he lacked the dynamic of the full Christian conviction. There was no cross, no resurrection, no Holy Spirit in his attractive ministry. Diligence without dynamic is

insufficient. He had certain facts of truth, but not the fullness of truth. With mental acumen he extolled truth about Jesus, but failed to uplift Jesus alone. Not all truth is the gospel, although the gospel is all truth. Apollos could argue about water-baptism but knew not Spirit-baptism. His teaching was set forth with mental adroitness, but while not erroneous, it missed essentials.

Some clever men today declaim on the wonderful life of Jesus, His example, His leadership, His teaching. But these are not sufficient for a lost world. We need the Christ of Calvary, the slain Lamb, the risen and enthroned Lord, and a sanctifying Spirit. How modern is the story of Apollos! Jesus, the greatest Man, the ideal Teacher, the last word in ethics, a perfect Humanity approaching Deity - but no thorns, no pierced side, not the Conqueror of death and sin. An imperfect gospel, although clever, does not save, does not cast out demons, does not cleanse the conscience, and does not bind up the broken heart.

One saving feature in the life and character of Apollos was his humility. He was willing to learn from those who did not share his gifts and endowments, but who had been schooled by God in another way. Criticism might have spoiled him, but sympathy helped him. The plague of London in 1665 was not stayed by the waters of the Thames, but by the fire of 1666. The fiery baptism accomplished what water could not do. The man of God requires spiritual unction to rise to the fullness of his ministry. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord . . ." (Zechariah 4:6,) is a word to be pondered in the secret place. There has come to us from extra-Biblical sources a reputed saying of our Lord: "He that is near me is near the fire." That is the heart of an experience of white-heat Christianity wherein fullness of knowledge is not alone of the schools but of the heart.

If this story teaches us one truth it is that an A-1 gospel cannot arise from a C-3 theology. Our creed should not determine the Christ, but our Christ should fashion our creed. This theology is the theology of experience and the Interpreter's House is the place of light. Our spirit must be open to new and fresh illuminations of truth, even as we are loyal to what we know. We shall be ready to confess our ignorance, first to ourselves, and then, if need be, to others. "Deep theology," says F. W. Faber, "is the best fuel of devotion; it readily catches fire, and once kindled it burns long." We need to dwell deep as Christian men in order to bring forth the positive teaching and preaching for our day. For one of his sermons John Henry Newman chose as a title these terrifying words: "The Salvation of the Hearer the Motive of the Preacher." That will not be attained by sheer cleverness but by a passion for souls suffusing all our gifts and graces.

After all, it is not by the clever man but by the average man that God's work is done. But such a man must be one who adds force and grasp to tenderness of spirit, and to a fine character there must be united an intense moral and spiritual enthusiasm. The trumpet call is the most inspiring of all sounds because it summons men to spurn ease and self-indulgence and fear, and sends us forth to venture in the great spiritual adventure. The kind of man required in the ministry is determined by the character of the Person whom we would serve. Small employers can take small employees. Little institutions can take little men. But our Lord and Master demands men of vision and self-sacrifice, men of conviction and faith. To be a "minister of Jesus Christ" is the crowning commendation of life. A man engaged in this ministry is one set apart. It is this separateness or dedication to his calling which gives tone and quality and dignity with grace to the highest of all callings before men. The temptation of the "clever" man is to mistake his gifts for power instead of the Giver.

The reward of a man who overcomes this temptation is not in any secular promotion in the church, not even an increase in material things. It is not by achieving a fortune or a place or gaining publicity that a man is successful. But the reward of an ideal pursuit is itself ideal. To write yourself deeply on the tablets of men's hearts is better than being thought merely clever. Our testing is as active service is to the soldier; the living of the spiritual life is the task of the spiritual man. The summons comes to us all. If we are to translate the gospel into the currency of our generation we should beware of becoming intellectual foreigners -detached, isolated, out of touch. Contact with the sins and sorrows of life enable a man to know the one thing that matters.

Further, we need to learn the grace of self-effacement. The more earnest and faithful the preacher, the more he must seek to be hidden behind his Master. The fact of being the center of the gaze of a congregation tempts some to the thought of their dress, the mode of address, and other personal ways which might attract the attention of their hearers. "John Wesley said a preacher's raiment should be as stainless as his character. The address should be free from personal adornment which draws approval of people at the expense of the stabbing word to the conscience and of the Word. ". . . we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Corinthians 4:5,); ". . . not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" (I Corinthians 1: 17,).

We seek, then, for simplicity in speech, directness of address, that we may win a verdict through preaching and witnessing for Christ. Not silliness, not slang, but the language of a heart full of love to Christ and for men is the divine medium to avoid the misuse and the over adornment in preaching. We need not fear such simplicity, as if our reputation would be injured. The outstanding gospel-preachers have been men with the art of simple, pure, Biblical speech. Browning says:

It were to be wished the faults were fewer
In the earthen vessel holding the treasure;
But the one thing is - doth it hold good measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matters.

We do not need to aspire to eloquence as if we sought to parade our gifts. A man is eloquent when his heart is aflame, not by tricks of language, but by the appeal of sincerity and compassion.

Another peril in being clever is the overuse of theological terms which are not always understood by this age. Truly, we need to educate our people in the great doctrines of the faith and ought so to do. But let us translate the words of the study into the simpler, nontechnical words of our common speech, causing the gem of truth to shine brighter by this furbishing. "And the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37,). We do not need to be clever, just clear. For a true preacher is one who reaches the souls of others. In seeking to reach men there is this danger of neutralizing the truth. The study of chemistry shows that there is a process whereby the peculiar properties of one substance are, by another, destroyed or rendered inert or imperceptible. Thus acids and alkalis more or less completely neutralize each other. It is possible to render neutral and ineffective the vital truths of redemption by the vanity of cleverness.

Preaching should be attractive and effective. Paul hints that in seeking attractiveness we may sacrifice effectiveness. He had the culture of Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy, and yet these did not spoil his presentation of the message. But many moderns have been overtaken in this fault. The message of truth has become a formal essay or a philosophical discussion. The student is urged to set up a high standard of literary and homiletic art (which has a place), but there is peril if the Scriptural presentation of truth is covered by man's art without Spirit-directness. Every man should be a law to himself in his preaching, but every preacher should be yielded to the Spirit of God for the delivery of Spirit-clothed thoughts and words. A Bishop Butler produced masterpieces in sermons of argument and analysis and philosophic acumen - but the conversions? Whereas the utterances of Wesley and Whitefield of the Scriptural message in the power of the Spirit reached multitudes of responsive hearts. Our self-conscious pleasing of the aesthetic is a self-complacency to avoid. But unction is the need of the mind and heart more than anything else - this mysterious extra of inspiration and abandon. Then the preacher is wholly loosed for this task and something is transferred from preacher to bearer in the impartation of the message. Indifferent either to praise or blame, a man set free from the acids of modern religion is a vessel unto honor.

Let Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), Kilmany, one of Scotland noted preachers, be a warning of

the vanity of cleverness. For seven years he lacked spiritual life and power, and then came regeneration. Once a friend told him, "I find you are aye busy, but come when I may, I never find you at your studies for the sabbath." "Oh," replied Chalmers-in those preconversion days., an hour or two on the Saturday evening is quite enough for that." But when Chalmers experienced that "expulsive power of a new affection," the same friend often found him poring over the Bible. "I never come in now, but I find you aye at your Bible." "All too little, John, all too little!" This was the beginning of those days of true ministry, when he learned that "to preach Christ is the only effective way to preach morality." No more clever sermons, but messages from the heart of God.

Concerning Thomas Chalmers, Lord Rosebery wrote: "Oratory must, then, have been one main secret of his amazing power. Energy was another. Tenderness, the tenderness of sympathy, was another. Read the story of his connection with young Thomas Smith and you will hear his heart beating aloud. But His base was CHARACTER. Through all the splendors of his speech, through all his activity of administration, through all his powerful and voluminous writings, there flamed the glory of a living soul: a supreme, unquenchable, fervent soul. For him Christianity was everything; his faith inspired every action of his life, every moment of his day, every word that he uttered, every letter that he wrote. That was the real secret of his power, that drew all hearts willingly or unwillingly to him, and that gave a mystery of inspiration to his discourse. He wrote enormously, he spoke continually, he revealed his inner self in every possible way; but after his first struggles and victory every word that remains on record seems instinct with a pervading, undoubting, eager Christian faith. There was an unconscious sanctity about him which was, as it were, the breath of his nostrils; he diffused it as his breath. This is what we mean by a saint, and if ever a halo surrounded a saint it encompassed Chalmers."

An analysis of a preacher's zeal and loyalty has been estimated to be ninety-three parts impure with bigotry, personal ambition, and love of authority; and only seven parts pure zeal composed of love to God and for men. Preaching is the most perilous of all vocations. We shall not find it listed in any government returns of dangerous occupations; nevertheless, it is an occupation of greatest danger-to the soul of the preacher. Here is where the conscience needs to be informed.

The difference between a sensitive conscience and a neuralgic conscience (to borrow a word from John Oman) is that a sensitive conscience is concerned only with knowing what is right; a neuralgic conscience, mainly with anxiety whether we are right. If we know that our ministry is "a received ministry" (Acts 20:24), that will safeguard us from this deplorable intrusion of self.

We should never forget that it was the Preacher (Ecclesiastes 1:1) who confessed..... vanity of vanities; all is vanity." He saw everything from "under the sun" and when the man of God is ensnared by earthly standards and temporal expedients, he loses the spacious and sidereal outlook upon his vocation. Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, in *I Was Made a Minister*, has wise counsel to offer to those who lose "ministerial balance" and who are a prey to the sin of "extemporaneousness." When the rope is stretched, it sags at the center. Our hope is not in being clever, but in spiritual enduement: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts

The Lust of Dissidence

"We are not always doing the most business when we seem to be the most busy. We may think we are truly busy when we are really only restless, -and a little studied retirement would greatly enrich our returns. We are great only as we are God-possessed" J. H. Jowett (THE PREACHER, HIS LIFE, AND WORK).

Dr. Jowett's sage counsel is the antidote to "much ado about nothing." Indolence and the ministry are incompatible terms. Our Lord said "I must work the works of him that sent me. . . . My Father worketh hitherto, and I work". JOHN 9:4; 5: 17

"As nothing tends more injuriously to the separation of the churches than heresies and disputes respecting the doctrines of religion, so nothing tends more effectually to unite the churches of God, and move powerfully to defend the fold of Christ, than the pure teaching of the Gospel, and harmony of doctrine"

FROM A LETTER TO JOHN CALVIN BY ARCHBISHOP CRAMER, MARCH 20, 1552.

WE ARE LIVING in an age when church leaders are discussing and planning for reunion and federation. Historical divisions are being welded together in an attempt to provide a solid front in Christendom against the common enemy. In the presence of these movements among denominations there are others who are given to the restriction of the bounds of true fellowship. Whether union is formal or organic, there yet remains our opportunity to "maintain the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3). There is a unity greater than union, and there is a communion already in existence. It is not something we have to create, but simply acknowledge and enjoy. A temptation to the minister is to limit his fellowship in Christ unduly and unwisely. Here a limitation of spiritual interest is a mark of unsoundness.

The axiom of Rupertus Meldenius, a Lutheran theologian, set down in his treatise *Paraenesis votive pro pace ecelesiae* (1626) - so often quoted by Richard Baxter that it is frequently taken to be his own-can well be placed as a guard upon our thoughts and words concerning this most important issue: "Sit in necessariis Unitis, in non necessariis Libertas, in omnibus Charitus" "Let there be Unity in things necessary, in things unnecessary Liberty, in all things Charity."

"Christianity is essentially a social religion; to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it." So wrote John Wesley, who was eager that no one for opinions and terms should destroy the work of God. Enough for him if a man loved and feared God. That was warrant for the right band of fellowship according to the character of a Methodist. The divisive spirit of sectarian policy was countered by him in these words: "I would to God that all men knew that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men by any but the common principles of Christianity. It is the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. But from real Christians, of whatever denomination, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all; not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained. 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'"

In the New Testament the word "schism" invariably means separation within, not from, the body of believers, and when this primary idea is applied to ecclesiastical matters the results are profoundly significant. Heresy in Scripture never bears its modern interpretation of false doctrine, but is a faction which divides the people of God. Its sinfulness lies not in that which divides, but in the division, and for this reason the forcing of any doctrines or practice as a form of communion compels division and is a sin of heresy. This means that the schismatic is the one

who raises barriers to communion which God has not raised, and thus the guilt of schism lies with those who impose the terms of fellowship, and not with the conscientious objector, who is thereby debarred from communion.

Paul points out this peril in I Corinthians 3, in which he writes that Christian men at Corinth were guilty of division, faction, and separation. They had an exaggerated opinion of their own judgment and overestimated their wisdom. Each claimed loyalty to some prejudice of the flesh and claimed that to be a principle of the Spirit. (Cf. 1:12, 2:5, 3:21, in which are mentioned instances of the contentious spirit and the party cries.) Paul, Apollos, Peter, and our Lord were set up as the leaders of rival groups. There was competition, not cooperation. One excommunicated the other, although each believed the same cardinal truths of the faith. Is not the same peril with us today? Paul sought to correct this lust of dissidence in the church of God which violated the spirit of fellowship. The sin at Corinth was that they had broken away from the center and had become eccentric. Christianity centers in Christ and He is the center of faith and life, not systems or codes devised by man.

Let us not think that the distinctions and emphases of truth are for enmity or division, but for enrichment and direction. In the study of theology, the singing of hymns, the use of books of devotion, and the missionary enterprise, we are indebted to men of different nationalities, various ecclesiastical backgrounds, and to every age of history. If we accept the enrichment for spiritual culture, why should men yield to the temptation to refuse fellowship with those who believe in the Name above every name but who may differ in secondary things? Some preachers refuse to labor alongside of their brethren, as though they themselves had received some new revelation! Perhaps some would even burn their brethren who are separate from them - if not at the stake, certainly within the citadel of a sectarian orthodoxy. But the burning of martyrs is not the defense of the faith!

If one believes in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning work as Savior, is not that a basis of unity and fellowship in the Spirit? And is not that a platform whereon one can unite with another in bearing witness to the gospel we seek to propagate to others? What is the irreducible minimum for faith and order in our common service? Alas if personalities blind us to the larger issue. How sad if sectarian prejudice and interpretation of other matters should prevent us from enjoying the riches of the vast hinterland of unpossessed possessions in Christ!

In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty;
In diversity, charity; in all things, Christ first.

Bunyan writes, "Again, I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted and in dispute, especially of the lowest nature." "Besides," says Bunyan, "I did let alone the things that engendered strife, because my proper work did run in another channel, even to carry an awakening word: to that therefore did I stick and adhere."

The Pilgrim Father Thomas Shepard has this comment: "Divisions pull down kingdoms without foreign enemies. It is the delight of hell to see churches at variance among themselves. This is Satan's continual attempt in the best churches and he is too often successful. It is most distressful to see what a small thing the devil will make to do his work: a word, a gesture, a garment will do it. One must have liberty to speak one thing, and another, another thing. I am of this mind, saith one. But I am not of that mind, saith another. Even a breath of suspicion will not seldom do it. Oh, tremble to entertain a thought of contention! Love one another sincerely, and you will live together quietly."

Other avenues of this divisive and disruptive experience come to a minister when he refuses the wider fellowship of the saints. It may come through fatigue. One of the sins of the ministry is that of overwork (as well as sloth) according to some acute critics. There is a danger of doing too much as well as of doing too little. Life is not for work, but work for life, and when it is carried to the extent of undermining life or unduly absorbing it, work is not praiseworthy but blameworthy. Ill health caused by hectic living, under-sleeping; poisoned body and mind,

resulting in irritation, quick temper, arrogance, and a quarreling spirit, is sometimes the price paid by "work-drunkenness." Then a man is prone to shut himself off from those richer fellowships in Christ. He begins to live a solitary life.

Another open sore is found when a man is divisive because he thinks he has not received his deserts in life for faithful and honest service. None of us is likely to get what he deserves from his fellows, anyway! Let a minister ask himself frankly where he thinks he ought to stand in his calling. A number are found to complain that the larger sphere of influence and the road to seeming success are denied them. It is true that men of real eminence go without earthly reward, while others (apparently by their push and scheming) get more than they deserve. Certain popular preachers are marked in low and plain figures by their brethren, although even here it may be done in innocence and without malice. And it has been known that some men, after a long ministry, are upset and do not rejoice in the elevation of the younger man. A temptation to dissidence comes when a man is a disappointed man.

Surely we shall be delivered from this perilous perversion if we are shut up to the supreme task. ". . . this one thing I do . . ." (Paul - Philippians 3:13,) is a means of concentration and consecration. While life is narrowed thereby, it broadens; while it limits, it liberates. The major interest controls and the minor interest falls into place. Losing life, we find it; spending ourselves, we save ourselves. The lust of dissidence is corrected by the love of discipline. A house divided against itself cannot stand, and a scattered ministry is thin and unbalanced.

When this sin attacks, it is noticed in certain men through their lack of poise and loss of equilibrium. It is easier to attack a doctrine or a movement or a person, and our auditors find out our shortage of love. Belligerency in the pulpit is belittling to the dignity and grandeur of the ministry committed to us. "He shall not strive, nor cry . . ." (Matthew 12:19) was prophesied of the model preacher. "To contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) is an inspired exhortation to which we must be faithful, but it has suffered many things from bad exegesis and faulty application. Sometimes, because the man was divisive, it has become an outlet to vent spleen and irritability instead of a true apologetic.

We have all noticed the loneliness of some men in the ministry. If it is the loneliness of self-esteem and self-seclusion and an aloofness of isolation it may be disruptive. Every true man of God is lonely in the crowd as he moves in the realm of eternal values and dispenses spiritual truth. The loneliness is so intense for some that they find a weight of spirit which tempts them to break away from life. Again, such aloofness may be born of timidity of spirit, afraid to venture lest sensitiveness is bruised. A few miss the change of ministry leading to enlarged growth in grace because of the limits of missing the wider fellowship. A man should not work alone.

This peril of dissidence is present when a man loses his ideals. On reading volumes on preaching, such as the Yale Lecture Series, one feels that here are men who open the windows of their lives and let us look in. The lecturer was not conscious of that, but in sharing freely and publicly his ideals of the ministry we discover his autobiography. This is natural in such a calling, for a man can but speak out of his experience the things learned. To lose those indispensable ideals is to succumb to temptations, for then we are already dead, though perhaps we still have a name to live.

Another tragic hour is that which has been described by Cotton Mather, one-time president of Harvard University. Speaking of the realistic character of the Christian ministry, he said, "I am sorry that I must conclude my advice for your diligence in the discharge of pastoral duties, with a warning, that you must serve many ungrateful people, and may be in many ways maltreated by them, who are under the stringent obligation to support you." We need a word of encouragement at times, but when a man does his best over a long period for a church which is blind and disinterested, some good men yield to despondency and, like Elijah under the juniper tree, are given to self-pity. Perspective is lost, and the sick man desires a change. Such defeatism is overcome only by the vision of God. When a mood of self-pity comes, we are restless and dissenting. A bracing antidote to discouragement, discontent, peevishness, and railing is found in Paul's course of culture offered in 11 Corinthians 6:3-1.3 to all ministers. The key is

steadfastness allied to time and patience. Through the perils, powers, and paradoxes he describes the Apostle reveals his heart about the ministry and the lust of dissension and variance upsetting life.

