



Suggestions For Young Pastors

—C. R. STAM

Suggestions FOR YOUNG PASTORS

by

CORNELIUS R. STAM

Founder, BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
Former Editor, BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT
Radio Teacher, BIBLE TIME
Author of THINGS THAT DIFFER
and many other Bible study books and booklets

BEREAN BIBLE SOCIETY
N112 W17761 Mequon Road
Germantown, WI 53022

Copyright, 1987

by
BEREAN LITERATURE FOUNDATION
7609 W. Belmont Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60635

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Worzalla Publishing Co.
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

This is a duplication of the book titled: Suggestions For Young Pastors, authored by Cornelius R. Stam.
This duplication has been done with permission from Berean Bible Society, N112 W17761 Mequon
Road, Germantown, WI 53022, www.bereanbiblesociety.org, (262) 255-4750.

CONTENTS

The Call to the Pastorate.....	Page 6
Pastors According to My Heart.....	8
The Key to an Effective Pastorate.....	10
The Pastor Himself.....	11
Your Heart.....	13
Walking With God.....	15
Admiration, Love and Respect.....	16
The Pastor and the Do It Big Boys.....	18
Pastors in the Conflict.....	21
True Leadership in the Pastorate.....	22
Coping With Criticism and Praise.....	24
Objectivity.....	26
About Seeking Advice.....	27
The Pastor and His Official Board	
Who's Boss?.....	29
Let's Back Up a Bit.....	31
The Pastor and His Prayer Life.....	33
Your Time.....	35
Your Reading.....	37
Meditation: A Lost Precious Art.....	40
Your Correspondence and Writing.....	42
Pastoral Visitation.....	44
The Church Service—Part I.....	46
The Church Service—Part II.....	49
Projection.....	51
Preaching Methods.....	53
Edification.....	54
The Kind of Pastors We Need.....	56
The Joy of Service.....	59
Appendix.....	60

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ANOTHER “BOOK BETWEEN”

Like the author's books *Moses and Paul* and *The Twofold Purpose of God*, the present volume is another “Book Between.” That is, while the writer continued with his commentary on *First Corinthians*, Brother Richard Hunt (our typesetter) and Mrs. RoseAnn Kees (the author's secretary) labored to compile *Suggestions For Young Pastors* from *Searchlight* articles on the subject. We sincerely appreciate the care which they put into this project.

ARTWORK

The artwork on the jacket is by our own gifted Bernadette (Mrs. Russell) Miller. She also did the art for the jacket of *Paul, His Apostleship and Message*. Heartfelt thanks to our sister for a beautiful and effective addition to this book.

PREFACE

This book is not basically intended for older, more seasoned pastors, or for pastors of prominent big-city churches, but for young pastors of small or average-size congregations—and for prospective pastors of such churches.

It is our prayer, of course, that pastors both young and advanced in age, both “green” and seasoned, may find rich blessing in reading the pages that follow. Were this a treatise on pastoral theology it would obviously have had to be a much larger volume. Actually, however, it is a collection of simple “*Suggestions*,” taken from individual articles in the *Berean Searchlight* from 1983-1986.

—*Cornelius R. Stam*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
June 1, 1987

The Call to the Pastorate

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

“And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”

—Acts 16:9, 10

To begin with, let's consider the *prospective pastor*, or one who is not sure whether the Lord wants him in the pastorate or, perhaps, in some other field of Christian service.

There can be no doubt that Paul was called by God to minister the Word in Macedonia by the *supernatural vision* described above. This was not strange, for others before him had been called into specific ministries in similar ways as, example, the circumcision apostles (Acts 5:19, 20), Philip (8:26), Ananias (9:10, 11), and Peter (10:10, 17, 19; 12:7-9), but those who use these experiences as examples of God's leading today greatly err, failing to “rightly divide the Word of truth.” Perhaps the quotation of a passage from the writer's *Acts, Dispensationally Considered*, will help to explain this more fully.

The experience of Paul's has often been used as an example of what a missionary call should be. In view of the evident character of God's dealing with men in the present dispensation, the application is generally somewhat modified, but still there is the feeling that a “call” to missionary work involves some sort of supernatural manifestation: a dream, a feeling that “the Lord spoke to me,” a sense of deep assurance or settled peace or urgent necessity or personal responsibility; a burden for the souls of a particular race or nation, the coming upon a particular Scripture passage from a “promise box” or in devotional reading, or the results of “laying out the fleece” or giving God the choice of two alternatives.

But none of these human emotions or experiences should be confused with the definite vision by which Paul was called to go into Macedonia, and those who today look for some supernatural manifestation in seeking God's guidance should reflect that of the many such “calls” recorded in the Scriptures, this one of Paul at Troas is *the last*,¹ for with the setting aside of Israel and her kingdom hopes such manifestations vanished away (Acts 2:16-18 cf. I Cor. 13:8).

Today we are to walk entirely “*by faith, not by sight*” (II Cor. 5:7). With hearts burdened for the lost about us, we should ask God for wisdom and providential guidance as to how and where we may best fill the greatest need, and then prepare by His grace to discharge our responsibility to fill that need. It may be that, after earnest prayer and thoughtful consideration, one may conclude that he can best serve God in Africa and may prepare to go, only to be hindered and shown that God really wants him at home or in some other place. But this does not necessarily mean that he was wrong in preparing to go to Africa, as it would if he were called by some supernatural manifestation, or if personal experience finally settled such things. On the contrary, the Lord may well use the most baffling circumstances for the good of His servant and of His own glory (Acts, *Dispensationally Considered*, Pp. 34-36).

¹ Though, of course, there were a few more supernatural manifestations for other purposes.

This writer, brought up in a missionary family, was once greatly disturbed as to whether God would have him to go to Africa, China, South America or some other place as a foreign missionary. For two weeks he spent much time in prayer each night, *determined* to find *God's* will in the matter. The answer was—*silence*. He knew no more after those two weeks were over, than when they had begun. But *now* he cannot thank God enough for showing him that we must take one step at a time in faith, and he continued in the work God had already given him to do, waiting for further guidance from the Lord. *This* was what God sought to teach him and what he needed to learn. *Now* he could not be more certain than he has been for these years serving in the particular place of God's choosing.

Pastors According to My Heart

“And I will give you pastors according to Mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

—Jeremiah 3:15

It has been said of some ministers who, perhaps, are not quick enough to visit and help the members of their congregations: “He is a teacher, but not a *pastor*.” Or, of one who spends *most* of his time visiting: “He’s a pastor, but not a teacher.”

Ah, but the pastor after God’s heart *is* a teacher, *feeding* his hearers with *knowledge and understanding*, preaching the Word and helping them to understand and rightly divide it.

Our blessed Lord was such a Pastor. At His first sermon at Nazareth’s synagogue, He began immediately to *teach* the people, showing them how to divide and understand the Word of God. Finding Isa. 61:1, 2, He read:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me... to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,”

And right there, in the middle of the sentence, He closed the book, and, giving it to the minister, began to say:

“This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:16-21).

Had he continued reading he could not have said this, for Isaiah’s prophecy goes on to speak of “*the day of vengeance of our God*,” which had not—thank God, has not *yet*—come to pass.

Thus our Lord’s very first sermon was a dispensational one, in which He helped His hearers *understand* the revealed plan of God and their place in that plan. *First* He fed them, *then* exhorted them.

At another time, as He prayed in a lonely spot, thousands of men, women and children gathered to await His re-appearance.

“And Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was *moved with compassion toward them*, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things” (Mark 6:34).

The religious leaders of His day, instead of helping the people to understand the truth, had “taken away the key of knowledge” and left them spiritually starved. They needed to be *fed* with knowledge and understanding. Hence, moved with pity, our Lord began to “teach them many things.”

Spirit-filled Peter, too, was such a pastor. Read his mighty Pentecostal address. Hear him explain exactly where his hearers stood in the prophetic plan. Pointing from the Pentecostal signs to the Scriptures, which dealt with them, he declared:

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:16).

Then, showing from the Word how our Lord was to return in judgment to occupy David’s throne, he called upon them to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Next to Peter's powerful preaching of the Word, the monotonous exhortations of most of today's "Bible teachers" are insipid. These so-called teachers keep merely exhorting the Church as it continues to grow weaker from lack of spiritual *food*.

The Apostle Paul was still another pastor after God's own heart. Read his epistles and see where the emphasis lies. Meditate on the powerful arguments in *Romans* and *Galatians*. Note how he deals with the failing Corinthians and Philippians by *teaching* them the great truths associated with spiritual character and conduct. See how he instructs the Thessalonians as to Christ's coming for His own, as compared with His return to earth to reign. Read the Ephesian epistle and hear him *pray* that God will give his readers "the spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* in the *knowledge* of Christ; the eyes of their *understanding* being *enlightened*, that they might *know*..." etc. (Eph. 1:17, 18). Hear him tell the Colossians how God would have His saints "know what is the riches of the glory" of the mystery, and note how he warns and "*teaches...in all wisdom*," that he might at length present these believers before God "full grown in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:27, 28). Hear him testify of his toil, and strife, and "great conflict" for them:

"That their hearts might be comforted being knit together in love, and unto ALL THE RICHES OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING..." (Col. 2:2).

Here indeed was a pastor according to God's own heart! True, he earnestly exhorted the believers too, but his exhortations were the more powerful because they were based on solid doctrinal and dispensational truth. In every one of his epistles his exhortations are preceded by *teaching*.

In these crucial days, when so many are satisfied if only their hearts are warmed, when a sick and divided Church can digest nothing more than spiritual milk, when the appalling ignorance of the Word among the laity only reflects that of the clergy—in these days when subversive movements gain ground on every hand while the Church lies prostrate—pastors after God's own heart are more sorely needed than ever, pastors who will *feed* His people with the *knowledge and understanding* of the Word.

The Key to an Effective Pastorate

The humblest pastor, one who has had little opportunity for formal training and may have few natural endowments, may take heart in the knowledge that ultimately the key to true effectiveness in the pastorate is *spirituality*. And the greatest pastor, well educated and liberally endowed with natural talents, had better remember this, for a large and “successful” ministry is not necessarily blessed and honored of God, while a seemingly insignificant one may be richly blessed.

Remember, the Apostle Paul referred to himself as “*unknown, and yet well known,*” as “*poor, yet making many rich*” (II Cor. 6:9, 10). He could boast no great organizational backing, yet even his co-workers were called “*these who have turned the world upside down*” (Acts 17:6).

The truly spiritual pastor may know little about worldly matters, but he will give much time to the study of the Word of God and will be earnest and instant in prayer. He will not be self-satisfied, or high-minded, but will walk humbly, begging God every day to make him the pastor he ought to be.

The truly spiritual pastor will be “*crucified unto the world*” and will “*flee [from] youthful lusts.*” He will truly love lost souls and the congregation God has entrusted to him, and will toil unremittingly for their good. He will conduct himself as a servant of God and will trust God to use him for His glory.

How can such a pastor be a total failure?

The key to a truly effective pastorate, then, is not intellectual endowment, or scholastic attainment, or a well-rounded education, or a thorough training, much less wealth or fame or personal magnetism; it is *spirituality*, with its desire to please God and to know and obey His Word, “*rightly divided.*”

The Pastor Himself

Will you do me a personal favor—to keep this article from filling a whole *Searchlight*? You put the flesh on the skeleton that I will present.

Last night I reflected on the books I have in my library relating to the pastorate, and a long-held disappointment came back to me. Some of these books deal with the *problems* of the pastorate and others—most of them—with the techniques of *preaching*. Let me name some of the titles: *The Preacher and His Preaching*, *Pastoral Problems*, *How to Prepare Sermons*, *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, *The Theory of Preaching*, *Variety in Your Preaching*, and *How to Improve Your Preaching*. They tell, mainly, how to deal with the problems of the pastorate and how to preach effectively, i.e., what the pastor ought to do and say and *how* he should do and say it, but all too little do they deal with *the pastor himself*. Don't misunderstand me, I do not mean to criticize all of these writers for lack of spirituality. Many valuable lessons—and spiritual truths—are found in these books, yet in the main, I have always felt that more needed to be said about the pastor himself—what he ought to *be*.

As I thought back to my earlier days, however, one book came to mind which I had treasured more than any of the others. It was *Pastoral Theology*, by the old Frenchman, A. Vinet (pronounced Vinnay). After the introduction, Vinet spends a substantial part of his book dealing with the pastor himself—his *character* and *responsibilities* as a Christian pastor. And this is important, for if a pastor *is* what he ought to *be*, he will surely *do and say* the right thing at the right time.

Since this subject is so vast, we will only touch, ever so briefly, upon the various phases of the character of a true Christian pastor: *what he ought to be*. From this point on, we trust that you will consider each suggestion *at leisure*; ponder over it, try to think it through *objectively*, standing aside, as it were, to look at yourself in the light of God's Word and will. And I will continue in the second person pronoun, so that you will know that I need these "suggestions" too.

First, do we obey Acts 20:28 and "*feed the flock*" which God has entrusted to our care with nourishing food from the Word so as to build them up spiritually? And do we take care to "*rightly divide*" the Word? For no good host would stir the soup, the salad, the meat, the potatoes and the dessert all together and serve them thus in one bowl! According to II Tim. 2:15 God *will not* "approve" us as His workmen if we fail to "*rightly divide*" His Word.

And what about our *attitude*? Are we *humble servants* of our congregations "for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:5)? Do we have hearts of love—*Christian love*—for the members of our congregations (II Cor. 2:4; 12:15)? Are we "tender-hearted, forgiving," *as Christ has forgiven us* (Eph. 4:32)? Are we *sensitive* to the feelings of others—especially to their *convictions* (Rom. 14:14-23; I Cor. 8:9)? Really, though, we *should* "provoke one another"—in the sense of Heb. 10:24! If all of us only did *that* more in our relations with each other, how blessed the results would be! Are we *compassionate*, "weeping with them that weep," and conversely, do we "rejoice with them that do rejoice" (Rom. 12:15)? It is easier, somehow, to do the former than the latter, for compassion generally comes easier than to rejoice—really *rejoice*, when others, rather than ourselves, are blessed! So self-centered is man by nature.

Are we *grateful* people, naturally overflowing with thanks, as Paul did toward God and toward those who showed him kindness? God has special blessings for those who realize that they are *not* worthy of all the good they receive, even if it is only the blessing of a glad heart, which includes a hundred other blessings! Remember, the pagan world, with all its superstition and fear and sin, got that way by being *ungrateful* (Rom. 1:21-24; cf. Phil. 4:6; Col. 1:12; 2:7; I Thes. 5:18). Are we *generous, openhanded*, rather than grasping? How Paul emphasizes this in his letters to Timothy and Titus! This writer's father once said, "Neill, there are many 'moochers' in the ministry; don't you be one of them; rather be a giver, a helper, a booster of others." (Acts 20:35; Eph. 4:28; Heb. 13:16) Yet, on the other hand, are we frugal, rather than wasteful or squandering, "*that we may have to give to him that needeth*" (Eph. 4:28)?

Are we *serious-minded*? It is a poor pastor who takes everything lightly and is known mainly for his constant joking (Eph. 5:4). Are we worthy of the *respect* of others, even of the unsaved—for our integrity and candor (Col. 4:5; I Thes. 4:12; I Tim. 3:7; 4:12)? Is our *moral conduct* beyond reproach, are we "one wife" men (I Tim. 3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6)? Are we careful not to betray confidences, and to discourage tale-bearing (Prov. 11:13; 17:9)? Do we exercise *self-discipline* and *family discipline*, especially since it may be necessary for us to exercise discipline in the church at times (I Tim. 3:5)? Do we avoid self-confidence, asking God daily to supply anything lacking in our character and to make us all that we ought to be as pastors? Let us never forget that one ounce of confidence in God is worth "tons" of self-confidence.

Are we "*good soldiers of Jesus Christ*," willing to "endure hardness," for Him, both to "stand" for the truth and to "withstand" Satan's "wiles" and "devices," yes, and sometimes his open hostility to the truth (Eph. 6:10-17; II Tim. 2:3; 4:5)? It will take much prayer, at times, to overcome what can only be called cowardice. And what about our prayer lives? Do we really *get close to God* in prayer—and do we pray *Scripturally, intelligently*? But this will have to wait for a special article: the subject is so vast.

Here I have only begun and there is so much more to consider! But the Holy Spirit will show us our short-comings and encourage us in those things in which, by grace, we submit ourselves to His teaching and discipline. So, beloved, our work is cut out for us. Being a pastor is a *real responsibility*—one which none of us will ever fully live up to—but as we seek sincerely to fulfill this responsibility for the glory of God, the work will be rewarding indeed.

Your Heart

Young man, God does not want your brains nearly as much as He wants *your heart*.

John Randolph, of Roanoke, Virginia, served in the Congress of the United States for 24 years and, according to Roger Butterfield, was easily the most forceful congressman of his time, and without an equal for stinging invective in political debate.²

Once he said of Edward Livingston, whose moral principles—or lack of them—he despised: “He shines and stinks like rotting mackerel by moonlight.”³

Strong language? But actually there is a lesson here for every man of God, for one may indeed shine before the public, whose lack of moral and Christian principle is, as it were, a stench in the nostril of God. The Old Testament has much to say about this. Little wonder, then, that God exhorts His people:

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).

It is a fact to be seriously considered that by nature,

“The heart is DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

And pretense, here, is futile, for God *does* know our hearts.

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts” (Prov. 21:2).

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...” (Prov. 28:26).

This is what God says about the human heart. Yet *He wants our hearts*; our hearts’ faith, our hearts’ love and affection. Salvation itself begins in the heart, for “*with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*” (Rom. 10:10), and He condemns “*an evil heart of unbelief*” (Heb. 3:12; 10:22). It is His will “*that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by faith*” (Eph. 3:17).

It is, of course, *by the Spirit* that the Father and the Son dwell in our hearts. “*Because [we] are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into [our] hearts, crying, Abba, Father*” (Gal. 4:6), and as we patiently endure tribulations “*the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*” (Rom. 5:5).

Ah, what a change has come about in our hearts since “with the heart” we believed! Now, by grace, we can “*do the will of God from the heart*” (Eph. 6:6), all the while “*singing and making melody in [our] hearts to the Lord*” (Eph. 5:19).

With all this blessedly true, however, we must still bear in mind the fact that this is ours only by God’s grace, to be appropriated by faith, for by nature our hearts are still deceitful and depraved. We are still the children of Adam as well as the children of God. Thus the admonition:

“Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).

² *The American Past*, Pp. 36, 37.

³ *Ibid*

It will help us to do this if we heed the words with which the 139th Psalm opens and closes:

“O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and know me.

“Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off.

“Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

“For there is not a word in my tongue but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether” (Psa. 139:1-4).

All this is *fact*. God *does* search us. He *does* know our actions, and words, and the motives behind them. He understands us altogether. Ah, but now see how David, the “man after God’s own heart,” closes this Psalm:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

“And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Vers. 23, 24).

Ah, there is the secret of a Godly life. David *beseeches* God to search his heart, that its evil may be uncovered and he may be led in the way everlasting. That, really, is the big question where a Godly life is concerned: *Are we willing to be searched?*

Walking With God
"Enoch walked with God"

—Gen. 5:24

What an epitaph!

We are told nothing about Enoch's life but this one thing: He "*walked with God.*" There is no record of any great deeds, or achievements, or victories; only that he *walked with God*. But this says it all. How much better to walk daily with God in loving, uninterrupted fellowship, than to have occasional rapturous experiences! And how much more this will mean to the pastor and his ministry!

But to walk with God, we must go *His way*. We cannot expect fellowship with *Him* if we go our own way for, wisely, He does not leave this choice to us. Rather we must daily enquire with Moses, "*Show me now Thy way*" (Ex. 33:13), and with Paul, "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*" (Acts 9:6).

Also, to walk with God, we must travel at *His pace*. We must not run impetuously before Him, but let Him set the rate of speed, learning to wait *His time*. This is important for we are by nature so impatient to fulfill our own desires and accomplish our own aims. But neither must we lag slothfully behind, indifferent to *His will*. Rather, we must be always eager to know and obey His Word and will.

With such an attitude of heart, how many precious truths we will learn from the Epistles of Paul, who has *more to say about the believer's walk than any other Bible writer*.

Admiration, Love and Respect **(Good—Better—Best)**

All things being equal, it is good when a man of God is *admired*, perhaps for his courage, or perseverance, or presence of mind, or promptness, or his ability to endure criticism, or to promote the work of the Lord, or perhaps for his eloquence in preaching, or his knowledge of the Scriptures. For such things, or any combination of them, any pastor may well be admired. Surely *Apollos* was admired by the Ephesians, for the record states that he was “*an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures*” and that “*being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord*” (Acts 18:24, 25). And who would not admire *Onesiphorus* and his family, who visited Paul again and again in his prison at Rome, when it was so dangerous to do so (II Tim. 1:16-18), or Aquila and Priscilla, who “laid down their own necks” for Paul in the service of Christ (Rom. 16:4). And certainly Paul himself had many traits for which he has been justly admired down through the centuries.

But it is even better for the man of God to be *loved* by those who know him. Now his congregation gives him an *affectionate* hearing and more readily grants him his desires and yields to his decisions. Now too, he has their sympathy in times of sorrow, their help when in need, their support when in trouble and their understanding when he fails. How gratifying and encouraging for the man of God to be loved! Paul enjoyed a great measure of love from some believers (e.g., Acts 20:36-38), but very little from others (e.g., II Cor. 12:15). Yet it was not Paul’s main objective to be loved, much less to be admired. It was his main objective to be *faithful* to his Lord.

It is best of all for the man of God to be *respected* by his fellowmen. General Douglas MacArthur once said, “If I had to choose between the two, I would be respected any day rather than loved,” and he was right.

But does not I Cor. 13:13 declare that of “faith, hope, and love,” the “greatest” is love? True, but here the apostle speaks of love *given*, not love received. *Respect*, justly deserved, more than love, and much more than admiration, serves to further the cause of Christ.

But respect must be *earned*. It is the natural response to consistent godliness, diligent toil, earnest prayer, conviction as to the truth, transparent honesty, true humility and loving concern. The price of respect is costly, but how precious the fruit it bears!

With the godly, faithful pastor, the respect he has built up by his consistent Christian conduct has gained for him increased influence, even authority over others, and this is Scriptural (I Tim. 5:17; I Thes. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:17). They rightly *trust* him and will even accept reproof from him which they might not accept from others. Paul had the well-deserved respect of those who knew him. He could say, without sounding boastful: “*Ye should have hearkened unto me*” (Acts 27:21), and “*Behold, I Paul say unto you*” (Gal. 5:2). This was because he could *also* say, for example to the Ephesian elders: “*Ye know...after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations [testings]...and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you, publicly, and from house to house....I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me*” (Acts 20:18-20, 33, 34). And to the Thessalonians he could write, “*Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe*” (I Thes. 2:10). Such living *commands respect*.

It was on the basis of this respect, so richly earned, that the apostle could warn the younger preachers, and all of us who would serve Christ, against the danger of preaching the gospel for gain, or for any reason whatsoever except love and faithfulness to the one who gave His all—Himself, for us.

It is by God's grace that any pastor is admired or loved by his congregation, but let us strive above all, not merely to gain, but to *deserve* their *respect*.

The Pastor and the Do It Big Boys

We are living in a day of great temptation for any young, wide-awake pastor.

In my brief lifetime we have come from the “every believer a witness” era to the “do it big” era; from the time when most Fundamentalist pastors *taught* the Word of God—often in verse-by-verse exposition—to the days of the great TV preachers who, often addressing millions of people, teach the Bible only in the most superficial way—and this, it appears, often to promote their own causes, with ordinary pastors all over the country following their example.

It is indeed a great temptation to young, aggressive pastors to follow the example of the so-called “Do It Big Boys,” and it is exhilarating to become “successful” and to be named among them.

But let’s look at these things in the light of what God Himself says on the subject. As we do, we will see that God would have us say with Paul, “*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?*” ever seeking *the Holy Spirit’s guidance* rather than seeking to attain to *any* goal but *to please Him*. In this area *ambition* is the enemy of a God-blessed life.

When I was a young man, the great majority of young people in our Fundamentalist⁴ churches across the country carried with them small pocket Testaments, daily leaving home in the morning with the prayer, “Lord, lead me to some soul today, whom I may lead to Thee.” These small New Testaments sold by the millions of copies in those days, while today they scarcely have a market. And as to pastors, Bible teachers and Christian workers, how familiar, some decades ago, was the prayer: “Lord, hide me behind the cross.” Like Paul, many a servant of God could sincerely say, “*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*” (II Cor. 4:5).

But today all too few have this attitude. Indeed, many of our most popular preachers are known, not for precious truths they proclaim, or for the power of the Spirit in their preaching, but for the interest they can create in this or that subject of popular interest or concern.

Many of them are, frankly, *performers*, with all the props and backdrop used in modern show business. Their service *must* begin with *entertainment*. Often this part of the service is a “show” just as actually as the world’s shows, except that it’s “good Christian entertainment,” justified on the grounds that it’s done to draw crowds, to whom the preacher can *then* proclaim the gospel.

As the preacher touches upon some point which the audience approves or appreciates, the listeners often respond by applause. And, human nature being what it is, he enjoys it; and there is nothing that so pleases him as a standing ovation over something he has said. As with unsaved performers, applause—an expression of appreciation—is what “keeps him going.”

How many of the “Do It Big Boys,” as they have been called, have you observed discouraging such applause, much less rebuking it? In this respect, Chrysostom (350 A. D.) did much better. As he preached, his vast audiences sometimes applauded, but this mighty man of God rebuked such “praise of men.” It was not strange to hear him say: “What is this, a theater? Why do you constantly interrupt my preaching with bursts of applause? Rather do what I say than to applaud me for saying it.”

⁴ I purposely use the term *Fundamentalist* rather than *evangelical*. The latter word can be used very loosely, while the former, where “religion” is concerned, clearly refers to those who stand for the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

But today!—Today it is becoming common to hear one Christian leader introduce another on the platform, with the request; “*Give him a big hand.*”

All this reflects a desire for popularity, rather than determination to be *faithful*. But let us, whom God has called into the ministry, say with Paul:

“But as we are allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, Who trieth our hearts” (I Thes. 2:4).

“...for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. 1:10).

Paul was not, like so many preachers, obsessed with the question, “How did I do with my hearers? Did they enjoy it?”

What a far cry many of our modern church services are from those of some decades ago, when the lusty hymn singing of the congregation and a brief prayer for God’s blessing on the service, were followed by the preaching of the Word! This is not to condemn all “special numbers” during the preliminaries, but rather to condemn the emphasis on entertainment.

Is there any *Scriptural* precedent for the argument that we need this “good Christian entertainment” to draw crowds so that we can then give them the gospel? Paul’s day was a day when Greek entertainment had reached its zenith; when all forms of art abounded, along with the games and contests that drew spectators from all over the Roman Empire. But did the people leave *his* meeting saying: “How wonderful it was to see and hear this or that ‘converted’ gladiator, or this or that ‘Christian politician’”? Hear his answer from his own heart and pen:

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (I Thes. 1:5).

Paul had come to them preaching the gospel *in the power of the Holy Spirit* and it was *this* that drew the crowds he addressed, and won great numbers of converts even at Thessalonica—converts who gladly bore bitter persecution for *their* witness to the saving grace of Christ.