Every minister of the New Testament should read the Book of Leviticus for its appeal and demand for a high standard of life on the part of those who minister before the Lord. We are not to copy the ancient priesthood in its ritual and practice, having found a more excellent ministry through our Great High Priest, but we may learn something of those abiding principles and suggestions concerning the sacredness of the man of God set apart. Leviticus 10:1-7 reveals a tragic event in the lives of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, who "took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."

When these two ministers lost their characters they lost their lives. Their sin lay in offering incense in a manner contrary to the revealed and declared will of God. Priests then understood that the only fire to be used in the Tabernacle was to be fire from the altar-fire that had come from heaven. Probably, too, they used what spices were at hand, not the proper incense. Neither education nor station nor privilege (Exodus 24:9) are sufficient to keep men from this presumption. So God vindicates His honor in judgment. Will-worship is not acceptable to God. His will is holiness. The warning of Leviticus 10:8-11 would point to one of the sins of priesthood. Vain desire and falsification of God's will are allied to drunken indulgence. From these we need to be free in order to minister worthily.

They failed to discern between the genuine and the counterfeit. To them fire was fire, but the altar of God required only divine fire. Strange fire was forbidden, so the fire of God destroyed them. Were they false priests unmasked? By ecclesiastical garments and priestly ritual the people accept them outwardly, but God had rejected them inwardly.

It may seem trivial or unimportant how we serve God, but a reading of Leviticus teaches that "trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." It is not permitted in the spiritual priesthood we exercise after the manner of the New Testament to kindle fire ourselves. The only fire permissible is that from the altar. Central in revelation and history and experience is the cross, and the fire of that holy gospel is the Holy Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of Holiness. The energy of the flesh, the cleverness of the mind without the anointing and unction of the Holy One are "strange fires." God teaches in this Book of Leviticus that He makes a difference between the unclean and the clean (11:47).

That harrowing story of Numbers 22-24 also is written to be learned by us who traffic in this ministry of holy things. For there Balaam was raised up by God to witness to his generation through a life of dissidence and variance, that a man may stoop to become an imposter and deceiver, and yet may be a preacher. Official and outward brilliance is not enough if there is an inward rotting through yielding to temptation. The Apostle Jude writes the funeral epitaph of ministers who thus fall: "Woe unto them! For they ran riotously in the error of Balaam, and perished.... These are they who are bidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever.... These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), shewing respect of persons for the sake of advantage. . . . These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 11:19).

When a man like Demas (II Timothy 4:9-11) forsakes the high office that is his, this spirit of instability is upon him and its cause is a love for this present age. Of course, the spirit of the age is always against holiness, and its enervating influence tests every minister. One wonders if Demas, who had a relapse, had experienced what Paul tells of in Galatians This autobiographical note lays bare one of the profoundest secrets of the preacher's safety and salvation. It was not

only that our Lord Jesus Christ had appeared to Paul and converted him, but that also He had been revealed in him. This solitude in Arabia brought to Paul the revelation of the uniqueness of the Son of God. One must read Alexander Whyte's most moving and molding chapter on this subject in his Bible Characters to discover what this grace might mean to all who deal with the intricacies of the heart. Our Lord "knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify of man" (John 2:25), and we too require that spiritual knowledge and fullness of insight. It is ours through the solitudes of Arabia.

A busy, flitting life is not necessarily the best, fullest life. The lust of dissidence is seen too often in the scattering of our energies over a wide area, leaving us without spirit for meditation. Once men prepared for life by retirement to the solitude of the desert and school, and it was difficult to entice them into the world. Now we find this world too much with us, and it is difficult to bring ourselves away from it to dwell in the secret place of that mystic, evangelical experience of Christ alone. This is the lost art in our age of rush and machinery. The man of God must prepare his horology of the meditative art to "save himself and them that hear him."

The Chill of Loneliness

"This world is not a vale of tears; it is a vale of soul-making" JOHN KEATS.

"There is a guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening we shall hear the right word." RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

"I should see the garden far better,' said Alice to herself, 'if I could get to the top of that hill; and here's a path . . . but how curiously it twists'" LEWIS CARROLL (THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS).

NOTHING CHILLS THE heart of a pastor more than the sense of being left alone. The entrance upon his vocation is full of zest and enthusiasm. Church members and leaders assure him of their support and assistance. At the first there is usually a fair response when attendances at services and personal contacts assure him of this encouraging strength. However, as the months pass by, a pastor finds a sifting is going on in any congregation. Then it is that there are those who no longer seem to give themselves to this standing-by of the pastor whom they have called as their spiritual overseer. Enthusiasm wanes and there is a settling down until the leveling-off process brings finally the faithful few who stand by in prayer and devotion. Then the man of God finds that instead of having large numbers of people to support him, he has a remnant. Not that people will not be in attendance at public worship and at the social gatherings of the congregation-but in the more vital and intimate things of the spirit the pastor will miss many at his side. This of course is not that the missing are unorthodox - rather the opposite. The dryness of soul so prevalent today affects those who profess much, but who do not like to be inconvenienced at some point of duty or sacrificial giving which is usually expected if one is to stand by the pastor.

The chill which comes to the minister is not easy to describe, but it is certainly felt acutely. just as one stands in a place of exposure on a wind-swept heath or on a rocky shore in winter and gradually feels the penetration of the cold, so in the life of a pastor there comes this terrible sense of forsakenness and chill of heart. It pervades his whole being with the sweep of desolation of spirit. There are moments when he is like Elijah who cried, '. . . I, even I only, am left . . .' (I Kings 19:10). Elijah has been a fit subject for an oratorio by Felix Mendelssohn who has portrayed this scene with dramatic music and interpretation. An artist likewise could unfold the story on canvas with brush and paint. It is a very human story and true to life. To be alone and to feel the desolation of spirit is an acute, spiritual experience.

How did this sense of loneliness come to Elijah? He appears as a prophet with a background of strength and power. He stands out with boldness and courage in a trying hour of history. He was recognized as a man of God and, later, John the Baptist was his counterpart. His speech was vigorous and biting when he rebuked the forces of evil and faced the priests of Baal at Mount Carmel. His majestic bearing and strength of conviction were evident when he fought against idolatry and proved that God was sovereign in the test of the offerings. The God who answered by fire was indeed the God of Elijah! Yet the man who stood alone for God at Mount Carmel found himself chilled by loneliness under the tree of Horeb. The threat of a Jezebel, the aftermath of struggle with its reaction of despair, brought Elijah to this feeling' Physical weariness, forgetfulness of past triumphs, and a jaded mind brought on this loneliness.

Elijah said, ". . . I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." The dread mood of being discouraged had eaten into his soul, and as he looked around he engaged in a

common fallacy of counting numbers. There was now no crowd to support him and it seemed that the enemy had won a victory. Is not this the way of evil? A man of God today finds he is working on to the point of physical exhaustion and mental weariness. It is then that spiritual loneliness begins to assert itself. There is so much to do and a pastor begins to imagine that he alone is responsible to do this work. Thus a discouraged man looks within and finds no help in himself. He feels very much alone. It is the loneliness of frustration and futility. God's answer to Elijah was, "Yet I have left me seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (I Kings 19: 18). Here is the loneliness of discouragement. A dispirited man is an easy prey to loss of heart. But God brings hope and courage again in the knowledge of His presence and an unseen host.

Elijah knew the chill of loneliness through his spiritual struggle for the faith. Our Lord also knew loneliness. Frederick W. Robertson (1816-1853) who ministered in the Church of England has a striking sermon on this theme. He points out the loneliness of the spirit in his isolation through character. Here Jesus stands out above and distinct from all others. In that elevation of character there was loneliness and it was manifested through His life and eventually in His death on the cross. But there is the other kind of loneliness-the loneliness of the spirit. "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:31-32). While there is a loneliness to be pitied, there is also the loneliness to be respected when we see the grandeur of the character and spirit of Jesus. There are times when the minister will have his hour of loneliness linked to his office as well as to his character.

Take the ministry as it is today. The many demands now made upon a leader in the church are exacting. As it has been said - he enters upon a high office and ends by running an office! This is the peril and danger of the ministry, it is true. Whether as pastor, administrator, counselor, visitor, or preacher-the minister has responsibilities which force him into a lonely position. As he engages in these he finds himself alone. He is a pastor and thus will seek to shepherd the flock. This involves visitation in homes and in hospitals as well as counseling individuals in need. He bears the inner secrets of families and is forced to share their troubles and trials. These are not only spiritual and moral but may impinge upon the economic, physical, and social relationships of life. The pastor is not a physician but he is often treated as one by those who think he should have the answer and the solution to their problems and difficulties. All this tends to isolation of spirit as confidences cannot be broken and secrets dare not be passed on to others. A strange loneliness comes over him. Why should he have to carry these burdens? Why should he be caught in the mesh of unsavory and intimate details of moral life? He may spend a sleepless night in the afterglow of an interview which has drained him dry.

The loneliness of the spiritual life is real to the preacher who wrestles with the truth in his study and in preparation for the pulpit. Knowing that he has to lead others and that others will look up to him for guidance and help, there is the awesome feeling that he is caught in this tension between the inquirer and his own inadequate knowledge. Yet he is supposed to say something or proclaim some word from God which is expected of him, seeing he is in that position of preacher! Especially is this true for the beginner, the man in his first pastorate. He has engaged in study for some years or has had some experience of life in business or in the service of his country. Nevertheless, he is a novice in some respects. Experience of life is one thing, but to be expected to answer the questions of life from the Bible is another. Here are limitations of years and experience. The answers expected are those which can only come through the fullness of the years as a Christian. People will be there on Sunday in the sanctuary and in effect will say, "If you have any word of encouragement for the people, let us hear it" (Acts 13:15).

Fortunately there is help for the preacher at this point. Lacking as he is in years of experience of life, he has at his hand the experiences of others. Turning to the Bible he will find that every type of person walks its pages. Every gust of temptation known to man is indicated.

Every moral failure as well as victory is set forth in telling prose and imaginative story. The preacher can take heart, and by study and meditation bring forth the exegesis and exposition of the sacred page. God has promised to bless that Word above all else Moses stood alone as he saw the bush aflame and led a nation out of slavery. Abraham stood alone in a city of idolatry and became a pilgrim of the spirit. Daniel dared to stand alone against totalitarian despotism and dared to make known his faith. John the Baptist stood alone in rebuking sin in high places.

Paul the dauntless stood alone in fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus and faced Caesar and the might of Rome by seeing the King immortal, invisible. Here is where we can find our loneliness an enrichment. We keep company day by day with the truly great of the ages through the Bible and we see how these are still related to life in our day. By study and in imagination we put ourselves in their place and in the place of our people and bring the one to the other. This is a loneliness not to be feared but welcomed.

There will be times when loneliness will overtake us when we know we have to speak out against evil and vested interests. Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms knew this when he finally said, "Here I stand, so help me, God." The issues were clear and right stood over against wrong.

Truth faced error. A man has to take his stand. As Peter also said in his day, "Whether it be right -in the sight of God.... For we cannot but speak . . ." (Acts 4:19-20). Conscience bends to the lordship of Christ in everything for the preacher. Whatever the cost in a community, we stand for the right as far as we can understand it and interpret it to others. The preacher stands alone on many moral issues. He is not supposed to engage in politics, and rightly. Yet he must speak out on moral issues which often touch political and social implications. He cannot tell his congregation how to vote in the sense of choosing the candidate, but he may encourage them to discern the relevance of certain issues before them which demand a Christian exercise his conscience and choose for the highest moral ends of society. The evils of gambling, drinking indulgences, and immorality are ever with us. There are other problems in our complex age - driving speeds and killings on highways, racial distinctions, religious monopolies, labor difficulties, and other issues which are matters of conscience.

Loneliness is inescapable and the pastor has his share. His lot is such that he is a man among men and yet a man set apart. His office and its function tend to isolate him, if not in a physical sense, in a spiritual way. His thoughts and brooding over the life and work of his congregation produce a feeling of loneliness. He will talk about plans and programs with his officers and people, yet there will always be a certain wistfulness and withdrawal in reflecting upon the implications of the work to be attempted. Who is sufficient for these things? A pastor is then walled in and the door is closed. This is a mark of our calling and vocation. It cannot be otherwise. We are men "set apart" by Christ. Our Lord has ordained us. We are not the same as others in the church, however much we talk about it. Ministry and function imply separateness and therefore loneliness in spirit. As our Lord knew this solitary way, so His servants follow Him still.

When trouble and sorrow come to people in the community and in the congregation the pastor is called to bring comfort and succor. How often this is done; but when the pastor himself suffers bereavement or loss, usually there is no one to call upon him and no one to minister to him. He is alone in that hour. His family difficulties with his own children growing up and the economic stress in the manse as well as in other homes are not the subjects of concern by others. The pastor is very much alone except he has a loving wife whose understanding and sharing lifts the load. The pastor must bring strength and comfort on Sunday to his people, but who brings this to him? He proclaims the gospel which delivers the sinner from sin, even as he faces fierce temptation in his own heart and finds the struggle a lonely "Gethsemane" without any other knowing.

Joseph Parker of the City Temple, London, knew something of the loneliness of losing his life-partner. In a letter (the original is in the author's possession) to the Reverend H. R. Harris he wrote. "My Dear Friend and Comrade in lonely sorrow. Thank you. I am not reconciled. My faith is drowned in my distress. Give me time. Why was such a glory extinguished? Ever yours,

Joseph Parker." In contrast, think of Arthur J. Gossip, Aberdeen, Scotland, who, after the death of his wife, was in his pulpit the following Sunday as usual and brought to his people that memorable sermon, "When Life Tumbles in, What Then?"

When Paul was in the city of Corinth (Acts 18:9), he faced opposition and danger from those who reviled him. When he was perplexed and alone, the Lord said to him one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack you to harm you; for I have many people in this city." Paul, alone and discouraged, stayed on a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among the people.

The promised presence of Christ is the help needed in the hours of loneliness. Winston Churchill spoke of the finest hour of his fellow countrymen when they stood alone in an hour of crisis for the world. There is the loneliness of defeat when we have let down our standards and when we know we have failed. How miserable a time that can be, but when we have endured the test and come through, then how uplifted we feel in the strength given us.

Nowhere is loneliness more felt than in the ministry. The nature of the life and task given to a man in this respect brings its lonely hours. He meditates alone to find the secrets of God to communicate to others. He walks alone to bring help and encouragement to those in suffering and in sorrow. He hears alone the secrets of the human heart and dares not share these with any others-not even his wife and partner-as they are inviolate through confession and confidence. He suffers alone when he fails with people. He is keenly sensitive alone when certain disciples of Christ turn back and walk no more with him. He agonizes alone when the truth proclaimed does not bring its results in converted lives. He endures the silence alone when he is baffled and perplexed in the providences of God.

Others can choose their friends but a pastor cannot always be free to so choose. A congregation gives scant liberty to be intimate with those we would like. There are restrictions and boundaries. Certainly a married man has his wife and family so that he is compensated somewhat. Not all are like Phillips Brooks of Boston who, as the outstanding Episcopalian preacher of America, knew the loneliness of a life without marriage. In his later years, and after the death of his mother, he realized that his future days were to be spent in increasing loneliness. He yearned for human affection. He admitted to a friend that the mistake of his life lay here, that he had not married. In other happy homes he seemed to resent the happiness expressed. More than once he is known to have said, "The trouble with you married men is that you think no one has been in love but yourselves; I know what love is; I have been in love myself." Out of that loneliness came consolation to others as he looked on the brighter side of things. In one of his sermons he said, "Sometimes life grows so lonely. The strongest men crave a relationship to things more deep than ordinary intercourse involves. They want something profounder to rest upon-something which they can reverence as well as love; and then comes God."

Call ye life lonely? Oh, the myriad sounds
Which haunt it, proving how its outer bounds
Join with eternity, where God abounds!

Brooks, like other bachelor-ministers known, brought something greater than themselves to those who needed strength and peace in the lonely hours of life.

What about the loneliness like that of George Matheson's? As a would-be minister at the beginning of his life-work he was stricken with blindness. The story is well known that his fiance left him alone thereafter. It has been questioned, but the fact remains that Matheson in his blindness wrote the famous hymn, "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." He was left alone, but as James Reid has put it so well, "alone, yet not lonely." This is what counts. A certain amount of solitude is necessary for the development and growth of the soul. We are made for fellowship. Even though we must find solitude for the good of the soul's health, we need not escape from God. To be alone-with God yes. But to be lonely-without God-no. Our loneliness is the

experience in which we find God in fullness. The man of God will find the chill of loneliness will be replaced by the glow of the divine presence.

A modern doctor of Switzerland, and a Christian at that, has written well and truly about man's inner tensions and disturbances. In his work *Escape From Loneliness* Paul Tournier has spoken of the loneliness which every doctor discovers in modern man. Even the socially-accepted and jovial fellows who entertain others with their tales of mirth are often within themselves not what they seem. At the root of this he sees man's sin and revolt against God. This, of course, is not the cause of a Christian man's loneliness but something else. A forgiven man has found peace with God and therefore is no longer lonely. But the very nature of his life and work as a pastor can make him lonely-when shut in and up to God there is a corresponding withdrawal from people. Is that why we are lonely?

Solitude is a necessity for the pastor. He must come apart and be alone. Working with people and often with crowds there is a constant drain upon his resources both physical and spiritual. The pastor has to meet the loneliness of his people and help them to find release. There are souls which cannot be alone; yet others find loneliness when they wish to avoid it and it hurts them. They find discomfort and insecurity. They are afraid of their own thinking, and often claustrophobia or agoraphobia upsets them; the fear of being, shut in and the fear of the crowd. In times of sorrow people feel acutely this sense of loneliness. Then the pastor has to bring them help even though he knows loneliness also. He might have his own private sorrow and heartache and yet this would not be known to those who expect him to help them. We need not run away from ourselves. There is a place of quiet rest, "near to the heart of God. . . ."

The late Edwin R. Roberts of Princeton Seminary used to stress this need to "rest awhile." One Sunday as he sat in a church worshipping, the pastor concluded his announcements with these words, "I am not going to take a vacation this summer. The devil never does." It was with the greatest effort that our friend resisted the temptation to rise and ask, "Who is your example, anyway, the devil?" But rather than pose that question, Ed Roberts went home and reread the gospels to find out the attitude of Jesus on this matter. He discovered that in the record which is limited to about three years of active ministry, there were mentioned ten periods of retirement.

In addition to the nightly rest and the sabbath rest, Jesus punctuated His ministry with seasons of refreshing. How much more should we!

To Jesus rest was change. After the busy days with crowds, the strain of the burning sun, the streets and highways with needy people, Jesus took His apostles apart to rest awhile. Change is rest and rest is change. William Ewart Gladstone, once the British prime minister, had four desks in his study: one for literature, one for correspondence, one for political affairs, and one for his favorite studies. He would spend one hour or two of concentrated work at one, and then shift to another. Here he would refresh his mind by picking up a new set of problems. Winston Churchill took up the hobby of painting and published a book entitled *Painting as Pastime*. The concern of the book is not with excellence in art, but with painting as a pastime; enjoyment is the aim. Churchill said, "To be really happy and really safe, one ought to have at least two or three bobbies, and they must be real. Change is the master key. A man can wear out a particular part of his mind by continually using it and tiring it, just the same way as he can wear out the elbows of his coat. There is, however, this difference between the living cells of the brain and the inanimate articles; one cannot mend the frayed elbows of a coat by rubbing the sleeves or shoulders; but the tired parts of the mind can be rested and strengthened, not merely by rest, but by using other parts. It is not enough merely to switch off the lights which play upon the main and ordinary field of interest; a new field of interest must be illuminated. It is no use saying to the tired 'mental muscles' - if one may coin such an expression - 'I will give you a good rest,' 'I will go for a long walk,' or 'I will lie down and think of nothing.' The mind keeps busy just the same. If it has been weighing and measuring, it goes on weighing and measuring. If it has been worrying, it goes on worrying. It is only when new cells are called into activity, when new stars become the lords of the ascendant, that relief, repose, refreshment are afforded." Rest is change.

The Dragnet of Discouragement

"Often take counsel in temptations, and deal not roughly with him that is tempted; but give him comfort, as thou wouldest wish it to be done to thyself." THOMAS A KEMPIS

"And out of darkness came the hands, That reach thro' nature, molding men." ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow ... ?"

LAMENTATIONS 1: 12.

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL the servant of God has been one subject to moods. Whatever his strength and structure of character and person, there has been with this the area of weakness. Here the devil can tempt him and at this point he is most vulnerable. Our Lord told the parable (Matthew 13:47-50) in which He depicted the fishermen gathering in their catch with its strange assortment of fish. Some were good and some were bad and thus there had to be a separation and removal. No man's ministry is without this experience. Think of the multitude of interests and pursuits, the demands upon time and strength, the hopes and fears which beset a pastor. Truly the good and the bad are mixed in any given day. Richard Baxter, in *The Reformed Pastor*, speaks of the pastor meeting the temptation to worldly-mindedness or gluttony or drunkenness, but discouragement is a subtle trial of the best of men. Part of our work is to comfort the disconsolate and to settle the peace of our people's souls. But what can be done when we are caught in the snare of this mood?

Elijah the prophet is a notable example of a man caught and found in the throes of this spirit. In I Kings 17, after the victory over the priests of Baal at Carmel, Elijah is found in his reaction under a juniper tree. He is no longer the strong, vigilant warrior for the Lord. He has allowed despondency to enter his heart. After the glow of battle and its victory, he has let down.

Strange as it may seem, there used to be in Scotland a friendly society with the title of "Order of the Juniper Tree." This desert shrub grew in the country of Sinai and the Jordan Valley of Israel.

From about ten feet in height it gave shelter to the traveler from the blazing sun of the desert. Elijah was relieved to find this tree for his shelter. His trouble was not merely the blazing sun after a tiresome journey; it was his mood of soul which bothered and troubled him most. To think he had defeated the heathen gods by the power of the one true living God, and now he was dispirited. Why? The fight against idolatry had turned into a flight from an evil woman, Jezebel.

She had sent word that she was determined to get rid of him, once and for all. His life was in danger. Think of the disappointment of Elijah. After victory he had to run! He is now distracted and, in discouragement, the dreariness of his lot causes him to see things out of focus. He acts like a man who has lost heart. He tells himself that he is a failure and therefore there is no use going on. He is caught in the vice of thinking he is forsaken and alone.

Perhaps Elijah was a man of extremes. From the shining heights of triumph at Carmel to the lonely shade of a tree, the moods of the soul swing back and forth. The heartache and sting of a bitter experience is there. The prophet thinks or imagines that he is defeated. Of course he was tired in the reaction of strain. He needed rest and food. God sent the food and provided rest. He also got his eyes open to see what God was doing and how God was working. He ended his sojourn by renewing his strength and returning to his work and mission. He did not quit after all. He was in danger of giving up the ministry to which God had called him, but he was saved from that. To feel beaten and down, to have bitter disappointments, to run away, is not

the way of escape after all. There were others like Elijah who ran away.

Think of Jacob running away from his brother Esau. There was a man who had done wrong and whose conscience aroused him. Fear filled his mind and his flight was full of foreboding and seeming disaster. Deceit was at the basis of this mood. He had deceived his father Isaac and his brother Esau in family relationships. He had acted deceitfully with his father-in-law Laban in business dealings. Running away as Jacob did brought him finally to Bethel where on the wind-swept moor and in the dream of the ladder he is found of God. Ministers can live a life of deceit and keep up appearances when there are the hidden sins of the spirit never dealt with. As Jacob found, God was on his track. Francis Thompson, in "The Hound of Heaven," has eloquently expressed it - this for the preacher:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed slopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
A down Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat - and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet -
All things betray them who betrayest Me.'

Another character who ran away was Jonah. He had been given a commission to go to the heathen with the message of God. He disobeyed and went in the opposite direction, but in his flight away from his duty, God caught up with him in a strange and unusual way. He finally was brought back from seeming death out of the big fish and sent again on the mission. The Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time. How gracious God is in giving an erring servant a second opportunity! This time Jonah proved his loyalty in the ministry committed to him in the obedience of faith. His arrival at Nineveh caused the city to be moved by his appearance as one risen from the dead and his sermon resulted in a multitude repenting and turning to God.

Many men in the ministry have run away from their duty. The pathway of duty is the only safe place. Duties are ours and events are God's. In that way we can expect God to honor our witness and bring His message to others. It is always an honored engagement for a pastor to be present on those Sundays when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. Where it is the custom every Sunday, then a pastor may be absent from time to time during the year, but where the custom is for infrequent communion services, then the pastor has his duty to be with his people. The same would be true during the week. Sometimes it would be a change for a pastor and his wife to attend a symphony concert or some such cultural outlet, but if such an opportunity came on the night of the church's midweek service it would not be becoming for the pastor to please himself. He has then to deny that opportunity and give himself willingly and joyfully to his people in the church's service. Conflicts there are in many areas of life for a pastor. A price has to be paid in saying 'no' to what might be legitimate and proper, but which is not always expedient in the light of duty. Others in life are directed by this sense of duty-the serviceman for his country, the fireman, the nurse, and the doctor -why not a pastor?

That we are men "under orders" is brought out in all the demands made upon us. John Mark was a young, inexperienced missionary when he set out hopefully with Saul and Barnabas. The missionary journey went forward with expectancy and zeal for a while, but later John Mark

defected from his goal and mission. He turned back and the reason is not clear. Was it because of the dangers of robbers and wild beasts in the uplands of Galatia? Was it the rigors of the cold and disease found in those highlands? Was it incompatibility in finding it difficult to get on with the Apostle Paul? Was it home sickness? Who knows what the reason was, except that it happened. Discouraged he must have been at some point, hence his homeward look and action.

Poor John Mark has been castigated and derided as a coward and a failure. However, we must see him as a novice at the beginning and one who was not adequately prepared for his task. Later, Paul would come to appreciate him and write to "bring John Mark for he is profitable to me in the ministry . . ." (II Timothy 4: 11). It was Barnabas, however, who saved his nephew. Barnabas is well named "a son of consolation." He acted as the Holy Spirit acted as the paraclete-the one called alongside to help. Thus he stood by John Mark in his hour of depression and failure. He did not allow him to give up. He restored his faith and recalled him to his ministry. Mark was an "Under-rower," an attendant, an assistant. The temptation to quit is always with us. Circumstances without, fears within, the devil tempting and luring, and a sensitive spirit will bring a man to the place of failure in this regard.

An article appeared recently in The Saturday Evening Post, in which a young minister wrote of quitting the sacred vocation to which he had been called. His writing revealed that he had a strong sense of duty and a high commitment to his task. He sought to express this in his straightforward speaking and his challenging preaching. His congregation evidently did not make much response and gradually the young man became dispirited and disillusioned. He reasoned that what he presented should have brought results, but his listeners were preoccupied with the even tenor of their lives and resisted any change in their habits of life. Business, the social round, family concerns, and the enjoyment of better things of material order-these mitigated against any idea of disturbance or change. In his eyes his people were not concerned with the rest of the world or the idealistic challenge to a venture some; religious life. Out of this came tension with his officers and congregation, until gradually he decided the church was not the place for him. He was led to demit his work and seek for involvement in social action where he could minister to people in their social and material needs. We could easily misjudge this man and can only assess what has happened in the light of what he has told us in the article.

It is true that there are people in the churches who do not wish the status quo disturbed. They are comfortable in Zion. Ease has overtaken them. The idea of the cross and cross-bearing in self-denial and a venturesome Christianity is not for them. That is for the pastor or the missionary. They have become spectators and sit on a balcony looking at the events on the roadway of life. Nevertheless, the pastor who knows he is called of God to minister the gospel should be aware of this upsetting situation. That does not give him an excuse to demit the ministry. He may have to walk alone. He could be like an Amos crying out against the sins of society and be very unpopular. He could find himself, like John the Baptist, "a voice for God." If he seeks to assess the success or failure of his ministry in terms of worldly success by statistics or responses, then he is bound to find gloom and discouragement overtake him. God's servants in every age have had to contend with this factor. Our Lord pointed this out even as He spoke in parables and quoted from Isaiah: ". . . seeing, they see not, and bearing, they hear not, neither do they understand " (Matthew 13:14, 15). The truth does not always get in and down and fails to come up in a harvest. We fail with many people. We touch some and again we never get to the hearts of many. Ours is a limited ministry at the best. But we need never give up in despair.

We are working with souls "in the valley of soul-making." Our task is to witness and bear testimony to the truth. John the Baptist worked no miracles but all that he said concerning Jesus was true (cf. John :10:41). That is an epitaph to think about.

The fact that a man has publicly made known why he demitted the ministry has elicited many responses. Some sympathize with this unknown brother. Others inform Mm-and the whole church -that they have felt like it many times. Who hasn't been up against the obstacles and handicaps to the divine calling? Has not our idealism been besmirched again and again? Have not people in the congregation been unkind, devilishly critical, censorious, gossipy, cruel in

judgment, and have not young men and their wives been broken in spirit by the harsh ways of those who have not given them a chance? In addition to those like this there are also retired ministers and their wives who still bold on to their status in a church or selfishly intrude into the life of the congregation-although they have long since retired! Many churches are in an unhappy state through this and many are the pastors and their wives who suffer in silence through this treatment which is not only unethical but unkind. Whatever the trial and the provocation found by any minister of the gospel, he still needs to know that Christ is with him and the rigors of his calling are not to be seen as something that should not be. He should see them as part of the trials and tribulations of one who must follow his Master.

Here the question is raised again about the calling of the ministry. It is not a profession. No one should engage in this except God has called him. A love for God and a love for people are necessary. But people today often look askance at the man who talks in these terms. After all, members of the churches themselves have to be fully equipped by training and study for their own professional tasks. The minister must not be behind them in his standards. Not that everyone will have the same equipment. Each church has its own standards for training and ordination. Nothing but the best is good enough for Christ. He can and does use those who have been deprived of a full education and providentially fashions such men for dynamic service.

Our age, with its scientific emphasis and its open doors of education to all without distinction, is one that should find the minister equipped with a broad general culture so that his specialized training will have relevance and depth. We live in a world of two cultures, as C. P. Snow has discussed in his Rede Lectures at Oxford, *The Two Cultures*.

If a man is dispirited because of the lack of response among his people; his seeming failure to arouse the community; the sense of futility in his work; the inferior complex that he is not educated as well as some other man; or the inadequacy he feels when men boast of scientific knowledge and achievement - then let him know that he is to be a man of God. It is this more than anything else which sets him apart from others. We may minor in many areas of life, but here is the major for us. Strangely enough this is the one title we shun if we are honest. It smacks of something like being "holier than thou." It links us with a medieval picture of an ecclesiastic who is removed from true life and who is despised because of seeming hypocrisy. Yet with all the jibes and sneers at this estimate, and with our own natural shrinking from this impossible height, this is our goal. If we are to overcome discouragement it can only be in this disciplined way of the man of God. All Christians may find this life possible but the servant of God is charged with this standard above all others. For this he has been called and to this he has committed his life. W. E. Sangster, beloved minister of the Methodist Church in England (1900-1960), was a luminous example of this. His life is unfolded in an outstanding biography written by his son Paul, but written in outline as autobiography by the father before he died. Here is God's plenty in which a man lays bare his soul in its soul-struggle for saintliness. It was said of John Fletcher of Madeley that his whole life was a sermon." This was also true of Sangster. During the last two years of His life his voice was silenced by an incurable disease. It was during that period he achieved much for the spiritual life of his people.

Discouragement comes unexpectedly in every life. The man of God is prone to yield. Blue Monday is never far away and the weapon of discouragement is one the devil wields effectively. Only by being a man of God dare we hope for victory over this.

When a man knows he has been called by the Holy Spirit and has within him the assurance that nothing can shake that conviction, then he is fortified against the demon of discouragement.

To quit the ministry is not for the man who sees in it a privilege and honor by which he serves his Lord and Master. Wasn't it William Carey of India who told his sons that anything less than a missionary would be a come-down and any office such as a government envoy or ambassador was not to be compared to the high office of a representative of Christ? Not that one could not be (and should be) a representative of Christ in any government position, but only some could serve God in that other position.

Perhaps one of the difficulties is what is called the maceration of the minister, a word used

by Professor Joseph Sittler in his Yale Lectures on Preaching, 1959. In the book *The Ecology of Faith*, he pleads for the reinstatement of today's minister in the proper context of the church and ministry. The word "maceration" implies "to chop up into pieces" and it is this unsought-for condition which mars many in the ministry. Life is so eroded by the trivial and the disordered hours that there is no fullness of life and a consequent lessening of power. To find proper balance and concentration of the things that matter most is the crying need today. An ordered life, ordered days, ordered studies, issuing in ordered worship and work-this is the salvation of the pastor from the trivia of busy-ness which is not necessarily the business of his Lord.

To "maintain the spiritual glow" is a priority in the midst of secular pressures. John Baillie, noted theologian of Scotland, gives us a glimpse of his habits in his study. There was the big uncluttered desk, the big leather chair - one for writing, the other for reading and brooding. But there was also in that room a prayer - desk by the window with its little pile of well-worn versions of the Scriptures and devotional books. There he was sure to be found alone in worship and thought. That constant and regular habit of devotion was the secret of the holy and humble heart of this man whose days were full. He had learned that in the midst of the pressures of modernity there was one necessity and that was to sit at the feet of the Master and there commune. It was the same John Baillie who wrote the erudite Gifford Lectures entitled *The Sense of the Presence of God*, almost his last will and testament. His little book of prayer is used universally and *A Diary of Private Prayer* is a treasured volume for those who have discovered its worth.

There is no royal road to victory. The surrender of our wills to Christ is the stepping-stone. But here on the threshold is the demand made upon us to yield not alone our possessions but ourselves. The sins of the spirit which easily over-take us bring their blight. We are prone to yield too easily to the seductions of the spirit of the age, which is a selfish spirit and a self-seeking spirit. Whatever brings indulgence and ease is there. Our need is to be purged of all base desire. Selfish ambition can thwart the work of God. Censorious criticism of others is a deterrent. Jealousy and spleen can blot out the vision of God, Let anyone be willing to be pliable in the bands of God, humble and without self-seeking in his life, and there is a condition into which God can move with His presence and power. Such a handing over of the life to God as "a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1, 2) brings the experience of the spiritual service which is desired.

The Smear of the Secular

"In recent years life for me has become a little difficult" SIR ALEXANDER FLEMING.

"He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,

This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldest fain arrest;
Machinery just meant
To Live thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed" ROBERT BROWNING

IT WAS IN a theological seminary that the Word was used in an acute form. A student who had given up much of the life of today was disturbed. He had known exciting and dangerous missions in World War II. He had found financial rewards for his skill in the post-war era. He had wife and family and a comfortable home and success in front of him. Then he underwent a profound spiritual experience and out of it he dedicated his life to the ministry of the gospel. This involved giving up all his affluent circumstances and taking his wife and two children to live in the confined space of a seminary suite on a campus for three years. At the end of one year he was disappointed. What was the trouble? Nothing about the studies as such; the teaching was excellent and the challenge was there to train and get ready for the work ahead. But there was something missing, something lacking. Suddenly he burst out with the words to the head of that seminary, "You have secularized it!" This was the indictment of a zealous, dedicated man who had sacrificed much to discipline himself to Christian ministry. Behind this was a serious blight within the center of training.

The secularization of the sacred is a peril very common in our generation. We are under the pressure of a secular culture and its demands upon the spirit of a Christian are severe and unrelenting. In the theological seminary there was a tacit understanding that men would be trained for the ministry, which implied that they would be trained in the religious or spiritual life. This was expressed in the founding principles when the theological college was instituted. Some of the intentions of the founders speak thus of training men in piety. That word is no longer used, or if it is, there is a laugh with it as if to dismiss this as irrelevant to us today. Yet, we know that the man is his message, the servant of God is the *sen-non*. Hence, the need to be pious-God-fearing. We see how piety in the true sense of that word was the most important element in a man's training. Intellectual and theological discipline, yes; but intertwined there should be the cultivation of the spiritual life.

Theological seminaries have courses in the basic disciplines of the Biblical languages, theology, ethics, history, Christian education, and practical theology. Some give courses in the English Bible, although it is taken for granted that men have a familiarity with this before entering. There are very few places which offer a course in the actual discipline of the spiritual life. Prayer and the development of the interior life is left to the individual. Apart from a chapel service and an annual retreat for devotion: men may pass through their training without being exposed to the practical knowledge of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The cry of the man who said, "You have secularized it!" was the word of a wounded soul, one that had come expecting and longing for a richer, fuller experience of the grace of God and finding not bread but a stone. The particular student left that seminary seeking another where his needs might be

met. How tragic that in the place where the spiritual life should have been seminal there was barrenness and death! Many young men have been disillusioned, both concerning the nature of the theological training and the spiritual level maintained. Too many muffled sounds and muted words are heard in the seminaries. Of course, the theological leaders might retort that they cannot do much in three years and the kind of young man who enters is not always amenable to change and refuses to be molded in certain ways.

There is the secularization which comes from any easy acceptance of standards which are deemed "worldly-wise." Our generation is one that seeks for success in every realm. The "successful" man is he who reaches a high place which is set over against the lesser lights who are not so fortunate. He is the student who takes the highest grades in examinations, the one who never knows what it is to struggle or fail in a subject. He is the man whose path is easy and secure, whose gifts and ability assure him openings and opportunities to find work and avenues of service.

It is otherwise with the man without ten talents but whose devotion to Christ and his dedication to the will of God is to be respected. He finds the temptation of the secular a reality. How is he to get a pastorate? What conditions should be set as a basis for work within the church? There are the items of salary and pension, not to mention many fringe benefits nowadays. It is embarrassing in a way that a minister has to talk about these things in the light of the idealism which prompted him into the ministry. The call of the Divine Spirit and the providence which led him out of other work and ways of life into this "sacred" calling seem to say he should be taken care of financially. What is he to expect in remuneration after four years of college or university training, plus three years in theological seminary? The doctor or the lawyer and other professional men, especially the scientist, can demand and secure higher returns financially after their many years of training and sacrifice - Why not the minister? It is here the vision of the servant of God arises to remind the minister that he walks in another way. He may or may not be well-off as far as these things go, but he must refuse to be a man who measures a call in terms of money. To do so is to be undone spiritually. The secular measurement of life in dollars or pounds is bound to be a temptation and the battle must be fought out alone with God.