May God restore to us the blessing of the days—not so very long ago—when there was *real* spiritual revival; when it was not any form of entertainment, but recovered truth, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit, that drew vast audiences and filled the churches of the Fundamentalists.

The thrust of all this: Young Christian brother, if you would be truly blessed and used of God, seek *His* face and ask *Him* to lead you into fuller service for Him. And when your audiences decline in number, don’t consult books and magazines for methods or schemes to reverse the trend. Rather get down on your knees before God and ask Him for more of the power of the Spirit in your preaching—and spend more time with the Word, digging out of that exhaustless mine the precious spiritual gems that will so light the hearts of your hearers.

If rather, you set a goal to accomplish some *great* service “for Him” you may end up being one of the “Do It Big Boys,” only to find yourself constantly tempted to compromise the truth to hold your following, and constantly forced to dishonor God by begging almost constantly for the millions needed to “make up that deficit,” a deficit that has already dishonored God, for it is no glory to Him when we cannot pay our just debts. In this respect we at *Berean Bible Society* can say with thanks to God that we have never owed a debt that we could not pay, always seeking to follow Paul in his resolve not to “stretch... ourselves beyond our measure,” but to advance only as God’s people, by faithful giving, made this possible (See II Cor. 10:14, 15).

Perhaps if some of those now so popular had not been *ambitious* they would not be thus dishonoring God and the Lord Jesus Christ who became “nothing” to this world that he might save us and make *us* something for Him.

No matter what natural gifts we may have, if we use them to advance ourselves we will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ—or sooner, for as the Lord said of the Pharisees who “loved the praise of men,” He will say of us: “Verily, they *have* their reward.”

Do you remember the story of Gideon’s 300? Out of 32,000 soldiers only these 300 were chosen to fight with him, all personally unseen, for the battle took place at night. But more; they approached the enemy with lamps in their hands inside earthen pitchers. And it was only as the pitchers were *broken* that the light shone forth! The lesson: “*We have this treasure [the gospel] in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*” (II Cor. 4:7). As we allow God to break us with the Sword of the Spirit we may depend upon it: the light will shine forth.

Pastors in the Conflict

Certain it is that it is not so much the indifference of the lost that keeps them from Christ as it is *our indifference*. Likewise it is not so much the indifference of the average church member that has rendered the Church so weak, as it is the indifference of their spiritual leaders.

Thus the Apostle writes, not to Timothy's congregation, but to *Timothy himself*,

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (II Tim. 1:7, 8).

If the pastor is truly on fire for the truth, his enthusiasm will spread through the congregation, for courage, like cowardice, is contagious. Thus Paul does not instruct Timothy to tell his hearers to be courageous; he urges *him* to be courageous.

This does not mean that the pastor should "flex his muscles," but that he should "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:3) and remain "standing" even in "the evil day" (Eph. 6:13). This is bound to have its influence on his congregation.

Christians and Christian leaders, who are always sighing for peace, and fear that the preaching of "the whole counsel of God" may bring controversy, should read II Tim. 1:7, 8 thoughtfully. Where the truth is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit Satan *will* oppose, but to fear him is to yield the battle by default. The spirit of fear, then, comes not from God, but from Satan. "For *God* hath *not* given us the spirit of *fear*, but of *power*, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*." What a combination!

It is a touching fact that this passage was written by one who was soon to be beheaded for Christ. We would not have counted it strange if he had suggested to Timothy that perhaps he, Paul, had been too intense in his ministry and had urged Timothy to be somewhat more diplomatic. But no! Rather the watchword is *Courage!* So far from urging Timothy to "cool it," as we say, he urged him to stir up and fan the flame burning in his heart. Indeed, not only does he urge Timothy not to be ashamed "of the testimony of our Lord," but he adds, "*nor of me, His prisoner.*"

This last is important. Many of Luther's followers were nominally "protesting Protestants," but they were not so outspoken as Luther. They thought diplomacy was the way to win the battle, and avoided Luther. They thought the reformation would be more successful after Luther was gone. This was so also of the late pastor O'Hair. Because he obeyed Eph. 6:19 and opened his mouth boldly, some were ashamed of him—not of the message, but of *him*. Ah, but they were ashamed of him because *they* were *not* obeying Eph. 6:19, but rather made the message of grace known in a clandestine or roundabout way that certainly made it appear that they *were* ashamed of the message.

Ah, but were Luther's followers less responsible than Luther to make known the great truths of the Reformation? Were O'Hair's followers, or those of the second generation, less responsible than O'Hair to open their mouths boldly to make known the mystery and its exceeding riches of grace? Indeed not! All of us who understand the great truths of the Pauline revelation are as responsible as he was, and as Timothy was, to be "*partakers of the afflictions of the gospel*" (Ver. 8).

But mark well, that those who take up the challenge are assured of all God's power to help them win the battle. Read it carefully, and rejoice—and act! "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel *according to the power of God.*"

True Leadership in the Pastorate

The following principles are among those which *this one person* considers important to Christian leadership, especially in the pastorate. He may be wrong, or only partly right as to some of them; others may be worth consideration and even prayerful study.

1. Confidence in God is worth infinitely more than any amount of self-confidence (Prov. 3:5-7). Often in times of crisis the pastor may feel woefully inadequate to lead the congregation entrusted to his care, but this tends to drive him to his knees and this in itself is always a defense against Satan's wiles.
2. Common sense is far more valuable than a brilliant mind (Psa. 111:10; Col. 1:9; cf., I Cor. 1:19).
3. A sensitive conscience is a defense against failure and disgrace. Only with a clear conscience can we face our enemies with confidence (I Cor. 4:2; II Cor. 1:12).
4. Never dodge a really serious issue; face it. Don't contrive some devious way to "handle it" for the time being. Face it without delay or the problem will grow worse (Eph. 6:10-13).
5. Beware lest Satan cause you to compromise your stand or to get you sidetracked. He is a master in this field (Eph. 6:11; II Cor. 2:11).
6. Be "instant" (on your toes) "in season, out of season." All that is needed to ruin any business, including the Lord's, is *neglect* (Rom. 12:11-13; II Tim. 4:2).
7. Where the implementation of *important* tasks is concerned, rather see to them sooner than later, so as to avoid getting into a bind. It will take just as long to complete them if you wait, perhaps even longer. Being concerned *soon enough* is the surest road to accomplishment—and a more relaxed disposition (Prov. 24:30-34; 27:1; Eph. 5:14-16).
8. It is important to maintain good rapport with those of higher, and even of lower rank. Don't get out of touch (Rom. 1:12; Phil. 1:3-5).
9. Financial integrity *PLUS* is a great advantage in Christian leadership. Not only should we be fiscally honest but we must give unmistakable *evidence* of this (II Cor. 8:20, 21), always submitting explicit and complete written reports of monies received and expended.
10. Men tend to be "free spenders" or frugal in the Lord's work, in direct proportion as they are in their personal lives. Remember that generosity and extravagance are not the same thing. Proverbs has much to say about both, and your congregation will love you for the former but not the latter.
11. The fewer one's external desires the happier one's life tends to be (Luke 12:15; I Tim. 6:6).
12. To a gracious attitude we should add *thoughtfulness*. Don't presume that all you do will be approved by others, but take them into your confidence, especially where *their* concerns are affected. This avoids misunderstanding. Personal thoughtfulness of subordinates is always important, helping to gain their love and respect (Heb. 10:24; Phil. 2:1-4).

13. Be quick to acknowledge mistakes. It's not really that hard! And don't try to save face; it's not worth it. The period after "I was wrong." It's a beautiful thing! (Jas. 5:16).
14. One will tend to exercise profitable discipline in the work of the Lord in proportion to his discipline of himself and his family (I Cor. 9:25; I Tim. 3:4, 5).
15. Make sure that your conduct and conversation—and the thinking behind them, are *wholesome*. This will earn the respect of those who know you best (Col. 4:5, 6; Tit. 2:7, 8).
16. It is wise not to spread one's efforts too thin. A few things done carefully and well are better than many things done in slipshod fashion (Col. 3:23).
17. It is important to take the necessary steps to keep well physically. The right food, enough exercise, and enough sleep (if possible!) are more important than most people realize. It's easy to die early! (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20).
18. At board meetings it is *very important* for the young pastor to be "swift to hear, slow to speak" (Jas. 1:19). The writer knew a man years ago who was forever telling others how some person had been *so interested* in what he had to say. He just wasn't sensitive enough to detect boredom or to recognize the mere effort to be polite. Such sensitiveness is most important to the pastor.
19. At board meetings be careful not to pressure the members or get them merely to bend to your will or plan (Tit. 1:7). The only exception to this is where an important moral or spiritual principle might be involved. Remember, they are the overseers in the work of the Lord *with you* as their leader. I have seen high pressure tactics backfire as board members just got less interested in contributing their thoughts, and finally resigned.
20. Endeavor, at board meetings, always to say what is necessary *in as few words as possible*. Sometimes this takes special prayer and effort. Board meetings can easily become "more talk than substance." Avoid this.
21. ABOVE ALL—remember that God "*resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*" (I Pet. 5:5). We may always count on His help if we "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God" (Ver. 6).

Coping With Criticism and Praise

Sunday after Sunday, it is said, Brother Jones would leave the church with some unkind remark for the pastor: “You preached too long,” “I was bored,” “I didn’t understand a thing you said,” etc. Finally one of the deacons said to the pastor, “Don’t pay any attention to him. He’s just repeating what the people say”!

What the people say about the pastor’s message *can* have a profound effect upon his emotions, but there are several basic truths to bear in mind where both criticism and praise are concerned—truths that will help us cope with criticism, the most irritating of these problems, and with praise, the most dangerous.

First, when criticized, don’t be quickly offended; that will only upset your sense of well-being—and your testimony. Certainly don’t immediately “jump back” on your critic on the one hand or avoid him on the other, scratching him off your list. He might just be right! So, ask yourself whether his criticism was, perhaps, valid. If it was, thank God—and maybe the critic too—for this is how God makes better servants out of us. It does help to make our labors lighter if we don’t take ourselves too seriously.

If, however, the criticism is wholly unjust, or perhaps an attempt by an opponent to discourage you, it may be both gracious and right to answer him, but even then, don’t take it too seriously. What representative man of God ever escaped repeated and sometimes unmerciful criticism? Dr. H. A. Ironside had a small motto over the door of his study at *Moody Church*. It read: “*To avoid criticism, say nothing, do nothing, be nothing.*”

But—and this is more important—don’t take yourself too seriously *when you are praised*. It’s natural to dislike criticism, especially when it’s unfair, and to *love* praise, even when it’s exaggerated! This writer has, through life, had an unceasing battle especially with the latter. And the love of human praise can adversely affect our fellowship with God. John 12:43 says of the Pharisees that “*they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God,*” and this made them the enemies of Christ, who was drawing more attention than they.

Thus we who, like the Pharisees, stand before the people, should search our hearts, praying earnestly and unceasingly that God will help us to really *want* the people to leave our services saying, not “What a preacher!” but “*What a Savior!*”

When, after the service, one of your hearers says, “I could have listened for another hour,” *don’t take it too seriously!* Praise God, but also remember that many pastors have fallen by the wayside simply because their hats became too small! God *let* them fall by the wayside, because He *hates* pride:

“God *resisteth* the proud, but *giveth* grace to the humble” (I Pet. 5:5; cf. Dan. 4:37).

What refreshing encouragement this passage affords the truly sincere servant of God! As we “humble [ourselves] under the mighty hand of God” (Ver. 6), He will give us grace for the present—and more glory than we deserve for the future.

Finally, where both criticism and praise are concerned, it will help us to reflect that we stand in the pulpit, not to please or thrill our hearers but as representatives of Christ, called to proclaim the Word of truth, rightly divided (II Tim. 2:15). I Thes. 2:4 and Gal. 1:10 state it well:

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.”

“...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Objectivity

Objectivity! A word we should never forget and always practice. To be objective is to be outward-looking and it's a wonderful, rewarding way of life. It looks away from self to an *object*. In our case the first "object" is *God*—then *responsibilities, opportunities, challenges*, and especially *others*.

Subjective living, on the other hand, is a deplorable, self-centered way of life, forever asking, even subconsciously, "What will I get out of this?" "Will it enhance my position in life?" "Am I performing well?" "How am I doing?" The focal point of such a life, yes, even in some pastors, is *self*.

Cain was subjective in his attitude. He thought *he* knew a better, more attractive sacrifice than that which God had bidden him to bring. And when his sacrifice was rejected "he was angry and his countenance fell." And *then*, when God gave him the most valid reason why he was wrong to be angry, he went out and, in a jealous rage, bludgeoned his brother to death. And when God judged him for *that*, he complained, "*My punishment is greater than I can bear*" (Gen. 4:5-13).

In it all he showed a subjective, self-centered spirit. How much better off he had been if, like Abel, he had simply taken God at His Word and offered the required sacrifice! Thus he would have "obtained witness that he was righteous" and, like Abel, would to this day have borne testimony to the wisdom and blessing of heeding and obeying God (Heb. 11:4).

The priest of Luke 10:31 was *subjective* as he "passed by" the "half dead" victim of a robbery. He thought: "What will happen to *me* if I stop to help him?" But the "good Samaritan" was *objective*. He thought: "What will happen to *him* if I *don't* stop to help him?"

Pastors, of all men, should be *objective* in their attitude, and they will find such an attitude richly rewarding. Thus adversities will not be so devastating, but will become challenges to faith and lessons by which they will learn to cope with the "up hill" nature of the ministry—and, indeed, of the Christian life. Adversities will gain for them new victories and raise them to new heights of spiritual blessing.

But a subjective attitude in a pastor will tend to make him yield to personal prejudice rather than to truth. He will be apt to make judgments based on his own interests, and when overtaken by some error or sin, will become introspective, and go to the *wrong* source—*self*—for help, determining to avoid this pitfall next time. How much Paul has to say about this! Besides personal prejudice, however, subjective living will tend to discouragement, suspicion, fear, mere emotional reactions and dissatisfaction with one's circumstances in life, of his treatment by others, etc.

Let us then, by the grace of God, do away forever with subjective thinking and, like "our beloved brother Paul," rejoice in the task to be accomplished, rejoicing with him that "*the glorious gospel of the blessed God*" has been "*committed to [our] trust*" (I Tim. 1:11).

About Seeking Advice

“Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and are written for our admonition....”

At age 78 I’m going to venture a suggestion to you, our younger pastors, that you will probably never receive from your peers.

Rehoboam was not 20 years old, or 25, but 41, when he ascended the throne of Israel (II Chron. 12:13). Due to serious restlessness in Israel at the time he was urgently in need of sound advice.

He went first to the “old men,” who had “stood before Solomon, his father,” and had exactly the experience to advise him wisely. But Rehoboam didn’t like the *kind* of advice they gave. He was still young and vigorous, and sought *bolder* advice. So...

“...he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men, that were grown up with him, and which stood before him” (I Kings 12:8).

After all, these were no longer “kids.” They were mostly in their early forties, and forward-looking young men. Ah, but the “old men” possessed one thing in abundant measure that the “young men” still lacked; many long years of *experience*, experience in the very field in which Rehoboam needed seasoned advice.

The “young men” did indeed give Rehoboam bolder advice. They said, in effect: “Call them together and tell them that you will be a much stronger leader than your father, Solomon, ever was, and that if they rebel, you will chastise them more severely than he ever did.” (See I Kings 12:10, 11).

Result: Rehoboam lost 10 of the 12 tribes⁵ in a breach so deep that it has never been healed—and will not be until the return of Christ. One can imagine Rehoboam now going to his young advisers and saying, “I wasn’t expecting this; now what shall we do?” There was nothing to do; it was now too late. And the secession of the ten tribes was not the most disastrous results of his folly, for soon the ten tribes apostatized *against God*, and not long after that the remaining two, Judah and Benjamin, did the same.

What lesson have we here for the young pastor? Just this: Tap the spiritual, moral and intellectual resources of the older saints in your congregation. Some of them may prove the best, most valuable friends you ever had.

If the writer may give his personal testimony: I am profoundly grateful that I grew up before the disintegration of the family and the accompanying “generation gap” had ever begun to set in. We spent our evenings *together*, mostly at home, and these were happier days indeed than the unsettled and wicked days in which we now live.

There were three “old men” in my life whose inspiration still lives on in me today. Mr. Herman Braker, then nearly 70 and I in my early 20s, would say to *others*, “Have you heard Neill Stam speak? Oh, you should hear him!” But to *me*, always privately, he would say, “Do you realize what you said tonight?” and then point out where I had unwittingly taught some untruth. Or, he would say, “The Lord was surely with you tonight. I enjoyed that.”

⁵ The phrase: “*for the cause was from the Lord*,” in I Kings 12:15, may well indicate that God had given Rehoboam up to his own headstrong way.

Then there was my own father. Though an exceedingly busy man, he would see that we somehow spent time together, perhaps in a walk home or the like. He was more cautious about his criticisms, yet also more searching, and as the years went by I became more and more deeply touched by his fatherly care and his wisdom. Since I was the 7th-born in the family, he was an elderly man by the time I had grown up, but I don't believe I ever noticed a "generation gap"—we lived closer to Lev. 19:32 in those days—though it was always natural for young people to give greater heed to those of their own age.

Finally, there was that giant of the faith, Pastor J. C. O'Hair. What an honor to have him as a friend! I got to know him in my early twenties, only he lived in Chicago and I in New Jersey, so ours was more of an acquaintance than a close friendship at that time. By the time I was 41, however, he was well into his seventies, and it was in the ten years after that that he became a true *friend* to me. He was more outspoken than the other two "old men"—occasionally he even reproved me—but he so wanted me to be well established in doctrine and practice, that his words of criticism and advice were deeply appreciated.

I shall never cease to be grateful for these three great men of God and their help and inspiration in the cause of Christ. Their memory, especially *in this respect*, is still a great inspiration to me.

So young pastor-friend, do cultivate a true friendship with the older believers in your congregation, and look to them often for advice. Some of them may prove to be the best friends you ever had. Let's not allow the present "generation gap" to affect us adversely, for it comes straight from human pride and the present trend toward Godlessness. May God help us to show this sad, wicked world something better than the modern lifestyle.

The Pastor and His Official Board Who's Boss?

A young pastor once asked me, “Do I have to consult our official board every time I want to hold special meetings?” I answered, I hope not too harshly, “You had better consult the board about holding special meetings if you expect them to co-operate enthusiastically; and you do need their co-operation.”

Every time we had a new class in Pastoral Theology at *Milwaukee Bible Institute*, back in the 1940's, a question would eventually arise about *authority* in the church. “Who's the final authority?” some student would ask, “Who has the final say-so?”

Sometimes, I had the feeling that at this point the flesh had entered in and that it would be necessary to answer this question, not directly, but from the standpoint of a Scriptural *attitude*.

I did realize, however, that at times differences of opinion—even conviction—might arise between the pastor and the members of his board, or, perhaps *certain* members of his board who might dominate the thinking of the rest. Such problems are not always easy to solve.

When the above question was asked, I generally enquired of the student *why* he had asked it, and sometimes this naturally brought us to the many Scriptures that teach that “*God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble*” (I Pet. 5:5 cf. Psa. 138:6, Jas. 4:6). Also that further exhortation:

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand⁶ of God, that He may exalt you⁷ in due time” (I Pet. 5:6).

It is important to remember that with authority comes responsibility, and that if the pastor exercises full and final authority in his church, he should be prepared to take full responsibility and all the accompanying criticism for his actions.

There have been pastors who have controlled their congregations and their official board as veritable dictators. And some of these have proved “successful”—at least in the numerical growth of their congregations. Indeed some of these have become great teachers of the Word despite their autocratic methods—but this does not make it right, or pleasing to God.

But, the question may be asked, is it not a fact that God called the *pastor* into the ministry, not the businessmen who make up his board? This, at least in part, is true, but the Word also places great responsibility upon the bishops or elders of the congregation (Acts 20:17-32; I Tim. 3:1-7).

The elders, thus responsible, might well argue that *they* are the ones who, under God, have engaged the pastor to minister among them, and not the reverse. Indeed, after the pastor has gone, the official board will still be there, and still responsible to seek God's will as to their next pastor.

Ah, but the pastor may respond, “They sought my services as a *leader*, not as a hireling.”

What, then, is the answer to this sometimes-difficult question?

⁶ He could crush us.

⁷ As His true servant.

First, it should be noted that here is where the element of *respect* enters in. A pastor may be totally in charge, yet lack sincere respect from those to whom, and with whom, he ministers. Such “authority” must have a bitter aftertaste. But if he has gained their *respect* by godly living, honesty, forthrightness, love, patience, true humility and an objective concern for the work God has entrusted to him, they will be apt to *seek* his guidance and will cooperate the more enthusiastically with him.⁸

After all is said and done, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the degree of the pastor’s authority—certainly of his influence—will be measured exactly by the degree of his moral integrity and true spirituality.

⁸ This is not to deny, of course, that some pastors *do* gain enthusiastic support by methods that are less than spiritual.

Let's Back Up a Bit

It's no good pressing forward when you're going in the wrong direction. Rather go back and start over.

During more than 60 years in service of the Lord I have witnessed a sad change in evangelism and preaching, and the great Bible conferences of yesteryear have all but vanished. In my youth it was not uncommon for the evangelist or pastor to pray that he might be hid behind the cross. That is, it was his desire that his hearers might leave the auditorium saying, not, "What a preacher!" but "*What a Savior!*" My own pastor was one of these and, by the grace of God, succeeded in doing just that. Sunday after Sunday we left the services overwhelmed at the riches of the grace of God.

But things have changed since then, for all too many religious leaders, like the religious leaders of our Lord's day (John 12:43) "*love the praise of men.*" And modern preaching methods have had much to do with this.

I have appeared on TV only seven times. Four of these were at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where the grace believers had simply called the TV station, informing them that I would be preaching at the *Berean Bible Church* there, and as a result I was invited, each time, to appear for a talk program. All four of these were grand opportunities to witness for Christ.

In another case, however, I was asked to preach, and for this we had to "go over the show together"—really in a practice session, to make sure it would be interesting. "Hold your Bible this way," someone suggested. "Point at a verse once in a while. Hold it up when you're reading from it, then hold it casually at your side or put it on the stand once in a while. And use different facial expressions. Smile, frown, look sad or happy as your sermon may suggest." Soon I'd had enough of that and asked, "Did you ask me here as a preacher or a performer?" At that they backed off and I was permitted just to preach from the heart, and in my own way.

Those were the early days, but now—in many large televised religious services the background has to be made attractive or striking, like the props on secular TV shows, often lavishly so. The lighting had to be perfect, the spotlight often following the speaker all over the platform. Some take no pains to hide the substantial cost of all this or, indeed, of their own affluence. And the big service must begin with a half hour or so of entertainment; good "Christian" entertainment, of course, but *entertainment*. Celebrities from almost every field, many still novices spiritually, or half in the world, are asked to take part; all kinds of special music is provided, etc. All this is done to get the people to attend the service or to tune in TV, and "*then we preach the gospel to them*" it is explained.

There is no Scriptural precedent whatever for this, nor for the constant applause for the preacher when he says something that pleases the audience. This only puffs up the flesh.

Do you know what Chrysostom (about 375 A.D.) said when his audience applauded his remarks? "Am I a *performer*," he asked, "that you should constantly interrupt me with your applause? I would rather have you listen to me with an earnest desire to *do what I say*." And on another occasion: "Is this the theater, that you cannot let me finish a sentence without interrupting me with your applause? Are you really *listening* to what I say?"

Doesn't it seem sometimes that we're right back in Chrysostom's day? The performers of this world do "eat up" that applause, and is there not a great possibility that *we* might be just as susceptible to the exhilaration of being in the public eye, and as pleased with the applause or the standing ovation? This is not exactly hiding behind the cross, is it?

The basic difference between, say, the 1930s and the 1980s in this regard is that back then we went to evangelistic services and Bible conferences not merely to be inspired, much less entertained, but to hear what the preacher had to teach us from the Word. And this had profound results, spiritually.

God help us not to aim at “doing things big,” and certainly not at *being* big, to be seen and heard by vast throngs. To really enjoy the power of the Spirit in our preaching we must put the “*seen and heard*” where it belongs:

“And Peter and John answered...We cannot *but* speak the things which we have *seen and heard*” (Acts 4:20).

“And Ananias said [to Paul]...Thou shalt be a witness to all men of what thou hast *seen and heard*” (Acts 22:15).

These words by Peter and Paul respectively, explain just what true evangelism is. The witness in court is not asked what he *thinks*, or what his *opinion* is, but what he has *seen and heard: what he knows to be the truth*. And thus it is our calling to bear witness to men of what God has revealed to us in His Word as *the truth*. If we do this humbly and faithfully we may well, like Paul, be “unknown, yet well known,” but who would long for greater *results* from their ministry than *he* had?

As I read the writings of great men of God from earlier centuries, like J. S. Howson, Alexander Whyte, *et al*, I often say to myself: “How I wish I could have attended *his* church and partaken of the spiritual feasts he spread before his hearers!” For these men became spiritual leaders, not because they were spell-binders, or had learned how to do things big, but because of *what they said*. That’s how their books became standard works. People, even of succeeding generations, wanted more and more of their teachings from the Word.

May it be thus with you and me, dear young friend, for God would have us *bear witness*, simply and sincerely, of the *truth* He has revealed to us.

The Pastor and His Prayer Life

As the pastor left his car with the mechanic at the service station, he said, “Now when you make up the bill, remember, I’m only a poor preacher.” “I know, I know,” said the mechanic, “I’ve heard you preach.”

Perhaps the pastor felt that this wasn’t so funny, for there are indeed many “poor preachers” in this land of plenty, pastors who find it very difficult to make ends meet. This is never easy, but financial need does tend to drive us to our knees, and thus into closer fellowship with God. And, as we are faithful, truly needed funds *will* be supplied. This writer knows what it is to be really poor though, by the grace of God, he has never owed a bill he could not pay. As a friend put it: “He always started worrying early enough!” That was true. We so dreaded any inability to pay our bills that we started praying and doing things well ahead of any foreseen problems.

But *spiritual poverty*! This is positively *devastating*! Any true man of God should prefer financial need to a lack of spiritual food to set before his congregation. Sad to say, however, this is not the attitude of all preachers, and as a result many, even, who are generously cared for, are still “poor preachers,” with starved congregations. Such pastors must, if at all conscientious, be troubled over the constantly-repeated evidences of their spiritual poverty. Again and again as they leave their pulpits, it must bother them that they have contributed little or nothing toward the *spiritual growth* of the people committed to their care, some of whom, at least, might have been sincerely longing for spiritual food and drink, and some even for salvation itself.

This brings us face to face with two profoundly important facts:

1. We cannot spread a spiritual feast before our people without *diligently obeying II Tim. 2:15*. Fruitful preaching is *not* one of the gifts of the Spirit, Pentecostal or otherwise; it is rather the result of *diligent, prayerful study of the Word*. This takes time and energy, but it *must* have the priority. Whatever natural gifts we possess—bestowed, of course, by the Holy Spirit—these must contribute to, or be the vehicles of, preaching that results from faithful study of the Word of God.