Another area of secularization is where the spiritual emphasis is muted and the standards lowered in morals. Every Christian is a minister or servant of God, whether in business, politics, teaching, nursing, medicine, law-whatever the realm of involvement. The minister who is a pastor is not different from his people except that they have relieved him from these pursuits in order that he should spend all his time in study and research, in prayer and devotion, so that he can come to them week by week and bring them reinforcement of their faith and encouragement for their witness in the wider spheres of life. For example, it is not for the pastor or the official church bodies to dictate to the state or the government how they should run their offices. But it is his responsibility to bring the light of the Eternal and the teaching of the Word of God upon his Christian followers in worship, so that they will go back to the arena of politics or business and there express their Christian convictions. They - not the pastorate the church in action in the community and in the state and in the nation. The pastor's task is to reinforce their faith and inspire them to go out as witnesses and martyrs for Christ in those life situations. Not that the pastor cannot vote or express his own personal convictions about the issues of the day wherein moral principles are at stake, but he has his own special work and ministry to do. No one else can do his work. He should not attempt to do the work which many others can do much better and with greater competence.

Walter Judd, former Congressman and a Congregational Church medical missionary to China before entering politics, has spoken plainly about this. He was a Republican member of the House of Representatives from Minnesota from 1943 to 1962. According to Judd, "It is not the business of the Christian Church or its agencies to try to run the State." The churches' major "business," he said, is to "challenge and inspire Christian men and women to take Christian principles into every walk of life-including, politics - and put them into practice." This is salutary when churches and church agencies and councils of churches have tried to interfere at this

point.

Another illustration comes out of the writer's ministry. In one of the churches served, a member has been the public prosecutor in the county and the city. Surely it would not be the pastor's task to tell this well-trained and qualified lawyer and attorney how to run his office. But when this man comes to public worship and takes part in the work of the church he should bear words of instruction and prayer from his pastor to lift him up to God's throne where he will be reminded of the eternal law and justice mixed with mercy. Out of that experience of worship he will be fortified in his faith and fitted to return to his office to grapple with the decisions which arise out of the administration of the law. The prosecuting attorney is the Christian in this instance involved in the secular society of which we are a part and there witnessing to Christ through his work. The pastor must not secularize his message to tell the lawyer what to do and become mixed up in the politics of his day. Here is the distinction needing to be clarified today. Too many men in the ministry are blighted by the secular because they spend their time in these matters when the weightier matters of the gospel and the Christian life are neglected. A pastor must not only be teacher and guide to his people; he must also be an example in devotion.

The Christians at Corinth in Paul's day had their problems. In that miasma of foul and stifling lowered standards which were linked with immorality and vice, the Christian found it difficult to stand alone. There was a phrase, "to Corinthianize." It would shock us to suggest that some in the ministry would be tempted here, yet it is so. Not that many have succumbed, in comparison to other callings in life. But we must confess that there have been casualties here. The seductions here are found not only in contacts with persons but through literature, leisure, television, and other films and plays. Our secular world has entered into the living room of the manse and a minister's children as well as himself are exposed to enticing suggestions on the screen of their imagination. The blight of the secular can besmirch the man of God at this point when he is saying, "I can choose what I see." Unfortunately we are using time and leisure as well as legitimate hours of recreation which may be justified in one's thinking; nevertheless the slow process of erosion of the spiritual has begun. How we need to watch here lest we fritter away the hours which never return! Satan may not get at us as "a roaring lion," but he could seduce us as "an angel of light" (cf. II Corinthians 3-1:14). The appeal to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (cf. Genesis 3:17 and I John 2:16) must never be minimized in our sheltered lives.

Leisure has raised many problems. Ministers are usually very busy men and one of our dangers is not only sloth, but overwork. Still we overdo in the long hours and our pride about a seven-day week in which we toil. This generation is finding leisure hours are more than ever. The forty-hour week in America and the freeing of Saturday and Sunday from labor brings two sabbaths together. More time is available for pleasure and other enticements, to the waste of the good and the best in life. Automation, medical science, and retirement opportunities contribute here. In the book *Philosophy of Recreation and Leisure* by Jay B. Nash the word is spelled out in terms of: "To use leisure intelligently and profitably is a final test of civilization." If this is true for the world at large, it is certainly true for the minister. He, too, benefits by this enlargement of life. During the ministry itself there are work demands but the minister can easily find time to use for himself. He does not punch the clock or record his time. He has privileges not given to others. His people trust him and rarely question what he does with his time. Visitation of the flock; the care of the sick, the round of meetings, and the services of worship - all these make the week full and demanding. Yet in the midst of it there are the opportunities when we can make time for ourselves and should legitimately be with our families and loved ones. Some men in their leisure spend hours in their favorite recreation, whether fishing, hunting, boating, and many other entrancing outlets. Money and time make up investments for self and the family. Nothing is wrong which is legitimate, yet the balance must be kept lest we are prone to overdo and be subject to criticism which robs our influence of its abiding place. We must never use and abuse our privileges in this regard to the detriment of our spiritual life.

The secular values of life corrode us when we fail to sense the need for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Here is the blight of the Christian church and certainly the one thing which binds the man of God. We can be correct in doctrine, orthodox in belief, zealous in work, devoted in spirit, yet be limited and warped because we have never entered into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ (Romans 15:29). This implies a meeting with God in Christ, a certain dealing with us by the Holy Spirit. Samuel Chadwick, that saint of Methodism, has testified how God touched him in his need: "The way I came is the way I know. That is why I send every seeker to the Word of God in dependence upon the Holy Spirit of Truth.... There is a Perfection that is definite, decisive, and determinative and there is a Perfection that is progressive, disciplinary, and ethical" (The Way to Pentecost). Even as Chadwick testified to this, others have throughout the whole church. Today's religious phenomenon is the rise of what is known as the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues" and that not only in the Pentecostal churches but in the Episcopal and other major denominations. Some look askance at this as an aberration; others see in it a manifestation of the Holy Spirit where there has been barrenness and deadness of spiritual life; while others look on questioning and wondering. God works in different ways and no one can dispute His presence and power. The test and measurement of any movement lies in the character produced and the service rendered. In this way time will indicate. It does point up, however, that the person and work of the Holy Spirit may be a neglected part of the life of the minister.

The New Testament is full of the disclosure of this empowering experience of God. The early apostles knew what it was at Pentecost. Christian believers and leaders throughout the centuries have testified to similar experiences. John Wesley on May 24, 1738, spoke of being in the meeting house at Aldersgate Street, London. His oft-quoted words from his journal are now among the monuments of English literature. He says, "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

D.L. Moody, America's outstanding evangelist spoke of walking down a street in New York one day when he was bathed in the love of God. He went back to preach some of the same messages but there was a difference. This came about through the prayers of two ladies who concentrated upon him. Present-day evangelist Billy Graham never claims to be more than an ordinary preacher, but think of the thousands who pray for him. What if in our churches our people concentrated in such a way to pray for the pastor? What miracles and demonstrations of power might result, who knows? Certainly the Holy Spirit is the secret of power and the secular is offset with His indwelling presence and unction from on high.

The snare of success is another means by which the spirit of evil can overtake us and seduce us. The measurement of this age is, How big is your work and how large are your statistics? Naturally, there are churches which have mushroomed through the population increases in certain areas. It is inevitable that the church then should grow. But a church can become too large until it loses its sense of fellowship and oneness among its people. Names and numbers are there but the identity of persons is often lacking. Ambition is a good thing when it means the spur to work hard and to serve with dedicated spirit. But ambition can be misdirected. A man's seeming success can come through a well-organized life and ambition.

Our age is an age of material standards, and success is measured in the church and in Christian service by the lure of statistics and numbers. Budgets, numbers, organizational knew one man who boasted he belonged to nineteen organizations and committees; and when questioned admitted he never attended the prayer meeting to pray for or with his pastor. The blind spot for many lies in seeking to stand well with or be thought of highly by officialdom or the leaders of the ecclesiastical powers that be! Perhaps doors will be closed against you or there is no promotion unless you play along with the machinery of ecclesiastical preferment. A study

made of one church leader shows how he is entangled in a score and more of organizations and committees beyond his own assigned task. How could such a man have the time or the adequacy for these errands except at the expense of the one prior task?

What counts is not man's approbation but God's blessing. Paul had nothing of this world's success to commend him when he was in touch with the Corinthian church. All he had was the claim of apostolic authority, God-given. In this he served and by it he measured all things. Sent by God-this was his conviction. Consider how he was derided because of his "bodily presence" (II Corinthians 10:7-11). Naturally the Greeks liked the man of striking stature and physical prowess. Paul did not measure up physically but no one will deny his spiritual qualifications. Thus Saint Augustine, (c. A. D. 400) speaks: "The honors of this world'. what are they but puff, and emptiness, and peril of falling?"

The Barter of Vision

"If one would be Christ-minded he must be missionary-minded, and one who is not this has no justification for calling himself a disciple of Christ. Are you missionary-minded? W. CRAHAM SCROGGIE

"The field is the world."

As Christ is universal, it will take a universe to interpret Him.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go . . ." JOHN 15:16.

". . . as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" JOHN 20:21.

"Go ye therefore, and teach [disciple] all nations ... " Mat 28:19.

"The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open oceans, calls up in the mind an arm of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it" ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

ONE OF THE tragedies of present-day church life is the professing follower of Christ whose horizon of interest and service is bounded by local and parochial points of view. "Where there is no vision, the people perish . . ." (Proverbs 29:18), and the individual is lost to the larger usefulness in the Kingdom of God if vision of world need is bartered away. Jesus Christ is the universal Savior and any conception of discipleship which does not march in step with that catholic ideal is defective and dull.

The Bible is replete with the story of one life warning against this temptation of bartering vision. Esau's experience recorded for our warning and instruction. This man, attractive in bearing, physically strong, energetic in spirit, readily responsive to need, is given the epitaph of "a profane person" (Hebrews 12:16). Profanity is not careless, crude speech, but the spirit which is accessible and easily trodden under foot by the things which are near at the expense of the things which are far away. The desecration of the inner sanctuary is accomplished by bartering and selling spiritual vision. In Esau's case it took "a mess of pottage." A simple meal, a moment's indulgence-and he was lost. Privilege, priesthood, princeliness, blessing, birthright-these were the things he despised when he set aside the universal and spiritual things for the present and temporal things.

The whole church is impoverished by the loss of the point of view of our Captain and File Leader, who "saw the multitudes ... as sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). There is a divine law in the ministry that we are channels of grace to men in the measure that we see and work from God's vantage ground. The servant of God is given a ministry for the whole church and he is sent to the whole world. John Wesley was right when he echoed Augustine's conviction:

I must have a whole Christ for my salvation:
I Must have a whole Bible for my staff:
I Must have a whole Church for my fellowship:

I Must have the whole World for my parish.

The last line should be engraved upon the conscience of every preacher, lest he become parochial and insular in outlook and service. Isaiah's experience (Isaiah 6) is that of the true missionary of the Evangel: first, the vision of God, then the vision of himself, and finally the vision of the world. Not as a visionary but as a missionary is the best service given.

The world to be possessed by our Lord is a world not bounded by race, nationality, color, or tongue. He saw the world as a harvest field from which He would gather in redeemed lives. His command and commission is to go into all the world and evangelize. The missionary enterprise, therefore, is the heart and life of the church. Without it the church would cease to be. And any local body called "church" is digging its own grave if it lacks this vision of the unfinished task. It is here that the minister is in deadly peril. He may be engrossed with the round of committees, organizations, and the other necessary things, but if he has not the spell of the world vision in his heart, how can he lead his people to the heights? ". . . as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (I Kings 20:40,). This text from the story of Ahab and Benbadad depicts the undoing of a man who was committed to a certain task, but who was so busy doing many things that the one thing was not done. It is to be feared that there are many "Mr. Fritterdays" in the ministry. But it is not only in the ministry that the day is frittered away with nonessentials. We need to sift the relation of many things competing for our time and strength. The church calendar is sometimes our condemnation. The church is cursed with parasite growths, drawing us away from our supreme task. The business of the church is to exercise a redemptive-missionary ministry. We must test everything we do by this one standard laid down by our Master.

When H. M. Stanley sought and found David Livingstone in central Africa, the latter said, "Tell me how the world is getting on." He labored within the confines of a dark continent, but his vision was unlimited. He left a mark as unique as it was enduring in the field of exploration, but his chief business was that of the missionary. He was not only a Christian man but one of the most powerful characters of modern times. He possessed moral courage and fearlessness, linked to an equal degree of sheer patience. Livingstone had the true Christian imperialism. So had John R. Mott of our generation. His biographer relates that the top of his desk in New York is covered with a plate of glass under which is spread a map of the world. It is renewed periodically to keep it up to date. In this Greatheart we have a man with a great idea incessantly at work on a world scale. Not everyone is permitted to travel the globe as can this missionary Nestor, but the pastor of a flock may do so with map and Bible in hand, and with informed and instructive surveys of literature keep pace with the worldwide movements of the church of God.

One of the tragedies of the ministry is the small-souled man who labors for a small group or thinks in terms of his sect or party. Too readily do we settle down with a minimum of outlook and a maximum of work. We need the range and horizon of the world-view to give ourselves effectively to service here. There is a spur and stimulus in the sweep of that far-flung horizon. Looking back over a generation we observe that the church in America and Great Britain has sent missionaries to the so-called heathen lands - to Africa, India, China, and Japan - but the millions of Europe near at hand have not been evangelized (except for a few small sporadic efforts). Why? Is it that the pastors and leaders of the denominations have been limited in vision and lacking in venture? Sometimes it is agreed that the church is committed to this and that, until it is not able to attempt work in any new field. But individuals and small groups have attempted this work with certain successes.

A bold, forwarding, marching policy would arouse the church and challenge the highest and best of our youth to dare and achieve in this service. Meantime, a small expeditionary force has labored in Europe, whose history needs no elucidation. If only the church had seized the initiative before days of revolution and war came to close the doors! We seem to have missed the opportunity of an allied strategy and continent-planning on a scale commensurate with the resources of the whole church. This shortsighted policy is but an example of the local church in

many instances. The ministry of our service struggles within the confines of a small radius known as "our parish," and often misses the universal sweep.

It is a striking phenomenon that those churches whose pastors have been baptized into the missionary spirit and whose people have been led thus are alive with spiritual passion and power. Names and places might be given, but that would make for invidious distinction and comparison. 'Facts are chieftains that winna ding, and durna be disputed,' is our Scottish epigram.

Go to the missionary church whose pastor has led the congregation in the knowledge and need of the whole world, and you will find that from there have gone out men and money and prayer, until the blessing overseas has been reflected in the work at the home base. Giving does not impoverish. At first, we do not read of the church forming a missionary society; there was but one missionary church! Every member found a place and an opportunity for service. The regions beyond and the cry from Macedonia did not pass unheeded, and the church missionary became the church catholic.

Truly, the bane of our day is a ministry devoid of this vision. When the church is more concerned with the round of the secular and easygoing, knowing nothing of sacrifice for the world, and a pastor is unable to lead his people in this way, how can we justify the name "Christian"? Not that a missionary-minded man neglects the home base; then, and only then, does he lose the consciousness of "home" and "foreign" missions to serve here with there. The missionary is not one who goes across the seas; he must first cross the street in his neighborhood and approach personally someone for his Lord. There are lost lives in Chicago as well as in China, in Toronto as well as in Tokyo, in Birmingham as well as in Bombay, in New York as well as in New Guinea, in Amsterdam as well as in Africa. It is not geography but Christology which makes the missionary pastor.

The winds of the world make answer,
They are whimpering to and fro;
What do they know of England,
Who only England know?

Nothing is more stimulating to a would-be preacher than to travel. We question the wisdom of a college and seminary course pursued in the same city or under the same control. Change is good (if the purse permits!); the medieval student had an advantage over us in traveling from place to place to hear the outstanding scholar in each subject. Alas that is not always possible today. But some travel is possible, necessary, if we are to be saved from isolationism, parochialism, denominationalism, even nationalism, run riot, in order to mix with others in different places and so learn human need through other lives and points of view. This broadens and widens the horizon of the mind and spirit, and it is in agreement with the Biblical revelation of the whole world waiting to hear the gospel. Insularity is a deadly peril to the preacher, whereas vision is his salvation.

"Let us grasp that supremacy of the moral issue for history and that finality of its settlement by Christ's death which makes Christianity 'Christian,'" says P. T. Forsyth, one of the prophets of the past generation. "We are failing to evangelize the world because of a failure in the only faith that overcame the world, the failure of a real living faith that the world has been overcome. There is no man great enough to force the missionary societies to realize that such failure in the Church is the source of all their difficulties, which are but symptoms, and beyond Boards. We have much religion in the churches which the pulpit reflects rather than leads. Our one lack at present is moral weight amid all our humane and ethical interest. And the deification of sacrifice (per se) will not give it: for sacrifice (as mere sacrifice) is morally neuter."

That is a noble thing, nobly said. Passion is the proof of compassion and the evangelization of the whole world is our task. It is not enough for us to live in a little world of our own; to the man of vision there is but one world, as there is but one imperative and one gospel.

One of the snares of modern church life is the emphasis upon philanthropy and amelioration

in the social life at the expense of the evangelical emphasis upon the redemption of the individual. It was this latter view which gave zeal and passion to the great missionary movements of an earlier generation. No one decries the social expression of the gospel in those places of need, but primarily the missionary compassion for other races is the chief thing. Missionary apathy is caused by a number of things, but the chief cause is the loss of vision on the part of the Christian leader. The newer knowledge, and fuller knowledge about other religions, the contraction of the world, the interaction of scientific and educational advance, have combined to lessen the idea of the urgency and exclusiveness of our message. But unless this exclusiveness of Christ is believed, how can we have vision? From revelation of the divine standard, through experience of our own need, we proceed to service for others. Not by "dragging in" "foreign" missions, but by having the worldwide program "in" all the time. I recall in one theological seminary that instead of having one professor who lectured on this subject (worthwhile, for there is a place for the specialist), every professor was expected to devote part of his instruction to missions. Thus the professor of church history treated the subject in part, rather than the whole of the developing church in history. The professor of theology expounded the development of creed and formula as it reflected the growing life and mission of the church. Missions is not an extra, but the heart of all theological study, and the end of the exposition is the beginning of action.

In this connection, the annual sermon on missions or the annual missionary deputation should be done away with if the pastor has not bartered vision. Sunday by Sunday, week by week, in sermon, address, prayer, and hymn, reference to the divine enterprise will become the warp and woof of the ministry. The congregation will learn that this is the settled conviction of the preacher. But what of giving? The gospel of giving should find practical leadership and demonstration. Here also the support of missionaries should not be left to a special offering or day, but should be the settled habit week by week. Where this has been adopted (one church gives ten percent, some few even up to dollar for dollar of the regular offerings), use is made of a special weekly envelope marked "Missions," or the percentage is deducted from the regular offering to the church, so that every offering has the world need in mind.