Pity the pastor who fails to spend much time in the study of the Word—perhaps because of the subconscious feeling that organizing, advertising—and compromising, must come first. He *must* keep that congregation and keep it growing in numbers, he feels, by these superficial and often God-dishonoring means.

2. We can’t expect light from the Word, or God’s help in our preaching, if we do not sincerely *ask* Him for it.

Many pastors need to spend more time in *earnest prayer* for God’s blessing on their study and proclamation of the Word: prayer in which they really *get close to God* and beseech Him to do His work through them. Paul asked for the help of others in such prayer, “*that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified*” (II Thes. 3:1).

Perhaps a personal testimony will help here. Your writer is but a feeble example of what a pastor ought to be, but it *was* his habit, when in the pastorate, to pray repeatedly and earnestly in preparing for each service: “O, God, please don’t let this be just another service. Make it one in which every single hearer will be *fed* and *blessed*.” God, in His love and grace, *did* answer these prayers far beyond our poor qualifications, and eventually led us into wider fields of service for Christ. And yet the monster, pride, seeks to make us sure of ourselves and careless about prayer. Thus we must keep ever praying for a right attitude and for *His* help in our ministry for Him.

“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. 4:16).

And let us do this so that we may indeed proclaim our God-given message, *“not...in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance”* (I Thes. 1:5).

Your Time

“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

—Psalm 90:12

Years ago, when a city missionary at the *Star of Hope Mission* of Paterson, N. J., we encountered a problem that proved difficult to overcome.

Located as we were, near the corner of Main Street and Broadway, and next to the *Central Bus Depot*, it was more than convenient for friends to stop by and pass the time of day.

Many working hours were lost as friends of the various staff members came in just to chat with the workers they knew.

Dad, of course, recognized the fact that this wasted time represented wasted *money—the Lord’s money*, much of it contributed sacrificially by friends of the work.

How to cope with this problem? It wouldn’t be easy!

Dad began by putting up an attractive sign which read:

**OUR TIME IS PRECIOUS
PLEASE DO NOT WASTE IT**

Two days of this, however, and he realized that this was no way to greet visitors to the *Star of Hope*. He therefore replaced the sign with another, aimed more directly at the members of our staff. It read:

**YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS
PLEASE DO NOT WASTE IT**

Even this troubled him, however, and soon he replaced it with a *third* sign, reading:

**TIME IS PRECIOUS
LET’S NOT WASTE IT**

Even this did not fully correct the situation, but it stayed there as a reminder that wasting time is unproductive. In fact, it troubled me deeply one night as I read Psalm 90:12 above.

Some six weeks previous Henrietta⁹ and I had been invited to a friend’s home just for a night of games and relaxation. Any betting would, of course, have been out of the question and the games we played were all wholesome and good for easing tensions. The evening passed with laughter and fun until midnight. It was delightful. So we all agreed to “do it again next week.” Soon it became a regular weekly date.

⁹ My first wife, who went to be with the Lord in 1971.

The trouble was that I already had been taking one day a week off and that this additional night seemed so useless and unprofitable after the novelty of it had worn off. Soon I was departing each week—always late at night—with “ho hos” and “ha has” running through my mind like so many accusations for wasting valuable time—time which I had spent in revelry while souls were perishing about me. And I had dedicated my life to the Lord as a missionary and, more recently, as a pastor! How could the Lord be pleased with this?

As I discussed the matter with Henrietta I found that she had the same feelings about it, so we decided then and there to discontinue our weekly “fun nights,” explaining our reasons as graciously as possible to the dear ones who had invited us.

Psalm 90:12, above, is a good prayer to pray. There is nothing dispensational about it. It would be foolish and wrong for any servant of Christ *not* to number his days, and to use them accordingly. Each day is a gift from God, to be used for His glory and to bring salvation and blessing to others.

Granted, as we number our days we should count in at least one each week for rest and relaxation. Some, for health reasons, need more. But let’s not *waste* time in mere revelry and frivolity, for we can *accomplish things for God* only by exerting the necessary *effort*—by faithful *toil*.

TIME IS PRECIOUS LET’S NOT WASTE IT

“One day is *with the Lord* as a thousand years,” but one day with us lasts only 24 hours, during at least one third of which we must eat and sleep. So let us sincerely pray the Psalmist’s prayer:

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Your Reading

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

“Till I come, give attendance to reading....”

—I Tim. 4:13

Various interpretations have been placed upon the above exhortation by the Apostle Paul. Mainly, it has been made to refer to *Bible* reading, even to public Bible reading in the churches. But your Editor is one of those who believes that the passage means *just what it says*.

Of course the written Word of God would lie at the center of all of Timothy’s reading, and *of course* he would read the Bible publicly to his congregation at Ephesus, but when we *read into* the Scripture that which it does not say, we are bound to lose much blessing.

The Christian pastor should be a *reader*. In the light of the fact that God says in His Word that our ascended Lord “gave” to the Church “some” who are “pastors and teachers,” (i.e., to feed and enlighten us) we should all seek to learn from these God-given men.

It is a sad fact that many pastors, even some prominent pastors, do not give attention to reading, much less to the *study* of the Scriptures. Any pastor who is not a reader should begin *at once* to cultivate the habit. We pity illiterate pagan tribes, but actually, one who *does not* read is no better off than one who *cannot* read.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was born into a fortunate family where books are concerned. There were ten of us and plenty of good books for all—literally in every room of the house except the bathroom. Even the kitchen contained a stack of precious books—Bibles!—from which we read daily at mealtimes.

Among the books in our home there was a minimum of novels, a maximum of Bible commentaries and topical studies, plus a few reference books, history books, biographies, etc. This “figured,” for dad had been saved and his life revolutionized as he tried to learn English out of a Dutch-English New Testament. He had learned firsthand that the Bible is indeed “living and powerful.”

My brother John and I already had small rival libraries at 15 and 16 years of age, and by the time we were 18 we knew all the second-hand bookstores on New York’s Fourth Avenue, including the Communist bookstores, where the proprietors, not knowing the value of “religious” books, would sell us many sought-after volumes at most reasonable prices.

We had gotten started early. Indeed, in our early teens we were already deeply involved in reading the writings of great men of God. Often at night we would sit up in bed, reading by flashlight, so that mother would not know that we were still awake! And now, in our late teens, we were familiar to most of the Fourth Avenue book merchants, who helped us to find many a book on our “wanted list.”

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT BOOKS

But how did we choose Bible study books and avoid spending our meager allowances on books that might undermine rather than establish our faith?

Well, first, there were more good, sound Bible study books available in those days, 50-60 years ago. The Christian bookstores of those days were largely filled with Bible commentaries and topical studies—a far cry from the average Christian bookstore today, where one might find *all* of its Bible commentaries on one or two small shelves. The Introduction to the *Scofield Reference Bible*, written in 1909, correctly states:

“The last fifty years have witnessed an intensity and breadth of interest in Bible study unprecedented in the history of the Christian Church. Never before have so many reverent, learned and spiritual men brought to the study of the Scriptures minds so free from merely controversial motive. A new and vast exegetical and expository literature has been created....”

This continued for at least another 30 years and the Church (i.e., the body of Fundamentalist believers) made real progress in the understanding of the Word, rightly divided—until the question of the so-called “Great Commission” and its water baptism and miraculous signs came to the fore, and increasingly Fundamentalist pastors and Bible teachers *opposed* the teaching of “the revelation of the mystery,” with its “one Body” and “one baptism.” This neutralized the teachings of many otherwise great men of God.

So we have about 40 years before the turn of the century and 40 years after, when “so many reverent, learned and spiritual men of God brought to the study of the Scriptures minds [remarkably] free from merely controversial motive.”

But how did we *find out* about good Bible study material? And then, how did we *find* these books, for many of them were already out of print.

OUR PROCEDURE

Well, let’s say that we were richly blessed in reading a book by Sir Robert Anderson (still one of the Editor’s favorite authors) and in that book he mentioned an “invaluable book by Dean J. S. Howson.” We would write that down on our “wanted lists” and go search for it at the second-hand bookstores. And *there* we would find that Howson had written *The Metaphors of St. Paul*, *The Companions of St. Paul*, *the Character of St. Paul*, and had co-authored *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, all valuable aides in Bible study, and tending to help one express himself carefully and clearly, as did Dr. Howson.

John and I always carried “wanted lists” with us and would check off the titles as we located and purchased them. How many anecdotes I could tell about our rivalry in building up our libraries! At one time John would find a book I had long searched for in vain, and at another it would be reversed.

For years we both searched high and low for Thomas Chalmers' *Astronomical Discourses*, a volume highly recommended by several men of God whose judgment we deeply respected. Finally, one day, I found a copy in a Communist bookstore! It was in "good"¹⁰ condition, and inside the front cover was written in pencil, "15¢." Fifteen cents? That *couldn't* be right! So I went to the sales clerk and asked, "Is this right?" "Yes," he said, and I straightway relieved the Communist bookstore of a very precious volume! And what an eye-opener! I had expected it to be a book about the stars and planets and, perhaps, the greatness of God displayed in creation. I was not prepared to read a book on astronomy that so encouraged and strengthened me *in the faith*. Chalmers had used the vastness of astral space (and I am writing from memory now), the size of the stars and planets, their speed in travel, etc., to point out the amazing fact of God's grace that the Creator of this vast universe had visited one tiny speck of dust (Earth) among all the mighty heavenly bodies, and had taken upon Himself the form of the little "nothings" inhabiting it, and each generation for only a short time, to suffer and die and rise again to redeem them from the condemnation into which they had fallen through sin.

The thrust of his argument? A challenge to the unbeliever: You don't believe this amazing story of grace? Mere observation should tell you that God is infinite in power, and wisdom, and glory, and in His wrath upon sin. Well, must this not be because *He* is infinite? And if *He* is infinite, must not His love be infinite too—as infinite as His wrath upon sin and all His other attributes and characteristics? Ah, then, this amazing story of grace must be true!

But back to our procedure in locating and securing good Bible study books. I would recommend to all young pastors the procedure described above. Indeed, with this in mind we have prepared a list (available upon request) of some of the books in my own library,¹¹ any of which should bring light and blessing to their readers, and *some* of which *Berean Bible Society* may be able to secure for you. For the rest, you will have to do the searching, but our list provides the names and addresses of two fine bookstores, either of which will even go so far as to put out a search for any given title. PLEASE do not ask us to make such searches for you, however. We have quite enough to do here, and time and strength are limited.

Has this article, perhaps, fallen into the hands of one who believes that "the Holy Spirit is enough," and that a Bible, a concordance and writing tablet alone are a better defense against false doctrine? Well, don't you go to hear some servant of God teach the Word from time to time? Then why not *read* what they have to say? Perhaps you should reconsider, in its context, the Scripture passage with which we opened this article. God bless you as, perhaps, you begin a new adventure in the study of the Word.

¹⁰ In those days they rated second-hand books as "fair," "good" and "excellent."

¹¹ Already donated to *Berean Bible Society*, however.

Meditation: A Lost Precious Art

**“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.”
—I Tim. 4:15**

I suppose there must be few college graduates who have won their diplomas without some “cramming.” A heavy schedule, sickness or perhaps lack of attention have caught up with students so that he finds himself, at the close of the term, unprepared for an important exam which is scheduled for the next day.

Tomorrow is the day of reckoning. He *may not* fail! So, absent-mindedly, he munches a sandwich that evening while his attention is riveted to a textbook. Hour after hour he continues, far into the night until, at two or three in the morning, he wearily puts his work aside and goes to bed with forebodings about the morrow.

Pastors sometimes cram too. On one occasion, some years ago, I sat next to a pastor at a Sunday morning service as he was about to deliver the morning message. As the preliminaries drew to a close he leaned toward me and said, “Pray for me; I didn’t crack a book until 11:30 last night.”

How sad! Does one prepare for a message from the Word of God by consulting a few books? Is preparation for a Spirit-empowered message merely a matter of *research*? No! A pastor should not cram for his message except in the most desperate emergencies. Then, and then alone, will God graciously come to the rescue and enable him to preach in the power of the Spirit. There is no reason why God should bless a “brilliant” ad-lib message when He has forewarned us that He “approves” only those who “*study*” the Word—with a view to “rightly dividing” it.

Studying the Word of God is not the same as studying mathematics or history or psychology, and failing to proclaim the Word to needy souls in the power of the Spirit is far more disastrous than failure to pass some exam at college.

The pastor should study the Word, not merely to master a subject but to have *fellowship with God*. If we have fellowship with God in prayer, how much sweeter should be our fellowship with Him in the study of, and meditation upon, His Word, as we *listen and learn* while *He* speaks! And if it is rude to hurry a friend in conversation, it would surely be most uncalled for to say to the Lord, as it were, “Please hurry. I’ve got to be ready with these sermons tomorrow, and I want to get to bed!” Yet this is what some pastors are doing, in effect, as they cram on Saturday night for Sunday’s sermons.

Result: The man who should be preaching the Word in power is too tired, physically and too lethargic spiritually, to do his hearers much good. Further result: His hearers remain uninspired and unchallenged and may well suffer spiritually for a long time to come, just because the pastor failed to give due consideration to the preparation of his messages; he failed to *meditate* on the Word and *ponder* prayerfully over its meaning.

How important it is for the man of God to *take* the necessary time to study the Word of God *at leisure*, so that his period of preparation may be a time of *fellowship with God*, a time of spiritual enlightenment and renewal. This is his solemn obligation to God and to those entrusted to his spiritual care. This goes for the Sunday School teachers too, for we cannot expect God to bless and use us on Sunday mornings if we “appear on the job” worn out and ill-prepared. Little wonder Paul wrote to Timothy, that gifted teacher of the Word:

**“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all”
(I Tim. 4:15).**

What student of the Word does not know that *meditation*, or *intense thinking* upon a subject is wearying to the flesh. But the results are most rewarding, for here, not physical strength or fitness, but spiritual power, or rather, *the power of the Spirit*, is the prize.

While a pastor this writer kept Saturday evenings inviolate—no social visits—to put the finishing touches on Sunday’s messages *at leisure* so as to be fresh in body and spirit when preaching the Word on Sunday. The week was for research, study and meditation, but Saturday was the day for *final considerations*, with the prayer often uttered: “Dear Lord, please don’t let these services be just ordinary services, but very special ones.”

We recommend these practices to pastors and Sunday School teachers who may be tempted to neglect their time with the Word during the week, then go visiting socially on Saturday night, with only “cramming time” in between, so that their ministry suffers both in understanding of the Word and in the spiritual power that should attend us whenever we preach.

Even at best our divine Teacher has poor material with which to work. We learn all too slowly the precious lessons He would teach us from His Word, so let us *take* the time to give Him *our undivided attention*. The results will be thrilling.

Your Correspondence and Writing

This time let's consider briefly a very practical—and very important—subject: Your correspondence and writing.

If someone said “Hello” to you and asked you a question, wouldn't it be rude of you to walk on and pay no attention? Well then, if someone wrote you a letter and you just let it lie around until, probably, it never got answered at all, wouldn't *that* be rude? Wouldn't it be unkind not even to give him the courtesy of a reply?

I am sorry to have to say that in my own experience some ministers have been among the worst offenders where unanswered correspondence is concerned.

I don't believe that in general this has been due to self-importance. I think it's just irresponsibility in that area. Whatever the reason, we wouldn't want *you* to be that irresponsible—especially if you are hoping that God will use you to any great degree as a pastor in His service. So—don't let that letter lie around unanswered; answer it *promptly*. The person at the other end will appreciate it.

This is not to say that there may not be times when it might be better *not* to write, for sometimes we may receive letters to which the best, most eloquent response might be no response at all. But such cases are surely rare.

There's more to this, though. Why not *use* your correspondence to improve your English. Years ago, when I was 20 or so, I was asked to acknowledge gifts sent to the *Star of Hope Mission*, of Paterson, N. J. Dad, the founder and president of the Mission, took great pains to impress upon me the importance of careful writing. He had had to learn English the hard way, from a Dutch-English (parallel column) New Testament—and he wanted to make sure that his children could express themselves well.

One time he gave me a book containing correspondence between the great women of Revolutionary times: Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, and others. These women did correspond about the war, politics and foreign affairs, but mostly their letters were mainly about bringing up the children, cooking, housekeeping, what they grew in their gardens, etc. Yet they expressed themselves so beautifully that I *loved* to read that book. That—not my English classes—was my first love affair with the English language. After that I drooled as I heard Churchill speak, and envied men like J. S. Howson—still do—for the clarity and elegance with which they expressed their thoughts.

So—don't just answer letters. Write thoughtfully, using your dictionary and your *Roget's Thesaurus* (You don't have one! Shame—better get one without delay) when looking for just the right word to express what you are trying to say.

One more thing: Why not ask your board to let you use the back page of your weekly bulletin for a Bible study message. Or maybe you already have charge of what goes into the bulletin. The *Berean Searchlight* was the outgrowth of the weekly bulletin of the church I pastored some 50 years ago. Indeed, this weekly message became a real help in the growth of our church. People would hand this “message by our pastor” to their friends, neighbors and loved ones, and some of them became interested enough to attend the services.

Finally, let's get back to the basic thought of this brief article. Don't be so unthoughtful, so inconsiderate—so *rude*, as to fail to answer your correspondence. If you do, you will not only do others an injustice, but will stifle your own witness for Christ, which could be greatly enhanced if He could use you as a *writer*, whose thoughts from the Word might be read again and again with blessing.

Pastoral Visitation

“Here he comes! Here he is! There he goes!” That’s how a member of my New Jersey congregation described my pastoral visits back in the 1930’s.

Be assured that the statement was made in pure fun, for while I suspect that that whole family would have appreciated longer visits, they know that their pastor was busy and appreciated the fact that he had cared about them enough to stop by when he could.

Yes, visiting the individual families in your congregation is important. Don’t ever deceive yourself into thinking that you are the kind of person who should give his time only to preaching, with little or no emphasis on *visiting*. It’s too bad when the members of the congregation must say, “He’s a good preacher but he never calls on those who need his help or encouragement.” Now you may be able to give me a list of such pastors—some of whom may have been very “successful,” but let’s remember that the mere size of an audience does not measure our success.

Preaching, however effective, can never take the place of a personal visit in the fellowship of a home. Think what a contribution Aquila and Priscilla made to the cause of Christ when they invited Apollos, evidently *to their home*, and there “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26). Surely Apollos never forgot that visit!

But can’t a pastor be too busy to visit the individual members of his congregation? Well, would you say Paul was busy during his two years at Ephesus? Read Acts 19:8-10 and 18-20 and see. Yet later, when apostasy threatened, he was able to remind them: “I...have taught you publicly and *from house to house*” (Acts 20:20).

Years ago I was instrumental in getting a young pastor into a small country church, but it didn’t take long before I began receiving complaints. “He walks through the children’s department of the Sunday School with head high and never even says ‘Hello’ to anybody....If you stop at his home he’ll be in the living room with his feet up on the hassock, looking at TV, and he’s almost always home for he never visits anybody.” Some six months later I visited the church and the pastor, hoping to help in some way. I invited the pastor to lunch, and we had hardly sat down when he asked: “You once had a small church: what did you do with your time?” I almost exploded: “What did I do with my time? I never had enough of it,” and told him how the *Berean Searchlight*, my radio ministry and several Bible classes took all the time I had without robbing my Bible study and home visitation of the time they demanded. Poor man! He had only a small church, and instead of cultivating that young plant, he was bored because he had so much time on his hands. Dear young pastor, or prospective pastor, don’t let that ever happen to you. Busy or blessed with extra time, don’t let any member of your congregation say: “I’ve been ill now for almost a year and pastor hasn’t visited me once.” Or, “My wife died six months ago and he’s never visited me since.” Or, “I’ve been alone now for a long, long time, and a visit from pastor would mean so much.” Such irresponsibility and lack of thoughtfulness is not only sad; it’s reprehensible.

There are pitfalls to visiting, of course, and problems as to *when* to visit, but if you really want to fulfil this part of your ministry the Lord will help you to work that out.

Try to visit when husband and wife are both home, and if you must visit a wife alone, try to take your wife with you, if that's possible, or some friend, but don't visit her alone unless she is a woman well on in years. Don't come to preach, but to have fellowship in the Word. Don't be formal, yet not too familiar at first either. Don't stay too long—much better to make the visit too short. Some pastors in both their preaching and their visiting are like Cincinnati *used* to be: no terminal facilities! So—unless there is a very special reason, don't stay too long. Leave them longing rather than loathing, for it's very easy to wear out one's welcome.

There is so much more to say along this line, but God has given you a good set of brains; use them for His glory as you serve the members of your God-given congregation with all that is in you.

The Church Service—Part I

“Let all things be done decently and in order.”

—I Cor. 14:40

THE LOCAL CHURCH AND THE CHURCH BUILDING

How many church bulletins contain such exhortations as the following: “As you enter the house of God, enter reverently,” etc., or “The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him,” followed with a request for silence and reverence in the “house of God.”

Such sentiments come from the minds of religious people who do not realize that God has no house or temple on earth today except *His people*. Just so, the local church is not a building, but those who gather together in it. The word “church” (Gr., *ekklesia*) simply means a “called out” assembly.

Yet, if we dedicate our homes, our automobiles, our money and ourselves to God, how much more appropriate it is to dedicate to Him the building in which we meet to worship Him, pray to Him, study His Word and sing His praises! Such a building should be known pre-eminently and consistently as a place where Christians meet to worship God and where lost and needy souls may go to hear the Word taught and the gospel proclaimed.

Therefore the need of Paul’s Spirit-inspired words to the church at Corinth: “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*”

DISORDER IN THE CHURCH

In our day, the above passage, perhaps, applies most directly to the Charismatics, among whom much disorder is found. This disorder stems mostly from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures and ignorance of dispensational truth. But it is the disorder itself to which we address ourselves in this article. In I Cor. 14:26 the apostle states:

“...when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.” This he condemns, adding: “*Let all things be done unto edifying.*”¹²

“Ye may all prophesy” he says in Ver. 31, but do it “*one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted.*”

If these passages of Scripture applied to the Corinthian church of Paul’s day, how much more do they apply to the *Charismatic Church* of our day!

This writer has visited numerous Pentecostal meetings and has on occasion witnessed almost indescribable confusion. At one such service the speaker would leap into the air and cry, “This overwhelms me!” while later, when he asked all to kneel in prayer, a great flood tide of human emotion was released. Some prayed, some sang, some moaned, some chanted, some lifted their hands, some pounded their knees with their fists, and many spoke in “tongues.” All was confusion.

¹² From which our word *edifice, building*. He refers to the building up of the church, spiritually.

Many were on their knees, but we had chosen to remain in our seats, suspecting that this sort of thing would take place. Thus in front of us and now facing us was an average-looking man who gave clear evidence that it was *not* the Spirit of God that controlled him. Evidently under the control of some power outside himself, he kept alternately uttering some sort of gibberish, and repeating the words, “*Save souls, save souls, save souls...*” perhaps a dozen times in succession so fast that one wondered how he could possibly articulate the words with such rapidity.¹³ What a travesty on Pentecost! What a gross violation of God’s Word in I Corinthians 14!

VARIED FORMS OF DISORDER

But other forms of disorder often prevail in otherwise fine, Fundamentalist, Bible-believing, Christ-centered churches, and we must always be on guard against the Adversary, who would fain use disorder to hinder Christians from thinking clearly and deprive lost souls of the point and power of the gospel of His grace. Pure irresponsibility on the part of God’s children often assists Satan in this objective.

The Editor spent several years of his life teaching the Word all across the land—years in which he became increasingly convicted of the importance of *order* in the local church.

In one church he witnessed children playing “tag” in the aisles in the fifteen minutes between Sunday School and the morning service, with no one doing anything about it. Often he has observed considerable noise and confusion going on right up to the time when the organist has sought to drown it out by playing some hymn. Surely this would not serve either to prepare God’s people for a time of blessing, or the unsaved to receive Christ as their Savior.

In such cases perhaps the pastor, the elders of the church, and the parents must all share the blame. They should kindly, but firmly see to it that the working of the Spirit is not hindered in this way. It is no doubt normal for those who have not seen each other for, perhaps a week, to want to greet each other and enjoy fellowship together, but it must always be borne in mind that the *prime reason* for even holding the service is *fellowship in the Word* and in the things of God—and the unsaved who are present must feel this to be so.

Even when the members of the congregation are simply standing around talking, it’s a good idea for the elders of the church to begin quieting things down at least five minutes or so before the service is to begin. All it generally takes is for two or three to move about among the people with hands slightly raised, giving notice: “We’re going to start in a few minutes.” Generally this will start the people moving toward their seats, especially if the pastor has made an announcement to the effect that this will be the procedure in the future.

Another problem that has been met with in churches large and small, is the disturbance that results when a few young people sit together who should be sitting with their parents. The pastor should never permit such disturbance to continue for long, for it will surely tend to hinder others from keeping their full attention on the preaching of the Word. Perhaps he could ask one or two of the boys to sit elsewhere, or ask some adult: “Would you be so kind as to sit with these boys.”

¹³ For a more complete account of this experience, write for our article, *The Charismatic Movement, A Personal Testimony*.

Crying babies is another problem, for sympathy naturally goes out to the mother, who wants to hear the sermon too. Yet, it is not reasonable to have the attention of the congregation focused upon a crying baby, when it should be centered upon the teaching of the Word. Most church buildings have a special room where mothers with children can go and still hear the message via a P.A. system. Some can even leave their babies there with volunteers who take care of the children. In one church, when a visitor arrives with babe in arms, one of the *mothers* of the church will immediately take her seat next to her and inform her: "In case you should have any problem with the baby crying, we have a nice room at the rear of the church where you can go and still hear the message. You can even leave your baby with the women there and come back into the service if you wish." Then, if the baby cries and the mother, perhaps petrified, doesn't move, someone can whisper this to her again and it will make it easier for her to go.

The writer once heard a pastor saying to a colleague: "What is a church without a 'bawl room'?" His friend answered: "Either too small, or lacking concern." Pastor J. C. O'Hair used to say: "Crying babies, like good intentions, should be carried out!" If your church does not have a special room for crying babies with a P.A. speaker providing the opportunity for the adults to hear the message, it would surely be wise to consider installing one.

NEED FOR PROPER LEADERSHIP

One type of "disorderly conduct" which must still be considered is that which is sometimes promoted by the leaders themselves. Just because the church building is not "the house of God," some conclude that it scarcely matters how it is used.

Years ago we were asked to preach on Saturday and Sunday at a church some distance away. We were asked to arrive on Friday evening. When we did arrive, we were appalled at what we saw. It happened to be Halloween, and spread all the way across the church entrance was a great poster, reading: "*COME IN IF YOU DARE!*" and children, dressed as they do at Halloween, were climbing in and out of the side windows. How could this possibly be honoring to God? How could it possibly impress those of the neighborhood that the gospel was being seriously preached there on Sundays or at the midweek services?

Much more could be said about the importance of order in the church, and this subject is much more significant than most people seem to think. If this writer may be allowed a word of advice in the matter, he would suggest: Make it a prime objective to dedicate the building God has given you *to Him*, that it may be known far and wide as a place where the worship of God, the study of His Word and the preaching of the gospel are paramount. Then beseech Him in earnest prayer to give you *the power of the Spirit* as you preach.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

During all the years of the Editor's youth as a Christian, it was a custom among us to arrive at the church service ahead of time, take our seats, and bow our heads in prayer for God's blessing upon the service. Only faint whispering was indulged in as friends greeted each other. This was an appropriate preparation for the service and made a deep impression upon the unsaved who attended.