Again, a wise pastor will see to it that any missionary leaving for another field does not go out by the "back door." Give the outgoing representative the largest of the Sunday congregations (not a week night) as an occasion of valedictory. Let there be a whole service given to this task, with missionary testimony and challenge and the commissioning of the individual by the pastor in the name of the whole church. Otherwise, the missionary leaves without the wholehearted support of the congregation, and the church misses an occasion of enrichment to vision. The pastor, too, might well lead his people week by week in the knowledge of missionary work through sifted reports of the world enterprise. This is the fuel and stimulus to pray. The death knell of missionary interest is sounded when everything depends upon an annual reference to the need. The eucharistic church is the one where this subject is the very pulse of the ministry and worship. And the preacher whose vision is not dim will have the joy of helping young lives in preparation and direction for service in the harvest fields of the world.

One outstanding example of a minister who did not barter vision is William Carey (1761-1832), whose thirty-two English years must be reckoned heroic and romantic alongside of the forty Indian years. That was a period of English history when there was a concern for the dearth in the churches. The prayers of the churches were answered by God challenging the people. If you want the Kingdom speeded, go out and speed it yourselves: only obedience rationalizes prayer; only missions can redeem your intercessions from insincerity." The master interest of Carey's life as pastor in Leicester was the evangelization of the world. His biographer says: 'Nothing could cool this passion, not the busyness of his crowded days, nor the widening range of his town ministry; not the urgencies of English programmes of reform, nor the growing prosperity of his church. In Leicester, as in little Moulton, the cry of the heathen continents and islands haunted his spirit. Indeed, Leicester's thirteen thousand made more vivid and poignant the distress of the world's hundred of millions.'

As the year of grace 1962 marked the 170th anniversary of the birth of the Modern Missionary Movement, let us recall Carey's experience. For eight years he had brooded, prayed, studied, written, to produce *An Enquiry*. This marks a distinct point of departure in the history of Christianity. It laid the foundations of missions in accurate information, careful consideration, and wise use of means, as well as in the obligation of Christian duty. At the meeting of ministers there was a solemnity and concern as Carey spoke with his brethren. In eighty-seven pages his heart pleads for the needs of the whole world. Here was *The Enquiry: Arguments, Review, Survey, Challenge, and Programme to the ministry*. To plan, plod, pay, and pray he called them. Followed by the deathless sermon,

Lengthen the cords, and
Strengthen the stakes,

he gave the watchword:

Expect great things from God:
Attempt great things for God.

Wherever a pastor has had the missionary vision there is a reflex blessing upon the local church. Let the conviction take root concerning the universal gospel for the whole world, and this fire will bring a 'refiner's fire' to the preacher. He will be challenged himself about service in the uttermost parts; he will face a new sense of stewardship of money and family and time. But such an experience will stimulate his ministry to reach others.

A luminous instance of this is found in the life of A. T. Pierson. As vision made him a missionary-minded pastor, so he shared his passion with others. Testimonies abound from H. W. Frost, Director of the China Inland Mission; Samuel M. Zwemer, of Arabia, and leader of missionary work among Moslems; and Robert E. Speer, Secretary of Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, that it was Pierson's ministry and witness which thrust them out into missionary service. Likewise, Pastor D. M. Stearns, Philadelphia, was turned into a missionary and Bible teacher through a conversation with Pierson, who said: "My brother, remember that your parish is not your field. The 'field is the world.' Your parish contains a force committed to you by God to train for Him, that through them He may reach the whole field."

An indirect result of this was the turning of \$650,000 into missionary channels-gifts sent through Dr. Stearns' church and classes.

A similar experience is related of A. J. Gordon, of Boston. His life as pastor was revolutionized by the missionary vision. His church was permeated by the same spirit, and caught the holy fire, until the burden of the whole world lay upon the church. Our temptation is to shelve responsibility upon a missionary society or a group of officials instead of leading the local church as a missionary body. Is not this ideal possible? Witness the Moravian Church of Germany when the pastor leads the way! Their record is one out of every sixty members as missionaries and supported by the church. Pastor Harmes led his own congregation to become a missionary society when others had no sympathy. His poor church caught the vision and at the end of forty years put into the field more than 350 missionaries, and supported them. This is the secret of the advancing church.

At The People's Church, Toronto, Canada, Oswald J. Smith pioneered this policy and supports 340 missionaries with an annual missions giving of over \$300,000. Another more recent example of this is Park Street Church, Boston, under the dynamic leadership of Harold J. Ockenga. In 1937 missionary giving amounted to \$21,339 through a conference on missions. In the same conference week in 1962 the amount was \$306,486 and support was given to 125 missionaries. In twenty years a sum of \$4 million had been given. Not every church has the membership and resources to achieve figures of such magnitude, but each church can do much more than is being done - when the vision is caught - so that money and men become available

for the unfinished task.

In the midst of true vision the word of Paul needs to be kept in mind. He speaks of "a bishop being vigilant, ruling well the house of God: one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (I Timothy 3). Did Paul have in mind the story of Eli and his family (I Samuel 2) when he wrote this? When the minister who has children sees afar off, let him not forget and neglect the family at home. Let him plan his work so that he has time to spend with them. We have a responsibility to them as well as to the congregation and the outer world; the vision should include those who are overlooked more easily than any others.

As we reflect upon the danger of lost vision and bartered opportunities, we dare not become "profane" persons when trafficking in the sacred. Nothing of emotional, scientific, or humanistic interests should lead us to barter the vision of the essential and basic needs of the world. When all restraint is cast off and lawlessness abounds (as it does today), it is because people have lost or repudiated the vision of God. This is the real world of our contemporary life. The corrective and antidote is the Christian vision. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; . . . white already to harvest" (John 4:35,). To barter that vision is to be guilty of sin, sin which thwarts the divine plan and its fulfillment. The furtherance of the gospel is our supreme task, and not visionary but missionary is the status of the preacher who is gripped by the vision of God and the vision of the unfinished task. Well may Abraham Lincoln's immortal words at Gettysburg be applied in this new context: "It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work.... It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us. . . ."

Such dedication leaves no room for the profanity which makes accessible any or all kinds of other interests crossing the threshold of our hearts. No barter, then, for birthright and blessing, which are the inalienable rights of the man of God who has caught the vision and shares his Lord's secrets.

As has been said by Filomena Natividad, first Methodist missionary to Okinawa, "If you have Christ in your heart, you are a missionary. If you do not have Christ in your heart, you are a field for missions."

The Crock of Clay

"Hogarth, the English satirist and interpreter of social life and conduct, was addressed by a lady who said that she envied his gift of caricature. At which the man of ready pen and imagination replied that she should not envy his gift, as every time he saw a face he now saw it distorted - including this woman's! Such is caricature or the cartoon which overemphasizes some characteristic.

". . . we have this treasure in earthen vessels ... " II Corinthians 4:7

THE MINISTRY IS the butt and jest of the world. Every age has had its satirists who have made sport of those who confess themselves the servants of God. Not every minister has been acknowledged as the happy warrior of the Lord. He has been ridiculed and scoffed at as a man out of harmony with the spirit of the age. Certainly our Lord was so mocked in His trial before Pontius Pilate when the soldiers dressed Him in a purple robe of supposed kingship, setting a reed of authority in His band, and crowning Him with thorns in derision. The apostles shared also in this ignominy and later were the off-scouring of that generation. Paul has much to say concerning this. During the past twenty centuries the Christian missionary and preacher has taken his share in persecution and opposition.

We should not think that the worst forms of hatred by the enemy of souls come always when the Christian leader is killed. Physical death has taken its thousands, but spiritual death has taken its tens of thousands. If the devil can push us into a corner and cause us to lose heart or cause us to pretend we are what we are not, then he has won an advantage. One of the subtle perils and temptations of the ministry lies here. We can pretend and keep up a form of godliness when the spirit has gone. We are prone to be caricatured by the world; we are given to caricature in our habits and actions. This latter is the thrust which leads us to defeat. The ease with which we fall into caricature is real and tragic.

In the disciplined life of the servant of God we find that the cultivation of the spiritual life is the culture of the whole man. The inward and the outward are one. The mental and the physical are intertwined. The whole man must be involved in the response to Romans 12:1, 2: "present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . ." Not just the physical body but the total person is suggested. Paul writes in II Corinthians 3:1-3 that we are "the epistles of Christ written in our hearts known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not - in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh."

This passage tells us that we are either a caricature or a copyright Christian. In I Corinthians 10:33-11:1 Paul says, ". . . such is my rule, to satisfy all men in all points, aiming not at my own private advantage but at the advantage of the greater number, at their salvation. Copy me as I copy Christ." The word used here in the original is "mimic me."

Christianity is not institutional, but individualistic. It is Christ received, realized, and reproduced. Caricature is "any grotesque representation of the person by the overemphasis on some characteristic or trait." Copyright is in law 'the right, belonging exclusively to the author, of multiplying for sale copies of an original work or composition, in literature or in art." We know which is the normal for the Christian minister! Consider some of the New Testament areas of concern at this point.

Conflict or contentment? These are the alternatives within the soul of the minister who encounters temptation. Romans 7:21-25, deals with this in striking language: 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law

of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. . . ."

There was a conflict of desire, of competing interests, a moral struggle going on in Paul's experience. Some have thought this was before he became a Christian, but it is just as likely to describe his state after he was found "in Christ." It was then he awakened to the struggle for mastery which is fought out in the inner life. Continuous conflict swept his life for a period. Here was "a divided self," a soul in tension. Homage was paid to the ideal but the flesh or "self" was dominated by the law of sin. Division, impotence, and a miserable condition resulted.

In contrast to this Paul wrote in Philippians 4:3-1-13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." As Moffatt translates it, "I have been initiated into the secret for all sorts and conditions of life." "In Christ I am able for anything." Here is the answer to the conflict of the inner life. There is a way through Christ. The Holy Spirit counteracts the evil. He, not it-Christ, not I-is the secret. When Paul passes into Romans 8 there is a peace and a stabilized life. The "I" of Romans 7 is replaced by the Holy Spirit.

Stunted growth or steady progress? The Christian life commended by the preacher to his people is that which he must live and demonstrate. Unless he manifests this in his own life it will not be effective in the lives of others.

I Corinthians 3:1, 2 calls attention to those who are "carnal" or babes in Christ and who depend upon a milk diet as infants. Children lacking maturity are given to disputing and partiality. They play with toys and have strong likes and dislikes. Such is the picture given of Christians who have not advanced in the faith. They are given to schism and their party cries use the names of Peter, Apollos, Paul, and the Christ. Spiritual superiority and pride engage their minds. The "carnal" characterizes them. This is not something sensual but rather selfish. Selfishness dominates this kind of life. The tragedy of never growing up lies here.

In contrast to this Paul wrote in 11 Corinthians 3:18: ". . . we all mirror the glory of the Lord with face unveiled, and so we being transformed into the same likeness pass from one glory to another, for this comes of the Lord the Spirit. Hence, as I bold this ministry by God's mercy, I never lose heart." This is the way of steady growth. We grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ (II Peter 3:18). Moses had his face veiled on the Mount, but the Christian comes to God unveiled. We reflect the Object of our devotion. We serve the One we worship. As we keep on looking in worship before God we are changed. We move from one stage of glory to another, or from one degree of glory to another. From glory we gain glory. Thus we end by reflecting His glory to others. This is the progress we make in the inner life of the spirit.

Husks or harvest? Again we are reminded of the alternatives for the man of God. Luke 15 tells of the prodigal who found himself in the far country eating husks. That is not a geographical term but a spiritual and moral state of soul - it can be in a church pew or even in the pulpit. How many ministers become spiritually impoverished until they are at a low ebb and cannot give to others! "Give me," said the prodigal and so he ended up with husks. "Make me" brought him back to a new state of being.

In contrast to the waste of a selfish life John suggests the principle of the full life (John 12:24): ". . . except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." Associated with this passage is John 15 and the words of our Lord: "I am the true vine . . . ye are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The gradation is there: "fruit-more fruit-much fruit," and the alternatives of "bearing not" - "Cannot bear itself" and "abides not." The fact that a minister's life is to be an example to others inclines us to believe that the soil of our life is the place where there is either nothing but husks or there is a bountiful harvest of the Spirit.

Hypocrisy or holiness? These alternatives are constantly the tension areas of our lives. How easy to become a counterfeit because the genuine minted quality has been tarnished and lost!

The world is so among men and not exempted from the gusts of temptation. Ours seem thrice-heated. James 4:4 tells of "spiritual adultery." Who has escaped this entirely in his ministry? Evils peaking of brethren, double-minded purpose for the ministry, and the vanity which comes because of place and position. The man of God dares not go after "other gods" when he is dedicated to the service of his Lord. Yet people, the dissipation of strength and time with secondary things, the lowered vitality and morale of spiritual strength upset.

In contrast we are called to holiness of life. A danger of the ministry is that we are afraid of holiness. We have seen the word abused and its expression falsified. Holiness is spiritual health and vitality. It is separateness to God and His will. Peter speaks in I Peter 1: 15: "As He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy in your manner of living." Jude counsels in verse 24: "Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless. . . ." Paul writes in I Thessalonians 5:23: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. I pray that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless . . . faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it." No life is free from fault, but it can be blameless. If we are set apart to God and so believe and act, we can live in our intention and desire and love toward God the perfect life of holiness. His commands are His enablings.

John Watson, Liverpool, England (better known as Ian Maclaren, the Scottish writer of undying stories of religious life in Scotland), tells of an early experience in youth. He had attended a solemn communion service and in the procession of elders he noticed an old man with very white hair. Some time later he passed a man on the road breaking stones. The man's white hair caught his attention and he thought he recognized the elder who had carried the communion cup at church. Telling this to his father, his father explained that the reason why the old man held so high a place in the church was that, although he was one of the poorest men in town, he was one of the holiest. "Remember," said his father, "the best Man that ever lived was the poorest, for our Lord had not where to lay His head. James breaks stones for his living, but he knows more about God than any person I have ever met." Thus John Watson learned that the greatest thing in the world is character, and the crown of character is holiness.

Caricature or copyright Christian? Which is the minister and servant of God? Paul sums it up in I Corinthians 10:33-11:1: "Such is my own rule, to satisfy all men in all points, aiming not at my own private advantage but at the advantage of the greater number-at their salvation. Copy me as I copy Christ." Such characterization is not caricature; this is the copyright. D. R. Davies, Welsh miner, tramp, Unitarian theological student, Congregational minister, socialist preacher, student of Marxism, a secular idealist, would-be suicide, but a man "born again," whose last years were spent in the Episcopal Church in England, has written his autobiography *In Search of Myself*. There he reveals his struggles both physical and spiritual. In the days when he had left the ministry for a while he spoke with "brutal clarity of the unreality of the religion he had been preaching for ten years, and in that grim, despairing struggle for bread, his theology withered away. He discovered that he had been preaching many things the truth of which he had never tested." This was part of the caricature He learned what no college or seminary could possibly have taught him: that in religion, second-hand truth is futile. General truth-speaking and forgiveness can be mouthed by a preacher and yet breed a dangerous self-deception and a peculiar kind of hypocrisy.

Who has ever known the bitterness of being found out? There is a dereliction of soul which sweeps over the preacher when he is moved and upset. Henry C. Whitley, Minister of St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, tells of such a moment when he had started his sermon with his heart and mind burdened and hurt. There were things he wanted to say, but could not bring himself to say them. He stumbled and faltered-the words would not come. Defeated and ashamed, he gave out the closing hymn, and fled from the pulpit. It seemed he was utterly alone and unsupported, but he was wrong. He learned later that some of the elders were moved and upset and showed this by their silence after the service. One came to him that evening and in halting words tried to express what they felt. By such a simple gesture the spirit of the preacher was lifted and encouragement was given. Sermons come out of anguish at times and they become

the record of a man's spiritual growth and understanding, his personal fears and doubts, just as much as moments of truth. The secret of overcoming and finding release lies in what John Fletcher, the Shropshire saint of Madeley, England, counseled in the eighteenth century: "Holiness is not generally the work of a day, nor of a year ... it is in general a progressive work, and of long duration." Apart from the inner struggle, the soul is beset by temptations and trials. Resignation alone brings peace and fruitfulness to the soul in such conditions. "Absolute resignation to the divine Will," he wrote, "baffles a thousand temptations, confidence in our Savior carries us sweetly through a thousand trials." As Emile Cammaerts confessed, "Suffering is the way to understand other men's sufferings, their anger and despair." He might have added that this is also the way of humility and holiness of life by which there arises a new strength in the service of God.

Many have tried to ridicule the preacher, but the speaking man continues to confront this generation. Our age is one that does not try to make men better but would trick the multitude into making life easier, guided in this dubiously profitable goal by propaganda and governmental paternalism. This is founded on the theory that the mind of the crowd is the last stronghold of wisdom and power. In such an age the immortality of the preacher can hardly endure much beyond his funeral day. But as other eras have given the preacher decent burial only to find there was a resurrection, so this age will not pass without the influence of the preacher still abiding in changed lives by the power of the gospel. I Corinthians 11:17-25 is still true: "Christ sent me to preach the gospel ... some find it sheer folly, but it means the power of God for those whom he saved . . . God resolved to save believers by the sheer folly of the Christian message ... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The treasure is in the earthen vessel, we know, and the translation of the New English Bible brings alive the text of II Corinthians 4:7: "We are no better than pots of earthenware to contain this treasure, and this proves that such transcendent power does not come from us, but is God's alone." This is the crock of clay.

John Baillie has reminded us that often the good is the enemy of the best. That is why the culture of the spiritual life demands a strict discipline. He testified that there were some enjoyments, some distractions, some ways of spending his time, from which he had to turn aside, if he was going to keep the Spirit alive within him. Each must find out the weeds in our spiritual garden needing attention. Because we have to be courageous in the ministry, we should beware of presumption. Overcoming discouragement should not lead us to presume. We need to be on guard against this danger. We can tire easily in the struggle. We give in too soon.

We know what it is to engage in spiritual devotion and accept the grace of God-only to slip into easy ways of observing devotion to God. The flattery of people after hearing our sermons and the adulation which comes from the uninformed produce this danger. We begin to imagine we are just a little above others. Injudicious remarks of praise build up our ego and we forget that there is a crock of clay. "How sweet it is!" is a well-known appraisal of flattery and applause. The truth in the satire is that there are those who find it sweet and agreeable and enjoyable. In fact, some people cannot live without it! Ministers are in the same danger spot.

After a while, with watching and praying, with work and service, we presume to be above this discipline. We begin to be less conscious of a fallen or backsliding state. Little faults and errors of character and conduct no longer trouble us. Prayer and meditation become more difficult and less appealing. We substitute "work" and deeds and justify our actions in being busy as true devotion. Then we are peevish and fretful and easily irritated at little things. We know how to rationalize and philosophize about these aberrations which soon become settled ways of life and habits of spiritual faith. The world at this point helps us in thinking that temptation after all is not so serious as we have thought. Bible reading and prayer become mechanical, and dearth and aridity of soul increase without our awareness of the change.