The Church Service—Part II

THE SERVICE¹⁴ ITSELF

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake” (I Thes. 1:5).

The above stands in stark contrast to the New Evangelicalism and the methods it employs to draw the multitudes to its public services. Theirs is the “do it big” philosophy: big promoters, big plans, big money, big advertising, big celebrities,¹⁵ extravagant backgrounds and much entertainment to create “that certain atmosphere” that will put the huge audience in just the right frame of mind to receive the message, all too often brought by one who knows little or nothing about “rightly dividing the Word of truth”—*apart from which no preacher can be approved of God* (II Tim. 2:15). We sometimes wonder how many people would attend these meetings if the “extravaganza” element were removed.

Are we being negative again? Well, hear us out, for any man of God who is not to some degree negative in his preaching certainly does not emulate the Lord Jesus Christ, or Peter, or Paul, or the great men of God of Church history.

Surely Paul’s philosophy in reaching the lost was vastly different from that of the Neo-evangelicals. He could write to the Thessalonian believers, “*Ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake,*” and it was precisely because of this absence of pretense and his whole-hearted commitment to the glorious message entrusted to him, that he could say, “Our gospel came *not* unto you *in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.*” He did not need costly arrangements of plants and flowers and an orchestra, complete with drums, to make his services effective. It was *what he said* that did it. It was the power of the Holy Spirit and the assurance with which he preached the Word, that gave his messages such power. How beautifully this is expressed in II Cor. 10:4:

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,¹⁶ but [they are] mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

So, beloved young pastor, as you prepare for the service in your church, don’t let methods ever take precedence over *the message* God has entrusted to you. And certainly don’t think in terms of doing anything “big.” Rather give much time to the study of the Blessed Book, praying often and earnestly that God will give you *insight* into His Word and thus the power of the Spirit and much assurance as you preach.

Much attention to methods and the desire to “go over big” has brought about the downfall of many a promising young pastor. Paul was “unknown...yet well known” (II Cor. 6:9), and thus some large churches have little impact beyond their own perimeters, while some small, seemingly insignificant ones, are known far and wide for their stand for the truth and for the teaching that emanates from their pulpits.

¹⁴ This could refer to the Sunday morning or evening service or the mid-week service or any special Bible study or evangelistic service.

¹⁵ Many of them still largely “of the world.”

¹⁶ I.e., of the flesh.

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The writer is 78 years of age, thus he lived in that exciting era of Bible study and evangelism (the early part of the century) which has been called the last true revival which the Church, in Europe, America and elsewhere, has experienced.

These were not days of “do it big” evangelism—we had no television then—except that Fundamentalist churches were growing on every hand. Great men of God, such as I have mentioned in previous “*Suggestions*,” were *teaching* the Word to capacity crowds who had attended Bibles in hand, to check on the pastor.

There was very little, if anything, in most of these services in the way of “special numbers.” But *the congregational singing!* This was something! Carefully selected hymns, spiritual classics, which many of our young people today do not even know, were sung with such heartfelt praise, that it was enough to send chills down one’s spine, often touching the lost deeply.

Also, these were days of “every man evangelism,” when practically every believer carried a small New Testament with him wherever he went. Even we teenagers carried these little testaments with us, leaving home in the morning with the prayer, “Lord, lead me to some soul today—some soul who needs Thee.” What rejoicing there would be among sincere believers if *such a revival, such a spiritual awakening*, were to arouse God’s people today! The New Evangelicalism, with all its extravaganzas, has not brought it about. Whereas millions of those little New Testaments (mostly good, leather ones, for much use) were circulated in those days, it is difficult to find many of them around today. There’s just not enough call for them. Doesn’t this say something about the condition of the Church today—yes, the Fundamental, Bible-believing Church?

This writer, a poor servant of God at best, almost wept for joy at his farewell service after 13 years at *Preakness Community Church* (now *Preakness Bible Church*), of Wayne, N. J. At the close of the service the master of ceremonies asked all those to rise who had come to know Christ *through some other member* of the church. Well more than half of those present rose to their feet. This was indeed “*fruit from fruit*.”

Projection

While still a young pastor I was taught a lesson I shall never forget.

I had been invited to preach at a large Midwestern church. As the congregation sang a hymn the pastor whispered to me, “We have 1200 people here this morning.” That was thrilling for a young preacher to hear.

However, they did not have P.A. systems in those days, and I had gotten but a little way into my message when someone from the balcony shouted, “Louder please!”

That was my first lesson in *projection*. I have never forgotten it, although I gradually got to project naturally and now do so without giving it a thought.

At this point I can almost hear someone say, “But we don’t have to be concerned about that these days, for we *do* have P.A. systems—good ones.

Ah, but projection *is* important in our day. I have heard men preach or speak over good P.A. systems, whose words were still unintelligible or for various reasons, hard to understand.

Yes, projection *is* important, and is not overlooked in the Scriptures.

Matt. 5:1 relates how Jesus, “seeing the multitudes...went up into a mountain: *and when He was set, His disciples¹⁷ came unto Him.*” This was still doubtless, a large gathering of people. Thus Verse 2 contains the descriptive phrase: “And He *opened His mouth* and taught them...”

Indeed, on the last day of a Feast of Tabernacles, our Lord’s heart went out to the multitudes gathered for a celebration that should have been spiritually refreshing to them, but had turned out to be little but religious form. Thus we read in John 7:37, 38:

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus *stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.*

“He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly [i.e., his innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water.”

Note the words, “*stood and cried.*” No question about it, our Lord wanted to be *heard*, He wanted His words to *reach* the ears of these poor people, and so their hearts.

This last is, first of all, what is necessary to proper projection. We must *deeply desire* to talk, personally, to *all* of the people before us. This attitude will help us to project most naturally.

Something of the same idea is found in Acts 21:40, where we read:

“...Paul stood on the stairs, and *beckoned with the hand* unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them....”

¹⁷ His followers, not merely the apostles, for He was only then in the process of choosing His apostles.

He wanted to make sure that *everyone* was listening. In this he differed considerably from a pastor the writer knew as a child. He “raved” on, seemingly not noticing those who rose to leave the building, or all the noise generated by some of those who remained; especially the crying babies! When the noise increased he just shouted louder!

A bit of study on the subject, however, will soon reveal that projection is not merely speaking loudly enough, for the man who practices only the cliché; “speak loudly enough so those in the last row can hear,” will be a pastor who shouts, and this can become tiresome and almost intolerable at times. Projection *includes* speaking loudly enough so that those in the last row can hear, but if a man follows *only* this rule, he may soon have those in the last row wishing that there were pews still farther back and those toward the front wishing that they had not come!

Proper projection will make listening pleasant to *all* the members of the audience.

As to volume, the sensitive preacher can soon tell whether all those in his audience are *listening* to him—without having to strain to hear—for he will be actually *talking to them*, each one. Thus it is rather a matter of making oneself *understood*, and this involves not merely volume, but *enunciation*, pronouncing one’s words clearly and distinctly.

It would require much more space than we have available to discuss the various causes of failure to project properly. A few examples are: tension, and the tendency to speak in too high a range of voice, the habit of dropping the voice at the *ends* of sentences, talking too fast to articulate clearly, turning the head back and forth or wandering back and forth across the platform so that the preacher fails to *face* the majority of his hearers. There have been many examples of such failure to project—and of the results, but the main thing to remember is that you should be *talking to the people* in your audience, not merely to the audience.

Many a preacher or public speaker with some seemingly serious drawback, where voice is concerned, has nevertheless mastered the art of projection, so be yourself, but ask God to help you to really want to reach all the *individuals* in your audience.

Preaching Methods

Basically there are three methods of Bible teaching and preaching: *Textual*, *Topical* and *Expository*. All three have their advantages.

In *textual preaching* one particular *verse or passage* of Scripture is used as a text, and discussed *in depth*. For example, in speaking on John 3:16 we might consider three important questions: (1) *Do You Believe It?*—really believe it? (2) *Is it Applicable to the Present Dispensation of Grace?* (3) *How Does it Compare With the Message Committed to Paul—and to Us?* (Scriptures: Isa. 53:8; I Cor. 1:17-25; I Tim. 2:4-6; Heb. 2:9; *et al*). One advantage of textual preaching is that your hearers will begin to better understand and more deeply enjoy key passages of Scripture.

In *topical preaching* some important *subject* of Scripture is discussed in depth. For example, the subject of *Reconciliation* might be profitably discussed—also under three headings: (1) *The Gospel of Reconciliation*. (2) *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. (3) *The Effects of Reconciliation*. (Scriptures: II Cor. 5:13-21; Eph. 2:15-18; Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20-22; *et al*). One advantage of topical preaching is the establishment of your hearers in *the great truths* of Scripture.

In *expository preaching* certain books, or sections, of the Bible are dealt with *in sequence*, sometimes verse by verse and, hopefully, “rightly divided.” By this method we are, perhaps, (1) most apt to gain a *general* knowledge of the Word, especially as we “compare Scripture with Scripture.” (2) It challenges the preacher to study the Word, *as such*, in greater depth. (3) Each week the audience is given an “appetizer” for what is to be taught the following week.

This writer was brought up under the teaching of a very gifted “verse-by-verse” expositor, Pastor Edward Drew of Paterson, N.J. He had come a long way in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” and consistently sent us from his services blessed to overflowing. The church building where we met had to be enlarged three times, until he “retired” to Florida, where he preached at St. Petersburg’s *Gospel Center* until he was 93!

Caution: Do *not* feel it necessary to comment at length on every single verse or you may find yourself teaching one small book, such as *Galatians*, for several years, to the boredom of your hearers! Your purpose is not to bring out innumerable technicalities, but to help your hearers understand what the Holy Spirit would teach them from any given passage.

Also: While it will doubtless be your primary objective to help your hearers understand Paul’s writings, you can also speak on other books *in the light of Pauline truth*, “comparing Scripture with Scripture.” Very profitable messages can be brought, for example, on Matthew or the Acts, but they will be a true blessing to your hearers only as you expound them *in the light of Paul’s Epistles*. Paul himself preached Christ “*according to the revelation of the mystery*,” and this should always be our objective. (Scriptures: II Tim. 3:16, 17; 2:15; Rom. 16:25).

This writer, when in the pastorate, and in Bible classes, has generally engaged in *expository preaching*, but in his traveling ministry *textural* and *topical preaching*.

Most important of all, remember that preaching in the power of the Spirit is bound to be more fruitful than merely following some particular method.

When the writer was a young man, Pastor J.C. O’Hair gave him sound advice he will never forget. “Don’t just study to *prepare for sermons*,” said our brother: “*Just study*, and you will overflow with sermons.”

Edification

The Greek verb, *oikodomeo*, means simply, “to build.” Sometimes the *King James Version* renders it “build,” and sometimes “edify”—which is the same thing, for an *edifice* is simply a *building*.

The word is used of the man who “*built his house upon a rock*” (Matt. 7:24), and in our Lord’s statement regarding His “Kingdom Church”: “*Upon this rock I will build My Church*” (Matt. 16:18). In these two cases and, indeed, all through the four “Gospel” records and the first chapters of Acts (30 times) this word is rendered “build.”

For some reason, however—a reason doubtless well thought out—the KJV translators rendered the same word “edify” almost exclusively from here on, where purely spiritual matters are concerned.

Thus in Acts 9:31 we read that when Paul, heretofore the bitter persecutor of the Church, was sent back to Tarsus, “the churches [had] rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, *and were edified*, and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

The reason we should be familiar with this subject is because the chief objective of believers is, or should be, the *edification*, or building up, of the Body of Christ collectively, and of its members in particular.

In Eph. 4:11, 12 we are informed that our exalted Lord “*gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*”¹⁸

“For the perfecting [maturing] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the *edifying* [building up] of the Body of Christ.”

Indeed, in Verse 16 of the same chapter, we read that “the whole Body” is to be engaged in “the *edifying* [building up] of itself in love.” How important it is, then, for us all, and especially for those who are called as pastors, to make this our chief objective, taking seriously to heart such passages of Scriptures as the following:

Rom. 14:19: “Let us therefore follow after the things...wherewith one may *edify* another.”

Rom. 15:2: “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to *edification*.”

I Cor. 14:12: “...seek that ye may excel to the *edifying* of the Church.”

I Cor. 14:26: “...Let all things be done to *edification*.”

II Cor. 12:19: “...We speak before God in Christ:...we do all things, dearly beloved, for your *edifying*.”

I Thes. 5:11: “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and *edify* one another, even as also ye do.”

¹⁸ Note: the apostles, the prophets, and the evangelists are each separated by the word “some,” but not the “pastors and teachers.” Evidently the “pastors and teachers” belong in one category; the pastor should be a teacher of the Word (See Acts 20:28: “FEED the Church of God.” Any pastor who does not feed his flock with the Word, rightly divided, is not obeying this passage. Note further that he speaks historically here. Only the “evangelists” and the “pastors and teachers” are still in order. As to the apostles and prophets see I Cor. 4:9; 13:8).

How easy it is to tear down with one brief sermon what has taken years to build up, or to hastily break down some dear saint who has long been built up, spiritually, by the teaching of the Word! Therefore we pastors, especially, must be *what God has called us to be*: the *builders* of the Church, not merely in numbers, but in the truth of God. (See I Cor. 3:9-16).