The final safeguard of the soul is to feel a discontent with our present state. If we long for something better and higher, we should be thankful. Fresh starts each day assist us in our progress. Each day is a day of the Lord. We commit ourselves to God each day. In the virtue of discipline there is the discipline of virtue. We are aware that God is asking something from us.

His Spirit is drawing us and directing us. Thus, in devotion to the will of God we act out our belief in the spiritual and our committal to God in Christ. The perseverance of the saints is made up of ever-new beginnings.

Looking back as we do from time to time we can see a little of the way we have come. The ship at sea moves on and forward ever in the light of the horizon and the compass. We are not able to see the way ahead, but the trough of the waves left behind the ship indicates something of the course followed. Temptations and obstacles come to us at the beginning of our ministry. Our Lord was so tempted in the wilderness as He set out on the appointed task. Later, in Gethsemane, He realized how far He had come when the temptations returned. Decisions made then were pregnant with what was to follow. At the cross came the final test, and the complete triumph consummated in the resurrection.

As our Lord led the way for those who "follow His steps," so we overcome our obstacles and temptations in solitude. We meet our adversary constantly and his devices are varied. We need not despair, for there are the resources available for us to win the victory "in Christ." In devotion and discipline, in love and loyalty, we continue with Him in His temptations. Then comes the Emmaus walk and the companionship which never lets us go. Thus Richard Baxter sums it up: "I humbly bless His gracious Providence, who gave me His Treasure in an Earthen Vessel, and trained me up in the School of Affliction, and taught me the Cross of Christ so soon; that I might be rather Theologus Crucis, as Luther speaketh, than Tbeologus Gloriae; and a Cross-bearer than a Cross-maker or Imposer."

The Waste at Noonday

"Simon Simon, I tell you that Satan has obtained permission to have all of you to sift as wheat is sifted. But I have prayed for yourself that your faith may not fail: and when you are converted, you must strengthen your brethren"

LUKE 22:31, 32.

"He whose name is Legion is at our doors deceiving our intellects with subtlety, and flattering our hearts with beauty; and we have no trust but in Thee" MARK RUTHERFORD.

"He who would accomplish anything must limit himself. The man who would lead others must himself be capable of renouncing. . . . The only life that for us human beings can be perfect is the life that is 'dedicated.' I mean by the expression 'dedicated life' one that is with all its strength concentrated on a high purpose .. "

VISCOUNT HALDANE.

AT NO TIME of life are we tempted more than in middle age. What that period is, each man finds out for himself, for the time is not that of the clock or calendar but the state of the soul. Mid-life overtakes some earlier than others, and no one can chart the period with exact chronology for every man. ". . . the destruction that wasteth at noonday" (Psalm 91:6,) is the meridian test of the ministry. This is "the pestilence that wastes at noonday" (Lamasa), "the calamity that spreads havoc at noontime" (Berkley). The time comes when there is a slackening of effort in the momentum of service. A lassitude comes on apace and the struggle has begun. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, former president of Columbia University, says, "If a man's curve of efficiency is ascending at 45, and keeps on ascending just after that period, it may well move upward for his whole life; but if there is a turn downward at 45, he will never recover." What is true in the observation of the mental powers of life is wholly true of the moral and spiritual state of the preacher.

Physically, as in all men, there is a subtle change taking place and not every man can maintain the strenuous habits of youth. His mead of exercise is generally less violent and the appeal of the easy chair more insistent. Mentally, this finds approbation without difficulty and a sluggishness of mind is experienced. There is nothing to stop it-except discipliner This temptation strikes at the peripatetic preacher whose round of engagements makes him an easy prey as well as the man in his third or fourth pastorate. Without disciplined habits of study and constant reading, a man repeats what is no longer fresh and vital. The old sermons need to be recast and relived, but that may not always be apparent in the pulpit. The mind finds enjoyment in reading lighter works, but is no longer zestful in the approach to the more serious textbooks which appear year after year. The library ceases to grow by nonelection, and so the mind reclines in the comfortable ambit of the ephemeral and passing output of the second rate.

Spiritually, it is a time when there is the tendency to live on past experience. The period of enthusiasm for the ideal and the untraversed way is past, and now the steady gait of constant reiteration of truth sometimes has a benumbing effect. The conscience is no longer wide-awake and the spiritual appetite for truth is often satiated. All the perils of the holy place are familiarized, until we do not feel keenly the wonder of the eternal things. We are no longer startled by suffering, no more shocked by sorrow, and not easily shamed by sin. There is no more deadly and insidious condition of soul than the dread ease in which we proceed to our tasks, unmoved.

Think of the young, untried theological student proceeding to his first funeral service. No

more trying ordeal awaits anyone. To most good men the contact with suffering and sorrow means the unloosing of a tenderness of speech and a compassionate heart. The snare of the noonday is that we are not now moved with compassion because we have recited the same words a hundred times or have become calloused in soul through the loss of spiritual identity with those who are in need. Without divine love our speech is empty and void. Sensitiveness may give way to satiety and compassion to coldness. Then our prayers lose their spirit because of our occupational disease and our preaching loses urgency and vehemence as we lose sight of the horror of sin.

Another soul-destroying blight of this period is the lack of resiliency to anything opposing our convictions. There are those whose lips are sealed in private and in public through linking themselves to the associations of men who do not belong to the church. One of our modern dangers is the substitution of social religions and humanitarian clubs for New Testament Christianity. The minister who belongs to outside societies pays a price. Loyalty to the tenets and practices of the society may run counter to that of the church and conscience. Boldness in speaking without the fear of any face and without circumlocution is a New Testament quality, and happy is the man who is not tempted to tactful silence when principles are involved. Who has not known the words that were half-alive and cold because fear had settled upon the spirit? He who is free in spirit is bold with the courage of the Spirit of God. A lowered morale is a danger of mid-life.

The false prophets of Old Testament days serve us a warning when we know our own peril in our contacts with the world. There will always be a demand for smooth things and an appropriate reward for him who is willing to supply them in the name of religion. The snare of popularity is fraught with traps for the unwary. If the truth is having effect upon mind and conscience, there will be a corresponding return of devotion to and trust in us who are the under shepherds of the flock; but there are those who will endanger our spiritual influence through a lowered standard which does not disturb the conscience.

It is inevitable that we shall mingle with those who are influential, wealthy, well educated, and powerful in the community. Here we need much grace and holy boldness to stand firm for all that we count dear in our vocation. No one discounts the aid and devotion and stewardship of those who are of the "mighty and noble of the world" in their friendship and service in the church. But it is not unknown that an individual may love power and wield an influence through these worldly aids. The temptation to simony in Acts 8 (in the story of Simon) is one that Peter resisted. A man seeking office in the church in return for money is a temptation to the preacher and also to the layman. The church's history is marked by such a peril. The invasion of the spiritual by the carnal, of mammon-worship and the seeking of power for personal ends, is observed in middle life. Flattery and fawning on the part of the so-called big man may produce an uneasy conscience and a devitalized holy life.

It is a necessity for the man of God to fear no face but the face of God, for there is a dark line in God's face toward any besetting sin, whether of vanity or compromise. There are few things more touching or instructive than the entries in Thomas Chalmers' Journal, which show with what earnestness he was praying against this danger at the height of his popularity. A defective dedication of heart is sensed where there is the bleating of the sheep (I Samuel 15). In truckling to the spirit of the age, the moral sense may be drugged and a trifling spirit betray itself in view of pernicious disloyalty.

When a man's interests seem to be the pursuit of numbers, buildings, organizations, and other utilitarian considerations, he may well question his state of heart if he ever wishes to promote spirituality these days. The spirit of the age will induce us to conform to the status quo of the unspirituality of mind. We should be utterly unafraid of public opinion, social disapproval, and personal loss; and to refuse to conform may be the way of an intrepid proclamation of truth. Expediency and evasion are Dot for us. William Robertson Nicol thus speaks plainly about such equivocation: "The apostasy of churches always creeps on apace when priests and prophets, afraid of imperilling their worldly interests become cowards, opportunists, and time-servers, and,

not daring to speak out the truth that is in them, suffer the cause of spirituality and righteousness to go by default." The man of God must be courageous.

Internal breakdown of morale is an uncommon experience of men of God. No one goes lightly into the ministry, and moral standards are higher than in any other vocation. The "school of the prophets" has always insisted upon an ethic which is above reproach. But a moral slump has been witnessed in a few casualties caused by playing with fire.

The theological student who reveals certain tendencies to this opening of temptation is the one who is not careful in his friendships. Because of the sheltered nature of his vocation, the young man is brought into touch with those of the other sex in home and in church. During student days a flirtatious spirit is no preparation for the ministry and marriage, and is fraught with peril as a man moves towards the noonday of life. How often has a student left saddened and disappointed lives of the fairer sex behind him because of the speciousness of his promises and the insincerity of his intentions. Here is the place for the Christian gentleman. Every theological student and all pastors, bachelor or married, should scrupulously watch their behavior in any friendships or contacts with the women of their congregations. The speech must be noble and clean, the relationship friendly without being too free, and the service together a partnership devoid of the sordid.

A man set apart for the high calling of God in the ministry can afford to wait God's time and choice for that most sacred commitment of marriage. When God gives a call and sense of vocation, He is able also to give to man the right guidance in the selection of the partner worthy and fit to share the home of a man of God. There are those who have been spoiled through marriages of convenience or worldly wisdom. Let the young man see that there are those who went ahead of God and now reap the harvest, of conduct not in keeping with the divine vocation.

A man's wife may make or break him in the ministry. There is no more important choice to be made in life than the choice of a God given partner sharing the same spiritual convictions and ideals. And, generally, the theological curriculum does not include a seminar on this subject!

Pastoral visitation and pastoral counseling afford opportunities when temptations can arise for the unsuspecting pastor. There is one valid and safe procedure in such an extremity. When asked to share the burdens and problems of another life, especially that of a woman, it is wise not to linger upon details or begin to relate our own experience of life. Rather turn quickly to the Bible for a reading to be sanctified in prayer. In this way the other mind will be turned away from any desire to intrude upon the pastor's inner life and the pastor will be fortified against temptation. Spiritual wisdom is necessary, and we must avoid any injudicious conduct in our desire to be helpful and kind.

In giving counsel and pastoral help, a man must be careful to state only what is from the Biblical teaching about sex and marriage lest he become prurient in discussion. Life's fulfillment in marriage is normal and right. Problems today include divorce as well as personal failures in sex. Good listening begets confidence, and trust opens the door to help. Not that we shall always assist others; more often than not we shall have many experiences of failure when we question what has been accomplished in dealing with wounded souls. The same is true in seeking to bring health and healing to others. Physical and mental illnesses cry out so that we shall pray and sometimes anoint the sick, expecting God to do His will. There will be surprises and also times of disappointment.

Mid-life brings into focus the most difficult and acute subject of temptation. This is a hard subject and there are those who have never been so tempted while in the pastorate. But a few have made shipwreck through carelessness and the destruction that wastes at noonday. King David's tragedy of ease and slackness opened the door to solicit the forbidden, until the lure and seduction of a Bathsheba was irresistible. If David is to be condemned, and justly, let us remember that once in a while a Bathsheba may be temptress. Not that the insurgence of sex should be excused or overlooked as non-important, but that no man should be behind in discipline and self-denial and self-control through the Holy Spirit. Not everyone can speak of these matters with sanity and rightness, yet with restraint. F. B. Meyer had earned that right

through discipline, and a doctor who came to him in the grip and passion of sex temptation relates that in helping him to victory, Meyer drew aside the curtain of his own life in self-revelation. His face was transfigured, and looking upward, he said with intense fervor, "I have had a cross to bear in my life, and it has made me the man I am."

There may be a nighttime in the secret recesses of the heart. It requires the night to reveal the stars. The darkness of confused temptation may be the inevitable condition of revelation and understanding of purity's strength. The noblest of men who are unsullied by the scorching flame of impurity are those whose integrity of life speaks of an antiseptic spirituality, who carried no odorous fragrance of habit or indulgence with them. ". . . be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord," said Isaiah (52:11). This is not to be confused with an unbalanced view of the holy life. Holiness of life is experimental and sane through obedience to the will and commandments of God. But this is not claiming to be free from all sin.

The story of Robert Pearsall Smith, as told by his son in *Unforgotten Years*, is a warning to those who ignore the plain teaching of Scripture and the treachery of the heart. B. B. Warfield, of Princeton, wrote that "there is nothing more dramatic in the history of modern Christianity than the record of this 'Higher Life Movement,'" of which Pearsall Smith was the leader near the end of the last century. We learn "that nature, in one of her grossest economies, has placed the seats of spiritual and amorous rapture so close to each other that one of them is very likely to arouse the other." Pearsall Smith had said to select gatherings of spinsters of a certain age that the "Higher Life" could be imparted by the salutation of "a holy kiss." When those who indulged with him in this intimacy became jealous, there was scandal. Honest souls seeking after a richer spiritual life were stunned and shocked, and the world without pointed the finger of condemnation at Smith and those who were associated with him. Whatever the intentions of this good man, his indiscretions of conduct with the other sex sealed forever his public ministry.

In the presence of these temptations we are not unmindful that even the grosser, fleshly appeal may assail us. The coarse may stab us as well as the spiritual and refined, and sin is sin. There is one thing difficult to say concerning our relationship with the women of the congregation, and yet it must be said. We see and talk with them about spiritual problems as doctors deal with physical complaints. It is known that a delinquent clergyman is an exception. But we face the same moral difficulties as other men. Because of the reserved nature of our task and our seemingly sheltered life, such temptations occasionally are thrice heated. In comparison with other walks of life, the record is high in its moral integrity and purity.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.

That is the secret of moral strength when this peril comes.

The man in the ministry must be told early, and be reminded occasionally, of the potentially tragic dangers emanating from his fellowship with women in the church. The Marys and Marthas and Lydias are in the church, but once in a while a Jezebel finds coverage. Our peril is in the unthinking, good-intentioned service we might proffer in the pastoral relation. It is a delicate subject, but enough has been suggested to show that it is decisive for a man to keep his moral standards high and never have a breath of suspicion exhaled anywhere concerning his conduct in this regard. Happy the man who is married and has his own understanding wife and children calling out his affection and love as a safeguard. We need not fall to the level of becoming the "women's parson" or allow presents from those who are attracted to our ministry to imply a closer relationship. The complementary relation of the sexes can be expressed in mental and spiritual appreciation of each other.

Consider the life of the Apostle Paul, who reveals an ethical nature trained in a strict school. After his conversion and entrance upon the sacred calling, he laid bare unreservedly the sins of

the past; but there was no confession of those dalliances with the flesh into which soft and self-indulgent natures easily fall. He could never have allowed himself that which would have robbed him of his self-respect. His sense of honor was keen. The darker sins of life found him with a conscience void of offense before God and man. If Paul is an example, the names of Lot, Saul, David, and Solomon are beacons of warning. And Macbeth and Iago, the middle-aged wrecks of Shakespeare's fertile mind, each warns us against this destruction that "wasteth at noonday." When youth is past, we may be overcome of every trial and offset the erosion of character; and as Enoch "walked with God," so can we.

The waste at noonday attacks all men, and wise is he who is vigilant and powerful. Sin is sin and we who speak about it to others may be taken unaware if we minimize its power.

A sin is a small and delicate thing
At first; it scarcely raises its head;
It creeps where the dust and shadows cling;
It fears the heel that may bruise and tread.

And then the swift metamorphosis,
Out of sound, out of sight,
From larva to bard, cold chrysalis-
And then the winged, silent thing bold in the light

The great soft moth that doth confound
-So fair and delicate to see
And in corruption bring to ground
Strength, wisdom, and integrity.

T.W. Ramsey, 'Imago,' Fifty Years of Modern Verse

The gossamer thread of this temptation appalls a Paul, whereas an Esau is not moved except it be gross and vulgar. To recognize the possibility of such confusion which brings the corruption of our best powers is a sure way to fortify the mind and spirit against the temptation.

There is another discovery we shall make in the midstream of our life work. The apparent danger to many is not that we will turn into criminals or blackguards, that we will wreck our lives and shame our families or churches. There are not many black sheep in the flock. The danger is that we, have become respectable, decent, commonplace, uninteresting, mediocrities. If our minds are becoming sterile and anaemic and our hearts cold and dead, it is because we have lost our passion for the Lord and the things pertaining to His Kingdom. In the meridian of life the mind and spirit may die long before the body. We are dead when we cease to grow in grace and in knowledge. The demand for youthful preachers today is not unfair when it is the wish for the minister to be a student of divinity all his days and not a wish to examine his birth certificate. The growing preacher will never lack for opportunities to minister, and happy is he who in mid-life is still drinking from the fountain of the New Testament.

To save a life from failure is to save a soul from death. Let a man find the perennial secret of when this temptation overtakes him and he will move forward to the last span of life and ministry with powers unabated in strength. When the winter time comes, there should be richness and mellowness of character, producing power and influence in the community. No man's work need end in a long drift of gloom, but the light that never was on sea or land should fall upon life and service to the end. If there has been apparent lack of success throughout life, let the closing period be rededicated to the happy acceptance of the will of God, so that all bitterness is cast out. It may be that comparatively few find their dreams fulfilled. The vast majority have to content themselves with humble aims, slow advancement, a seemingly uninteresting career, and a nameless memory. Little worldly success is given the preacher, and we could bear but little, anyway. Wise is the man who does not repine or become bitter in spirit,

but exultantly goes forward expecting the autumn and latter rain to come in a new splendor unknown in youth. The prayer of Ignatius Loyola may be ours: "Teach us, Good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest: to give and not to count the cost: to fight and not to heed the wounds: to toil and not to seek for rest: to labor and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will."

In the period when disillusionment may overtake us we should be prepared to search our hearts in the presence of the Lord. "Thou hast set. . . our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:8, 12). The extraordinary capacity of the mind for self-deception must be remembered. A true self-knowledge is necessary. We should discover tendencies and know our sentiments. Endless opportunities for that deadliest form of hypocrisy, self-deception, abound. There is vanity posing as dignity, priggishness as self-respect, self-pity as the result of overwork and the temptation to hurry about, meanness or slovenliness as asceticism, moral cowardice or worldliness as being all things to all men, insincerity as humility. Who among us can say that these and similar rationalizations find no place in his own life?

No one should object to criticism. Using a sword himself, the pastor should not be surprised if men wield a rapier to his own discomfort and hurt. Isn't it true that many have abused the privilege of entering the ministry? Qualifications for the sacred office are in question when our fellows look at those who presume to speak in the name of the Eternal. And rightly so, for there are those who give the impression that God discredits reason and discipline, whereas we know full well that God never called a fool to preach. The ministry of the Word does not provide a couch for lazy bones and limp minds; it offers instead a yoke, thorns, and a cross. Thus Henry Ward Beecher testified to one great truth in riper years, that much as he owed to himself, he owed still more to his enemies. His friends never saw his faults, and if his enemies exaggerated them, nevertheless they compelled him to see them.

Because of the insidious peril of temptation in middle life we may find help in noting how Paul dwells again and again on personal character as one of the deepest essentials of the minister of Christ. "Let no man despise thy youth . ." (I Timothy 4:12). How? By asserting claims? That would be a poor way. There is a great difference between demanding and commanding respect. Not for ourselves, but for our Lord and Master, we are to earn an honest attention by commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We are sure to be watched; so we are required to take care in loyalty to the law of Christ. By setting this before us for Christ's sake we shall become examples to the flock. And we should never forget that we are being watched by those who are contemptuous of, and antagonistic to, the Christian faith. I Timothy 4:12 speaks of the "example . . . in word, in manner of life, in love, in fidelity, and in purity."