Have you come upon some “bright new idea,” never, so far as you know, taught by anyone else? If it is not calculated to build up your hearers, forget it. Do you have something that will *really* challenge your hearers’ intellects? If it won’t *build them up* spiritually, throw it in the waste basket. Will *this* sermon hold your audience spellbound? If it isn’t *edifying*, bury your pride and search the Scriptures for something better. Will this other sermon enhance your image, perhaps show your hearers that you have a fine command of the English language? Forget any “great swelling words of man’s wisdom.” Your aim should be to help your hearers *understand* the truth and this is best done in clear, simple language. Are you engrossed with convincing arguments on some debatable subject? If the subject is vital, and if your arguments will help to *build your hearers up in the faith*, fine; otherwise scrap it. Our responsibility is not to prove that we are right on every subject, or on *any* subject. Our responsibility is to *edify* the saints, to so feed them with the Word that they will be established and *built up* in the faith. Is it necessary to “reprove, rebuke and exhort” (II Tim. 4:2)? Then make sure, first, that it is necessary, and if so, do it “*with all long-suffering and doctrine*” so that even this will edify, or build up, sincere believers.

How rewarding, how refreshing, to see individuals, and families, in our congregation—and even the congregation as a whole, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! May God help us so to preach His Word that our hearers will indeed be thus edified.

The Kind of Pastors We Need

“And He gave some...pastors and teachers”—Eph. 4:11.

Our times are leaving their mark on humanity, on the Church and on the individual—even on individual pastors. As materialism sweeps the world, not only are fewer men entering the ministry, but among those who do enter, the desire for temporal things frequently keeps them from developing into the kind of pastors whose ministry God can bless and honor; the kind whose qualities of character are so clearly set forth in Scripture.

According to Eph. 4:11, pastor (or pastor-teacher) is one of God’s special gifts to the Church and in I Tim. 6:11 he is called a “man of God.” Some suppose that all believers are equally called to this ministry, but this is not so. God gave “some” pastors, not *all* pastors. The pastor’s office, therefore, is a sacred trust and should be discharged with scrupulous care in the light of the Word, rightly divided. On this basis the true pastor is:

1. One who has been *truly called of God* to the pastorate. The man who has “studied for pastorate,” but was never called, who may have a few degrees but no temperature, is the bane of the pulpit.

“There was a man *sent from God*, whose name was John” (John 1:16). Later another man was called as “an apostle of Jesus Christ *by the will of God*,” whose name was Paul (Eph. 1:1). The former was a prophet, the latter an apostle and they were very different as to background, character, intellectual ability, etc., yet both were mightily used of God because both had been divinely *called* to their work. The pastor as well as the apostle is God’s gift to the Church and must as truly be called to his ministry if he is to be used of God.

2. One who lives in *close fellowship with the Lord*.

- a. who earnestly *desires* to be used of God (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6).
- b. whose personal conduct is beyond reproach (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7).
- c. who remains separate from the world (Gal. 6:14).
- d. who spends much time in prayer and study of the Word (II Tim. 2:15; 3:16; I Thes. 5:17; Eph. 6:18).
- e. who cultivates true Christian graces (I Tim. 3:2-7; II Tim. 2:22-24; Tit. 1:7, 8; 2:7, 8; 3:2).

Many promising pastors have failed because of hidden sin and a failure to live in close fellowship with the Lord.

3. One who is *utterly dedicated to the Lord*.

- a. who will truly love his congregation and will “gladly spend and be spent” for them—even *when this is not appreciated* (II Cor. 12:15; Acts 20:31).
- b. who has a heart for the lost (II Cor. 5:20; II Tim. 4:5).

- c. who has a heart for the saved (Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:9).
 - d. who will minister to his flock both publicly and personally, visiting them in their homes (Acts 20:20).
4. One who, like Paul, will “*serve the Lord with all humility of mind*” (Acts 20:19).
- a. who will not have his heart set on a fine church, a comfortable home and a large salary, but will truly desire to be only in the place of God’s choosing.
 - b. who will realize that one must creep before he can walk. Big ideas not carried through have wrecked many a ministry.
 - c. who is always eager to learn; who will not only accept, but will *seek* advice from those who are older and more experienced.
 - d. who will not be covetous of those who appear to fare better than he.
5. One who will show Christian leadership, “instant” (i.e., on his toes) “in season and out of season” (II Tim. 2:2; 4:2; Tit. 1:5).
6. One who will “*give attendance to reading*” (I Tim. 4:13). The reading of the Scriptures is doubtless primarily intended here, but we believe more is included. Paul himself was an omnivorous reader, and pity the pastor who is not. If the man in the pew listens to his preaching, *he*, the pastor, should be constantly listening to the preaching of others whose books he should have in his library. Many pastors fail to express their thoughts clearly because they have never gotten into the habit of reading the writings of able men of God. Truly “reading maketh a full man.”
7. One who will “*preach the Word*” and not be sidetracked into joining the crusades of unregenerate men, however good these crusades may be in themselves (II Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 4:2). Religious-political crusades may enthrall believers for a time, but what they *need* is food and light from the Word to help them grow spiritually. Note that in Eph. 4:11 “pastors and teachers,” unlike others listed, are placed *together*. Some have rendered this phrase: “pastors who are teachers,” or “teaching pastors.” The pastor who *teaches the Bible* faithfully will be rewarded as his hearers grow in grace.
8. One who clearly recognizes the fact that God has committed to our trust “the preaching of Jesus Christ *according to the revelation of the mystery*”¹⁹ (Rom. 16:25). The “mystery” is not merely one truth we should hold. Paul called it “*my gospel*” and it should be *ours*. Even when preaching from the Old Testament Scriptures we should preach Christ—*according to the revelation of the mystery made known to Paul*. When the pastor has learned to relate the “Old Testament” and the “Gospels” to the Epistles of Paul—to see the whole Bible in the light of the truths set forth in Paul’s Epistles, his ministry will be greatly strengthened.
9. One who *wishes to be known* as a servant of Christ and a “steward of the mysteries of God,” recognizing that “*it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*” (I Cor. 4:1, 2).

¹⁹ For those who do not yet have a clear understanding of the mystery we suggest our book *Things That Differ*.

Such a pastor may not be “accepted by the Christian community,” but the “Christian community” today is no better, spiritually, than was the Jewish community in the days of Christ and Paul. Our book, *The Controversy*, (re-titled *Holding Fast the Faithful Word*) has produced overwhelming documentary evidence that many of our leading Fundamentalists have not only closed their eyes to the truth of the “mystery” but have used carnal weapons to hinder its recovery. Whether they have been motivated by fear of persecution, the desire for man’s approval, financial gain, or what, they must answer to God, but in opposing the distinctive message which our glorified Lord committed to Paul, they have “taken away the key of knowledge” from their hearers and readers, robbing them of the rich blessings they might have enjoyed through an understanding of these precious truths.

If I Tim. 6:20 and II Tim. 1:12-14 mean anything, they mean that the pastor, above all men, is to guard as a treasure, the purity of the revelation committed to Paul and to us. We, beloved, are stewards of the mystery and its associated mysteries, and “it is *required* in stewards that a man be found faithful.” If we are faithful to our trust we will enjoy the greatest of all blessings—*God’s smile*. If we allow ourselves to be beguiled by the trend toward ecumenism and tolerance of error, we may indeed become popular with men, but what will man’s fickle approval be worth when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ?

10. One who will not only stand faithfully for the “mystery,” but will *proclaim* it *boldly*. This was Paul’s great desire and, being naturally of a sensitive disposition, he had to ask others to join him in prayer for boldness.

“Praying always...for all saints; and for me, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME, THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: THAT THEREIN I MAY SPEAK BOLDLY, AS I OUGHT TO SPEAK” (Eph. 6:18-20; cf. Col. 4:2-4).

He likewise encouraged his spiritual son, Pastor Timothy, in this—and with him all other pastors who might be tempted to withdraw from “*the good fight of faith*.” Let all pastors take his words to heart:

“GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US THE SPIRIT OF FEAR; BUT OF POWER, AND OF LOVE, AND OF A SOUND MIND. BE NOT THOU THEREFORE ASHAMED OF THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD, NOR OF ME HIS PRISONER, BUT BE THOU PARTAKER OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE POWER OF GOD....Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me....That good thing which was committed unto thee [Lit., that precious deposit] keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.... THOU THEREFORE, MY SON, BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS. And the things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. THOU THEREFORE ENDURE HARDNESS AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST” (II Tim. 1:7—2:3).

When we come to the end of our earthly ministry it will mean little to be able to say: “I was applauded on every hand. Thousands came to hear me preach and I built our congregation up from a handful of people to a great organization.” But it will mean much indeed to be able to say with one who was “*unknown, yet well known*.”

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown...” (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

How much, much more could be written about the pastorate! How poorly the best of us have filled our posts! But we can, by God’s grace, be faithful to our calling and it is faithfulness that God honors.

The Joy of Service

The author has felt the need of adding a few more words on objective and subjective living, and inexpressible joy of the former.

In one church, on a Sunday morning, as the organist begins to play some lovely, Scriptural hymns, the pastor appears on the platform and takes his seat. Almost all have arrived and as he glances about the audience varied thoughts naturally run through his mind:

“Here comes Dick Johnson with his wife and children. How nice! I wonder whether Dick’s heart problem is improving. That can be so discouraging. They should know how I miss them when they can’t be here. What faithful Christians! Oh, I wonder who those new people are. That’s at least half a dozen here this morning I don’t even know. I wonder how many of them aren’t saved. Lord do give me just the right words to say for all these dear people. Do save the lost and richly bless Thy children this morning.”

But in another church, at meeting time, where the pastor looks over the audience in the same way, different thoughts run through his mind:

“Well, everybody seems to be glad I’m here again. I hope they really are. It’s nice to feel wanted and loved—at least *liked*. Oh, there’s the Nolan family. He criticized what I said about latecomers last week—and he was *wrong*! Well, some people are always finding fault. Lord, help me to do well today; last week I stumbled quite a bit.”

The difference between these two pastors? Well, for one thing, the former was essentially *objective* in his attitude, while the latter was *subjective*. The former had his interest focused on the members of his congregation; the latter too largely upon himself.

It is interesting to note how objective living naturally results in thoughtful, hearty *service*, while subjective living works the other way. It *wants*, it feels unfairly dealt with, it claims its due; it feels it should *be served*. But what a joy it is to *serve* God and man; to be *used* for His glory and their good! Truly “*It IS more blessed to give than to receive*” (Acts 20:35).

Paul was gloriously *objective* in his outlook. He said in I Cor. 9:19:

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I *made myself servant* unto all, that I might gain the more” (i.e., for Christ).

What a joy it must have been to the apostle to see some of the fruits of his humble service to others! And what satisfaction in the knowledge that God was pleased! Indeed, even when there was little or no apparent, immediate fruit borne, he knew that all fruit does not appear quickly. And so, having *taught* the Corinthian saints about *service* and objective living, with no evident response, he wrote them again:

“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved” (II Cor. 12:15).

Surely this did not come from a bitter spirit. Rather he sought to assure them that *he loved them as God had loved him*—no matter what—and prayed for appropriate fruit to be borne—hopefully soon—in them. This attitude took his mind off their failures and left him the full joy of serving God and others out of a loving heart.

APPENDIX

ON USING THE GREEK IN YOUR PREACHING

I have just received a brief note from a very dear friend, inquiring whether I had thought to warn young pastors about the danger of using Greek in the pulpit with only a superficial knowledge of the language. Actually, I had overlooked this important matter.

Rather than prepare an article on the subject I have felt it best to quote in part from a letter I recently wrote on the subject, which at the same time points up the danger to the pastor of inadvertently encouraging his hearers to use a multiplicity of modern translations, so that they can no longer read the Bible aloud *together* or quote passages from one common version: a significant contribution to confusion! Part of this letter follows, slightly edited so as to avoid any personal implications.

“I surely wish we could encourage you by promoting this translation, dear brother, but this we cannot consistently do....

“Will you still be my friend if I write frankly about this? I feel you would want me to do so.

“First, I am convinced that there are very few real Greek scholars in the Church today. Years ago Dr. _____ President of _____ College, was widely acclaimed as a Greek scholar. Yet, as we went for a short walk one morning he read his Greek New Testament aloud for ‘practice,’ and I was amazed at how falteringly he did so. Later I came to know a prominent pastor who was also supposed to be a Greek scholar. At any rate, pastors were constantly turning to him to settle matters of translation, and he generally responded confidently, sometimes even dogmatically. Yet he too failed dismally to read his Greek New Testament as fluently as he read English.

“I cannot help comparing these Greek ‘scholars’ with what we know of the 47 great men of God who translated the *King James Version*. Most of them had spent their lives in studying Bible Greek and Hebrew—and other languages, for there was at that time a great resurgence of the study of Bible Greek, and there were *many* who could read Greek as fluently as English.

“I have before me a picture of Ridley, Cranmer, Latimer and Bradford together in the dreadful *London Tower*, awaiting execution for preaching the gospel. The inscription reads: ‘*They rejoiced together in the study of the Scriptures, unto all were burned at the stake.*’ What precious truths they must have uncovered together! It almost makes one wish he could have been with them!

“What I’m getting at is, that before we think of revising the *King James Version* we should have at least some *company* of *comparable* men of God to bring archaic expressions up to date and make such few changes as are absolutely necessary—and the time for this is certainly *not* now!

“In bringing out a whole new translation of _____,²⁰ may you not end up sending people right over to the corrupt translations which are flooding the market today? Why should they not go to them since you have shown them how many ‘mistakes and inadequacies’ there are in the *King James Version*?”

God has given us many valuable tools with which we may go more deeply into the Greek. Let us use them when we need help in determining the sense of a passage. But let us not flaunt our little knowledge of the original language, especially in any effort to prove a point.

²⁰ We have deleted the extent of this translation so as not to identify the translator.