To come to terms with ourselves is the real issue in times of temptation, for there is no greater need than the stainless life. We need the Almighty Keeper. The devil is always lying in wait. But the Lord is near and ready to be our Master and to reveal His mastery through us over sin. This is the way to full self-control and the achievement of Christlikeness of character. If we spare ourselves we shall falter and fail. It is impossible to be our best at the supreme moment if character is corroded and eaten into by daily inconsistency, unfaithfulness, and besetting sin.

There is nothing more certain than the ability of our Lord and Master to assist us in moments of temptation. When we see ourselves in His light we understand. During the last war a soldier picked up on the battlefield a battered frame which had once contained a picture of Jesus. The picture was gone but the frame still bore the words *ecce homo*. He sent it home as a souvenir, and someone put a mirror in it, and hung it on the wall. One day a man went into that house and read the startling words, "Behold the Man," and saw himself. Is not this parabolic? The servant of God sees only himself when he sees himself in Christ Jesus; then the blots and stains, the weaknesses and petty things which trip us up, and the bias toward certain sins. It is then we are startled at the heinousness of these temptations and posit unceasing vigilance lest we stumble and fall.

When evil thoughts molest,
With this I shield my breast-
May Jesus Christ be praised!

In His steps we follow, to find that "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). We shall realize the need of a perpetually renewed act of self-giving and dedication with all the courage and generosity of which the self is capable in Christ.

Look out to God,
Love His glory,
Hate yourself,
And be simple,
And you will shine,
Fortunately without knowing it
Or thinking of it,
With a Christlike splendor,
Wherever you go
And whatever you do.

F. W. Faber

In discussing the temptation to deterioration in character we are not unmindful of the manifold avenues by which men are prone to fall. Life is like the sea: there are depths and shallows, fair and foul weather, calm and storm, ebb and flow; there are mists and fog, trade winds and warm breezes blowing, shipwrecks and derelicts, lurking icebergs and coral reefs out of sight. But there is also the charted course of those who have suffered and overcome, and the wisdom of Christ's gospel, and the flaming ardor of His love. As wise navigators we shall take soundings of those deeps of the moral life and chart our course by the Sun. We must keep in touch with the Interpreter's House to have the truth authenticated to us by the Spirit of God. Then the moral quality of our lives will certify our communion with God and reveal in obedience the will of God for us. As we overcome in the fight, a holy life will gain the hearts of men, and holiness of living will pass into genius for reaching those for whose souls we wait. Also, the parasitism of unbelief and doubt will be crushed and a strong faith will overcome the deadening effect of the continuous round of duties wrapped up in our vocation.

In this way we crucify the cowardly thing, the softness that would sink to things below, self-pity, dullness, selfishness, failure. Surely the fight is worthwhile to keep our ideals and vision where Christ has pointed.

When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something.
God stoops o'er his head, Satan looks
Up between his feet-both tug-
He's left, himself, I' the middle:
The soul wakes and grows.

Robert Browning

The Rust of Ochronosis

"The ochronosis is well marked in the ears and beginning in the sclerotics. It is interesting, too, that he has slight pigmentation, brownish in color, of the conjunctivae. . . . He has the same curious gait as . . . - a stoop at the hips, with a curious swinging of the arms" SIR WILLIAM OSLER

"If gold rust, what shall iron do?" GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ONE OF THE marked characteristics of the modern day is the resurgence of an ancient disease. Paul knew it in the first century. He diagnosed it at Galatia when false teachers came in to poison the new converts to Christianity. These teachers were known for their injection of doctrines which were corrupt and which colored the thinking of those thus affected. The Judaizers, as they were called, had come among the newly established church and were seeking to destroy the health and vitality of these Christians. The Judaizers were guilty of poisoning the gospel in its simplicity and power. The gospel saved man by grace through faith and not by works. They now came and taught that works were necessary and also that circumcision as a religious ordinance and sacrament was also a necessity for salvation. Then the Hebrew religion with its laws was added as requirement for these Gentiles who had become Christians through faith in Christ. Thus there were added certain things to the essential gospel.

Heterodoxy is the false as over against the true. There is of course no other gospel than the gospel of the grace of God, but the Judaizers endeavored to provide something as a religion which savored in its terminology the idea of a gospel. It was different in character, and different in an evil sense. It was an opposition or an alternative gospel-so called. The Galatians were troubled mentally, and upset. All they had known was now in danger of being reversed and changed. Paul used language which was cutting and strong-. . . though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you, let him be anathema!" (Galatians 1:8). This word anathema means "to be accursed" and is so used in the Septuagint (LXX) of a thing or a person set apart and devoted to destruction, because hateful to God..

The defection of the Galatian Christians saddened and hurt the Apostle Paul. It was so serious a matter in the light of the gospel and its truth as revealed from God that he could not speak of this except in the strongest terms. His condemnation of those who carried the evil infection was the same as any medical man would use if confronted with a dread disease which threatened to carry away its victims speedily. A doctor would speak of a dread disease as an accursed thing and seek for its destruction. Surgery is necessary sometimes in order to save the whole body. Cancerous growth must be removed to save a life and give health. Even so in the church of Christ there must be a spiritual surgery, or there has to be the drastic stamping out of the foul, all-pervading fever of a perverted gospel.

The first century knew this and Paul fought the fight against evil teaching and false doctrine.

The centuries rolled on for the church at large and every age witnessed something of this threat and knew this fight for spiritual health. The Middle Ages especially stand out with the blight of a dead religion which held the common people in slavery to a system of "works for salvation." The Reformation was inevitable in its struggle to save the church from spiritual death and burial. Martin Luther and many other reformers whose names should be recalled and held in respect and honor led the fight against indulgences, the veneration of images, prayers for the dead, the exaltation of the mother of Jesus as a mediator, and the pernicious doctrine that works saved the soul. The eighteenth century and the preaching of John Wesley brought a spiritual physic to

heal and to save a generation which had known the blight of deism and a religion which lacked the vitality of saving faith in the Christ. Religion as spelled out by the philosophers and the preachers of England in Bishop Butler's day was something of a different color than the pure gospel of grace. Then pulpits were degraded by the profanity which used an office for personal gain and indulgent living. In an age of slavery, bubble-finance, low moral standards, rationalism, deism, "natural" religion held sway. Scepticism and cynicism made Christianity-something of intellectual discussion, and the blind guides of the church were colored and marked by their false substitute gospel. All this until the breath of revival came under the Wesley's and Whitefield to purify the foul air and miasma of the age.

The present age knows something of the same disease which comes periodically and with theological emphasis. When German philosophical rationalism erupted in the beginning of this century theological education was affected deeply. False teachers with a substitute gospel sought to infect the whole church. Many in Europe and in America were so touched. Two world wars have checked the belief in man's inevitable progress and the pendulum has swung for eyes to see that man is a being swayed by demonic powers, even when he is least sure of his faith. The trend today seems to be a watered-down theology or one that is acceptable to everyone without distinction. No longer should the Christian leader speak of his convictions when they differ from those of other Christian leaders. Confessions of faith are to be toned down and the things that differ are to be kept out of sight. Here is part of the ochronosis of our time. The pigment of theological complexion is not to be different but the same. Theological pigmentation is very popular in some circles. Those who work feverishly for ecumenical union among denominations are noted for this. They fail to see how they stand at the hips and have a curious swinging of the arms. All the "twisting" which goes on in conference, and among the very important people who constitute these (for be it noted-none of the rank and file are ever there), displays the color of a staining which is easily recognized.

Biblical exegesis of John 17 is interpreted to mean that our Lord had in mind an organizational union, whereas the context does not so suggest. As there is but one flock already, there is no need to make one fold-as many folds are required to shelter the one flock. The body of Christ, the church, is one in its unity already. The centrality of faith in the Lord and Savior is foundational and all else can find variety of expression without a denial of that Headship and that oneness of the whole body. Many members-they vary and are unlike each other-do not compete, but complement each other under the controls of the Head. Unity in diversity and oneness in variety make sense and carry conviction in witness for Christ. A union of Protestants into one monolithic structure would issue in the same lust for power and the same inevitable deterioration of spiritual life, requiring again another reformation. The many different expressions of the Christian faith are not a hindrance to belief, but express its richness and wealth in abundance of truth. Even as nature gives infinite variety of life, so the church is healthier and more dynamic with its variety instead of the deadening sameness, as if everyone was the same coming off an assembly line.

We are not divided,
All one body we,

is sung in the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" and it is true. We are one body now, even as the human body is one but has infinite variety of members with different functions and expressions.

Pigmentation also finds its impacts when a double standard of morality is introduced into the church and into the minister's life. How easy these days to become agitated about apartheid, disarmament by banning the nuclear bomb, the segregation issue, capital-labor relations, social responsibilities when millions are underprivileged Many theological students are imbued with a keen sense for social justice. Many preachers find their message dealing with the social and international problems of the hour. It is all true that the gospel in dealing with men will impel

the members of the church to deal with these moral issues. But what is disturbing is that when these are given focus, there is a lapse in dealing with sexual standards, honesty, responsible freedom, cheating and gambling-and other social ills are bypassed. just when there is this advance in social morality there is a corresponding decline in personal morality. People will cheat to win a point, pass an examination, get ahead of another. They will indulge in gambling a little, knowing its erosion of character and how it threatens moral standards and blights lives. Even chastity is not before charity, according to a British professor broadcasting his ideas about sexual morality until church and religious people are inclined to agree with him. This is disturbing, that personal moral standards are no longer held high. The minister is caught in this and unless he is sensitive to the spiritual ideals of his calling he can let down the standards. The ochronosis here is very subtle because of his privileged position, yet he is not exempt from the temptation.

Of course there is a true union of Christians and a moral standard to be kept. God's people in every denomination and across racial, language, and color differences find themselves one. Their oneness is found in the experience of sins forgiven; of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; and in the Bible as the Word of God. This is a reality already experienced. It does not depend and does not need a gigantic organization to achieve it. And when moral issues confront the church and the minister, there is one infallible rule of faith and practice which had come to us in our reformed tradition. It is the Word of God speaking to us directly out of its history and record and through its pages. The Bible "finds us," as Coleridge said. The Holy Spirit who inspired this Word also illumines it for our understanding. We are thus made aware of the Ten Commandments and the One Great Commandment, plus all the other teaching of the Book. We are not in any doubt as to how we should behave. It is there so plainly. We choose the right over the wrong; we select the better and the best; we go on to Christian maturity.

Addison H. Leitch has reminded us, in *Christianity Today*, that "the basic conflict in Protestantism has to do with authority and that the question of authority for us is the question of our interpretation of our creedal statements on the Bible. Do we bold the Bible to be the Word of God or to contain the Word of God? Or to serve as a channel for the Word of God in the total existential situation?" just as we dare not paraphrase the Declaration of Independence without diminishing the idea of its message, it is proper to retain the words for the dimension of the language as inseparable from the dimension of the idea. Dare we talk about the ideas of Scripture without the words of Scripture? One of the temptations of the ministry is here. Those who belong to a confessional church and who subscribe to a confession of faith are by their vows shut up to the contents thereof; they cannot thereafter say that they neither affirm nor deny what is contained therein. Yet many do this. It is a subtle temptation to become stained by ochronosis and find in that pigmentation our peril and undoing.

Sir William Osler, the famed medical genius of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, was a trojan for work and said this was the master word-work. But he also knew the danger of the earthy ocher which would change him from a man of ideals into a hireling. In one of his addresses to students he had this to say in counsel: "A conscientious pursuit of Plato's ideal perfection may teach you the three great lessons of life. You may learn to consume your own smoke. The atmosphere of life is darkened by the murmurings and whimperings of men and women over the nonessentials, the trifles, that are inevitably incident to the hurly-burly of the day's routine. Things cannot always go your way. Learn to accept in silence the minor aggravations, cultivate the gift of taciturnity and consume your own smoke with an extra draught of hard work, so that those about you may not be annoyed with the dust and soot of your complaints. More than any other the practitioner of medicine may illustrate the second great lesson, that we are here not to get all we can out of life for ourselves, but to try to make the lives of others happier. This is the essence of the oft-repeated admonition of Christ: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' It is not possible for anyone to have better opportunities to live this lesson than you will enjoy. Often the best part of your work will have nothing to do with potions and powders, but with the exercise of an

influence of the strong upon the weak, of the righteous upon the wicked, the wise upon the foolish. To you as the trusted family counselor the father will come with his anxieties, the mother with her hidden griefs, the daughter with her trials, and the son with his follies. Fully one-third of the work you do will be entered in other books than yours. Courage and cheerfulness will not only carry you over the rough places of life, but will enable you to bring comfort and help to the weak-hearted, and will console you in the sad hours when you have 'to whistle that you may not weep.'" What was true in medicine is true in the ministry. We have to bear much and carry a great deal which is known only to God. In private the real test is given to us. Can we take it? How do we fare in our inner life? Are we all that we profess or seem to be in public? Osler's counsel is most apt to the minister in the throes of temptation.

What is true in physical diagnosis of ochronosis is also correct in the realm of belief and theology. The Divine Physician can easily see if we are showing symptoms of that dread disease. As Osler phrased it, it is observed in these areas:

- "the ears"-what a minister receives and believes;
- "the sclerotics"-the hardening process of belief;
- "the conjunctivae"-the new point of view accepted;
- "the stoop at the hips"-the servility for the unorthodox;
- "the swinging of the arms"-the propagation of the new.

Without being facetious it is to be observed that often a minister who is caught with this temptation displays it through what is known as a "swelled head." His talk and preaching are suffused with references to the latest and the most popular of theologies, whether of Bultmann or some other. Each age has this danger, for each generation is exposed to some new name or star who has appeared in the theological firmament. Thus the minister imagines he is emancipated from the old and the out-of-date views of those who cling to the past. The swagger and bragging of one so infected is sad. Ochronosis is a dangerous disease once caught.

That beliefs matter is obvious. Recent articles in a national magazine raised the burning question about the beliefs of theological students and those who might become ministers in the future (cf. Redbook, August and November, 1961). The survey made in many theological seminaries and in different groups of students indicated the signs of ochronosis—a change from an orthodox point of view to a more liberal view, especially in relation to the basic doctrines of the historic Christian faith. We cannot escape the implication that what students believe and accept in the seminaries is an index of what they will preach tomorrow. It is true that some change as experience and time come their way, but generally the trend is sure. How ministers take solemn vows of adherence to their church's standards or confessions of faith and then teach and preach otherwise is a question of ethics at least. If they do not so believe, honesty surely would compel them to leave the church's ministry for another—but there are those who still remain within the church and convey their ochronosis infection to others.

The antidote against this dread disease in the ministry is found in the life that is hid with Christ in God (cf. Colossians 3:3). Robert Murray McCheyne, of Dundee, Scotland, has left us a legacy of the kind of life which is without this disease. He counseled out of his own experience that the preacher should "study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week." This would require a constant daily walk with God. It is this which is the lack in theological seminaries. All the theological and academic disciplines are there, but the interior life is left to the individual's caprice and whim for training. As Osler spoke of medicine to his students, so the minister: "The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head." Here is where the minister is tested and tried, tempted, and either falls or triumphs. The prophet Ezekiel (24:6) has an acute comment about the people who so fail: "To the pot whose rust is in it, and whose rust has not gone out of it"—how telling!

When all is said—and done in our thought of the ministry, we must be careful lest we are "double-minded" in our talk about what we believe. R. E. C. Browne, *The Ministry of the Word*,

points out that a "schizophrenic" is not a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality but a personality so split into isolated fragments; one that stares vacantly or talks to himself; one out of touch with reality.

This could be true, as we have seen, of a minister who holds two contradictory sets of doctrines at the same time; i.e., he affirms the confession of faith or creed and then refuses to affirm some of the doctrines found therein. In our temptation we are in danger of becoming blind guides to our people. We can rant about truth and goodness, exhort and appeal to people to do this and be that, and yet in so doing fail because we have not lifted up Jesus Christ, the living, eternal Person who alone can bring meaning and reality to what is intended.

Our own life is fed by secret springs of devotion. Here is where we find the help we need for honesty and fearless witnessing to the truth. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, England, abstained for a while from all books of a devotional character lest he should be lured into the habit of feeling without acting, but he returned to them, realizing that "our affections must be nurtured in the highest." We need to be healthy-minded, thankful, and without affectation if we are to rise to the place of spiritual leadership among our people. Yet it is by the same devotional reading among the classics of soul culture alongside of the Bible itself that the inner life is fed at the secret springs of piety. What we are in our thinking in solitude will ultimately be unveiled in public. Only by avoiding the oversimplification which has an answer for every problem and every modern difficulty can we engage in the spiritual warfare. We are always "engaged in the fight" and the struggle of faith never ceases. In that matrix we are and we become men of God without deviation from the Center, Jesus Christ Himself.

The Kindling of the Fire

"The regulation of every -man's plan must greatly depend on the course of events, which come in an order not to be foreseen or prevented. But in accommodating the plans of conduct to the train of events, the difference between two men may be no less than that, in the one instance, the man is subservient to the events, and in the other the events are made subservient to the man. Some men seem to have been taken along by a succession of events . . . having no determined principle in their own characters. . . . Others, advancing through life with an internal invincible determination, have seemed to make the train of circumstances . . . conduce as much to their chief design as if they had, by some directing interposition, been brought about on purpose" JOHN FOSTER, (ON DECISION OF CHARACTER).

"Temptations, when we meet them at first, are as the lion that roared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them, we shall find a nest of honey within them" JOHN BUNYAN.

THE MINISTRY WAS never intended to provide a safe place or a comfortable living for preachers. If the cross and not a cushion is our symbol we should not be shocked by the antagonisms of life. We shall be a target for animosity and misunderstanding by the very nature of our work and vocation. "The fellowship of his sufferings" is not a pious quotation, but a veritable highway of living dangerously and courageously with Christ. And the tribulation experiences, the heartaches, the wounds, the slights, the sense of disappointment and frustration may be caused by human channels within professing Christendom, even within the church itself. Human nature, although redeemed, is queer and unyielding stuff; small wonder that we who are working with it in our own hearts and in other lives should not escape its contrariness.

The warning about our temptations and tests is reiterated throughout these chapters, for if there is one thing clear in the ministry, it is that "ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12). We need to stand fast in the age-abiding victory of our Lord against all that would be against us. Morale, as we have learned in the present world-conflict, is everything. How much more in the spiritual warfare of Christ's man against the accuser of our souls! A man may give way, here and there, in the years of a full and strenuous life, but what is most impressive in the struggle is not the ruin of a life but its recovery by grace and faith, which is courage.

Martin Luther confesses: "Oh, bow I trembled when I was ascending the pulpit for the first time. I would fain have excused myself; but they made me preach. It was the regulation, that the junior brethren should preach to the rest. . . .

"Here, under this very pear tree, I have, over and over again, argued with Dr. Staupitz as to whether it was my vocation to preach. He said it was. I had fifteen reasons against it, and fifteen more when they were done. 'Doctor,' I used to say, 'you want to kill me. I shall not live three months if you compel me to go on.' 'Our Lord,' the Doctor would reply, 'our Lord requires the aid of able men: He needs your services, and must have them.'"

"If I had my time to go over again I would make my sermons much shorter, for I am conscious they have been too wordy."

"Sermons should be addressed to the . . . commonalty. If in my discourses I were to be thinking about Melancthon and the other doctors I should do no good at all: but I preach in plain language to the plain, unlearned people, and that pleases all parties. If I know the Greek,

Hebrew, and Latin languages, I reserve them for our learned meetings, where they are of use, for at these we deal in such subtleties and such profundities, that God Himself, I wot, must sometimes marvel at us."

"Albert Diirer, the famous painter of Nuremberg, used to say that he took no pleasure in works of art which were overladen with coloring, that he much preferred those which were plain and simple in their execution; and so I say about sermons."

"Oh, how happy should I have been, when in the monastery at Erfurt, could I have heard once, only once, a sermon, however brief, upon the Gospel ... !" (Table Talk).

Very early in the reign Of George III, Sir William Blackstone, the eminent jurist and author of the celebrated Commentaries on the Laws of England, had the curiosity to go from church to church to hear every clergyman of note in London. His reaction to all these sermons was that he "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero," and that "it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether its preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mohammed, or of Christ."

In a sort of apologia, written in 1753, an anonymous 'church' convert to "Methodism" declared that "many of the church sermons of the day were in an unknown tongue to the common man." Most preachers, he protested, seemed to care very little what effect their preaching had on their audiences (J. Wesley Bready, England: Before and After Wesley).

John Wesley is a luminous example of redeeming every fragment of time. At the end of that moving Journal of his an attempt is made to account for this unique achievement: "To one great purpose, he dedicated all his powers of body and mind; for this he relinquished all honor and preferment. At all times and in all places, in season and out of season, by gentleness, by terror, by interest, by every motive and every inducement, he strove, with unwearied assiduity, to turn men from the error of their ways and awaken them to virtue and religion. To the bed of sickness or the couch of prosperity; to the prison or the hospital; to the house of mourning or the house of feasting, wherever there was a friend to serve or a soul to save, be readily repaired. He thought no office too humiliating, no condescension too low, no undertaking too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of God's offspring. The souls of men were equally precious in his sight."

Many years ago, a young pastor in his first church had an experience which was serious then, but which seems amusing now. He was invited to preach at the annual church service of a certain secret society. He was not a member of the society, so he was given certain information which would help him prepare his sermon. He was told that the organization was founded on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and that the members helped each other and thus manifested the Good Samaritan spirit.

The young preacher, being entirely honest and not even diplomatic, told the audience that, after studying the parable, he was inclined to think most readers had missed the point. This organization, for instance, existed to help those who were in its membership and who were in "good and regular standing," but the Good Samaritan helped a man who had no standing at all (Will H. Houghton, president of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago). When the wrong emphasis is given in preaching or where preachers dodge the actual truth of Scripture to suit the convenience of a group or an ecclesiastical organization, such equivocation is the death-knell of that evangelical note needed today. Dr. Houghton points the true way!

A worldly spirit is a danger to the preacher. What vanities and inanities are revealed by the casual speech and the off moments! And sometimes there is an unwarranted dogmatism with lack of humble conviction. There is room for more of that humility before the revealed truth which was well expressed by the late Professor Robert Dick Wilson, A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament: "Let me reiterate my conviction that no one knows enough to criticize." He was referring, of course, to those who were unscientific in their approach to the study of the Bible, but it ill becomes the preacher to restate his prejudices as though they were convictions and standards of judgment for others who do not see eye to eye with them, even when accepting the Bible as God's last Word to man in Christ.

The inwardness of our message as it affects our character and conduct is the primary reality.

Do we know in our own hearts the power of the gospel which recreates life and enables men to live on the higher plane of the Kingdom of God? From the reports of some of the shallow meanderings of time that pass for preaching, it would seem that some ministers have lost the realization that there is a Savior.

Even C. J. Jung (Psychology of the Unconscious), moved by no apologetic motive, has deemed it his duty to remind us that modern men have lost a vivid and feeling awareness of the deep historic meaning of the word "redemption" through forgetting the moral and spiritual condition in which men were before Jesus came. "The domestication of humanity," he writes, "has cost the greatest sacrifices. We do not realize against what Christianity had to protect us.... We should scarcely know how to appreciate the enormous feeling of redemption which animated the first disciples, for we can hardly realize in this day the whirlwinds of the unchained libido which roared through the ancient Rome of the Caesars. In the past two hundred years Christianity has erected barriers of repression which protect it from the sight of its own sinfulness."

Salvation is an historic fact with a challenging and transforming ethical meaning, bearing upon every man as he really is in his inner life and in his active relationships. It is here that the preacher must ever proclaim the historic tenets of the faith and work for a verdict without delay.

The psychologist is not alone in reminding us of our lost sense of sin. This is one of the deficiencies of our generation, according to Charles W. Koller, former president of the Northern Baptist Seminary, Chicago. Trenchantly, he writes: "Our generation has become indifferent to the holiness and sovereignty of God! Here is reflected a serious deficiency in modern preaching. When the emphasis was shifted from the holiness of God, the sinfulness of men, and the need of redemption, the consciousness of sin went with it. And when the church lost its consciousness of sin, the world also lost it. As a result, the world is not much concerned about salvation. Since there is no consciousness of sin, and since it does not seem to make much difference anyway, the world is not crying to the church, 'What must we do to be saved?'"

"Let the people of God restore the lost emphasis! Let saints and sinners be instructed anew in the sovereignty and holiness of God! Let it be the concern of the Church to reveal the Gravity of sin and the imperative need for repentance! In the sight of God there are no mild sinners, and sin does not come in pastel shades. Sin is disobedience, lawlessness, moral anarchy, such as would dethrone God if it could. Holiness is not relative, but absolute. The slightest taint of impurity is incompatible with it. Without cleansing there can be no fellowship with God, either here or in the world to come."

Read also John A. Hutton's pronouncement in *The British Weekly*: "In the light, or under the threatening, of these incidents [war] we would suggest once again that the revival for which the Church and all the churches ought immediately to plan and proceed with, is the revival of the Ten Commandments! The revival of that method of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ which embodied the first preaching of the faith! For it was Christ who declared, concerning the Law which in its moral substance raises the Hebrew religion above all others, that not one jot or tittle of it should pass until all was fulfilled!

"Such a day still tarries, horribly. For is there one of those Ten Words of the Decalogue concerning which we may say that it need no longer be urged upon us?"

"And let not preachers suppose that insistence upon the Law will reduce the still greater urgency of the Gospel. Contrariwise! There is in our mind a shrewd and profound observation by Dean Church to this precise effect: Let any man confront himself with any one of the Ten Commandments, and let him observe himself under the light of it-and he will find many reasons for a humble and desperate acceptance of the faith once delivered to the saints. It was the Law, said Paul, which confronted me with Christ. A faith, indeed, which is not a personal necessity, is not indispensable."

A few other quotations are given in this causerie for reflection:

"The vocabulary of disparagement was unknown to him as Tamil or Telugu; the muscles which are flexible in the lips of the sneerer were atrophied in his" (A. B. Macaulay, Hugh R.

Mackintosh as a Man).

"Very few people can read; almost everybody can read history, travels, science (objective instruction), but very few can read books calculated to strengthen their own minds, to increase their subjective power—such books as Butler, Foster, and scores more. Many can understand them thoroughly and answer any questions on them, but they can do this without having themselves thought through what the author has thought; now you must do this if you would acquire some permanent good from the thoughts of another; they must not remain his, they must become yours, not ideas which you have got from him, but thoughts that you have thought for yourself (under his guidance of course).

"I could not go and hear Gladstone just for poverty—every penny that is not used up in living is devoted to books, and of pennies that go that way the number is easily reckoned, for I have just bought three books this year. But all things are good, and poverty teaches like the rest. It's an experience, however, not to be desired" (Early Letters of Marcus Dods).

Because a man is a preacher he is in danger. The nature of his calling and the demands upon character make it inevitable. —Phillips Brooks (Lectures on Preaching) dwells upon the danger of self-conceit: "In a certain sense every young minister is conceited. He begins his ministry in a conceited condition. At least every man begins with extravagant expectations of what his ministry is to result in. We come out from it by and by. A man's first wonder when he begins to preach is that people do not come to hear him. After a while, if he is good for anything, he begins to wonder that they do. He finds out that the old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon. It is not strange that it should be so. The student for the ministry has to a large extent comprehended the force by which he is to work, but he has not measured the resistance that he is to meet. He knows the power of the truth of which he is all full, but he has not estimated the sin of which the world is all full. The more earnest and intense and full of love for God and man he is, the more impossible does it seem that he should not do great things for His Master. And then the character of men's ministries, it seems to me, depends very largely upon the ways in which they pass out of that first self-confidence and upon what conditions come afterwards, when it is gone.'

A.E. Garvie (The Christian Preacher) calls attention to the sins which so easily beset the preacher and are hindrances to saintship:

"(1) The calling itself brings with it a secret and subtle peril in the desire for the praise or the dread of the blame of men.

"(2) When a man falls before the temptation of seeking and prizing popularity, another fault often appears. He gives himself 'airs'; he looks down on men who may be really abler and worthier than himself, who are not as popular as he is; he is not among his brethren as the least of all, but makes it plain that he regards himself, and expects to be regarded, as the greatest of all.

"(3) But popularity as a preacher brings other worldly gains besides the praise of men.... A preacher is a profane person like Esau (Heb. 12: 16), who cares for the fees, and not altogether for the sacred task of preaching.

"(4) A fourth peril of the preacher is that out of the pulpit he may not in His conversation and manner adorn the doctrine he preaches."

Garvie's sage counsel is worth pondering, as is that of J. H. Jowett in a brief discussion of the perils of the preacher, religious as well as moral (The Preacher: His Life and Work). Our aim and goal ought to be that freeness and fullness of life of sainthood found in the communion of our Lord and Master.

The inner life determines the quality of life and service. If we are to proclaim holiness, we must desire holiness for ourselves. When we preach about ethical standards we shall distill unconsciously our own moral life and level. In our service we should be on our guard lest a mass of energy in the running of many organizations takes the place of the Holy Spirit. If we drift away from the center of our faith to the circumference routine, then the fine gold becomes dim. Not in argument, but in witnessing lies our true strength in the pulpit and out of it. "That

which we have seen and heard declare we unto you . . ." (I John 1:3).

W.R. Maltby, Ilkley, England, has offered out of his ripe experience in the Methodist Church, "Five and Twenty Precepts for Preachers, as reported in The British Weekly (February 19, 1942). They should be pondered by all, and especially No. 24 on "A Preachers Damnation": "He spoke of great things and made them small; of holy things and made them common; of God and made Him of no account."

We are called to self-watch. "Keep thy heart above all that thou guardest. For out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Peter told our Lord: "Spare thyself!" We are open to the same solicitation. Do not spare your judgment of yourself. Do not spare yourself in confession of your sins and mistakes. These two maxims are necessary for us who really desire to be honest in the presence of our temptations. The supreme test of excellence in character is not in the greater but in the lesser incidents of our practice and conduct. The scrutiny of self when we are alone, not when we are before the public, is the only safeguard against corrosion and besetting sin. As our Lord taught, we are members of the true Vine and a sharer of divine life and nature by grace. The character or fruit-bearing expected by the divine Husbandman is the result of pruning and that life of mystic communion with God through His Spirit.

We are not unlike those who came out of Egypt and who are impassioned to strip off the ornaments which they brought with them. At the outset of our ministry we may delight in many things which, later, we are determined to throw away. We have seen what life is, and we have seen what death is. We have learned what common people have to suffer. It is then the man of God must strip himself of every adornment of the flesh: his pride of sermon construction, his gifts and abilities, his subconscious desire to please men. A man will continue to use every gift of God, but his sole aim will be to please God and to win men by the cross of his Savior. Delivered in the hours of these temptations, he will be passionate and eager to be of use while the lamp of truth burns.

Valuable as the call to our vocation was, it will not do to trade too long on such a memory. James Stalker has it in *The Preacher and His Models*: "A ministry of growing power must be one of growing experience." As we are not immune from temptation we should learn that we do grow through temptations and testings. For the final approbation of our calling will not come by way of our qualifications, gifts, achievements, but whether we live as godly men. Everything around us tends to make us shallow and live the outer life. We have to watch and pray to conserve the inner life. The minister must be a regenerated man, or he has no place in the ministry of the gospel. It is possible for a man to be regenerate and yet remain worldly, shallow, undeveloped, and unsanctified. Paul exhorts us "to take heed to ourselves" in order to be saved in the moments of temptation.

If we are obedient to the will of God and responsive to the Holy Spirit we shall be overcome when tempted. Utterly unworldly, indifferent to praise or blame, free from pride, almost unconscious of gifts, filled with a passionate devotion to our Lord and a zeal for the spread of the gospel—these possessions set ablaze by the Spirit of God will issue in sacrificial devotion and fullness of ministry. Let Jesus Christ be Lord of life, and the problem of temptation can be mastered by His supremacy. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, . . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. . ." (Revelation 2:17; 3:21). Who would not become such when "a great High Priest our nature wears . . . to help us in the evil hour"?

Brethren, we may lift up our hearts in the hour of testing, knowing that the grace of Jesus Christ is sufficient. If there are those who ask, What do we get out of the ministry? the truth can be expressed in Richard Baxter's language of the seventeenth century: "I'll tell you but the truth: constant study, preaching, and all other labors; yet though I am day and night full of pain, study I must, preach I must, instruct the ignorant, resolve the doubting, comfort the dejected and disquieted soul, admonish the scandalous and relapsed. As far as I am able, these must be done, and very much more, besides defending the truth against all wrangling seducers; and when all this is done, what is my profit? . . . In a word. . . the life of a minister is so heavy a

burden, and such a continual grief, that I confess from my heart, I have been many a time haunted by Jonah's temptation, to overrun God's work and to put it off, as Moses and Jeremiah would have done. We have flesh and blood as well as other men, for we are but men; and when in the time of temptation, I have hearkened to the flesh, this hath been the language of it—was not I born as free a man as others? Why must I then be tied up to this work? ... Such thoughts as these the flesh has suggested.... But do I approve of this, or grudge at my employment? No, I bless the Lord daily, that ever He called me to this blessed work! God hath paid me for all these sufferings a thousandfold.... And my constant experience assureth me, that the dearer it costeth me to serve Him, the more abundant will be the incomes of my peace! I would not therefore change my life for any of the greatest dignities on earth. I had rather thus serve in the Gospel, so He will go on to bless my labors. I am contented to consume my body, to sacrifice to His service, and to spend all that I have, and to be spent myself, for the souls of men."

"Who is sufficient for these things?" cries the preacher. The answer is close at hand in: "Our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament" (II Corinthians 3:5-6). So, then, in the midst of common temptations we are made sufficient, made fit for this supreme task of life. Not filthy lucre, not prestige of position, not any humanitarian urge puts and keeps a true man in this ministry of all ministries. The temptations soon beset one to test the qualification's of character. Only a life surcharged by the Divine Spirit, imbued with a love for the revealed truth, and characterized by a holy passion to persuade men, is worthy of the high calling. "To expound and testify concerning the kingdom of God, and to persuade men concerning Jesus" (Acts 28:23) is our one task.

Courage will be needed, and grace is available to those who keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. This ministry is not of the letter, but of the spirit. It divides men in life and death. No man can lightly become a minister when he hears of the horrific power of these insidious temptations. His life will need to be disciplined; he will need to apply a rigorism at once hard and firm and at the same time to avoid the by-end of a formalism at once pedantic and lifeless. In the crucible of the mystic relation with his Lord and Head the minister will beat out a moral theology of the heart until he finds himself sharing the insight and the foresight of the Chief Shepherd of righteous souls.

What I aspired to be,
and Was not comforts me:
success is nought;
endeavor is all.

It is written that Jesus "knew what was in man" (John 2:25,), but the Christian man does not know what is in himself. We may be strangers to certain sins and not easily touched by some forms of temptation; not that our nature is invulnerable, but because we have never been in the situation for this or that temptation to arise. Whatever our claims to advance in the life of holiness and sanctification, we do not deceive ourselves in imagining that we could not be so attacked.

The record of temptation in life is striking. Who would think that the sweet singer and psalmist of Israel who gave us the Twenty-third Psalm could be the guilty paramour of another man's wife and then murder that man? Or that lovable, frank, open-minded, passionate Peter, who swore his loyalty and devotion to Christ, would deny His Lord? And in the records of the history of the church at large, witness Bishop Andrewes weeping over the manuscript of his Private Prayers, beseeching God for holiness, yet guilty of paltry partisanship and infamy which stained his good name. Or Samuel Rutherford, apostle of love in Scotland, horrified at the fierce passion which swept him in time of dispute.

These are things which make any man in the ministry to say he doesn't know himself in those deeps of his being if he should be tempted. We may pray to be delivered from presumption—the presumption of claiming a state of life which is perfect—and the pride which

leads to self-sufficiency. To be set free from spiritual blindness is to be aware of our constant need of grace, and it will lead us to flee to Christ, in whom alone we stand, complete in His righteousness, sanctification, redemption, and wisdom.

"Quit you like men" is our challenge and call who follow His steps. We are never off duty, and to fulfill our ministry will exact the highest reach of our powers. Jonathan Edwards framed seventy resolutions for his self-government, but one is sufficient for "a good minister of Jesus Christ," even Bunyan's word: "I preached what I did feel-what I smartingly did feel." Even our failure is a schoolmaster of the soul, teaching because we have learned,

Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select,
What armour to indue.

Whatever the judgments against our fallible and insufficient lives, we have been called of God and as such render service in his name. People may expect of us the ideal Christian man and therefore set us up too high in their minds and in their expectancy. No man in himself can hope to fulfill all that is demanded of him. Only the grace of God sustains. Only the love of Christ compels. Only the communion of the Holy Spirit vitalizes. In reading again the Letters of Forbes Robin-son I recall how they inspired me as a beginner. Now they reveal how much we owe to love and prayer. In the inner life is the secret of our strength.

Temptations vary very much. Think of the ancient classification of "The Seven Sins and the Seven Virtues." These include Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, Lust, and Wisdom, justice, Courage, Temperance, Faith, Love, and Hope. This does not by any means exhaust the list when we think of: Blight, Restlessness, Irritability, Worry, Insincerity, Unchastity, Sins of Speech, Sins of Affection, Quarrelsomeness, Censoriousness, Worldliness, Intemperance, Cowardice, Egotism, judgment. As in the strategy of modern warfare there is a disposition of forces by land and sea and air, so the attack comes to us on various levels of our life, and there seems to be a graded system. To be tempted and tried is not an unmixed evil if we are to be strong to assist others in the fight. The spurs are won thereby; the cross is our way of conquest; bleeding brings blessing; and our straightening is the way of our achieving. Best of all, this conflict with the unseen and spiritual antagonisms will draw us close to our Savior, and we shall be able to give an account of our victories like that of Matthew Arnold's Bethnal Green preacher:

"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely," said he, "for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ the Living Bread."