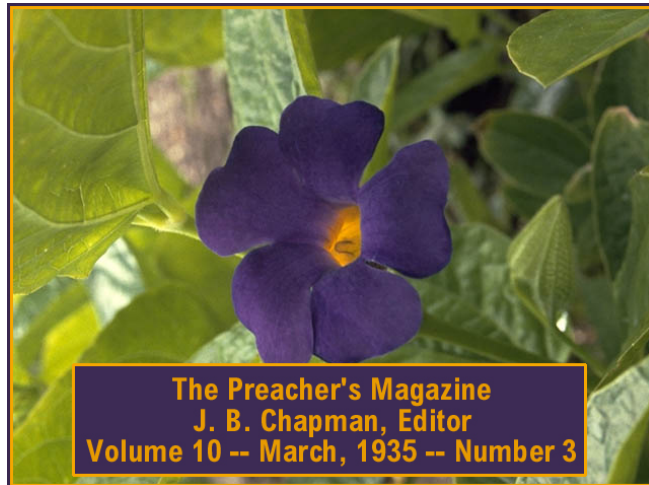


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J. B. Chapman, Editor

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01 --PREPARATION TO PREACH -- J. B. Chapman

Perhaps most of us have now lived enough to enable us to see the hand of God in many things relating to our lives which were an enigma at the time of their occurrence. We may even have lived enough that we "can see instances in which God overruled where He was not permitted to rule.

Many times I have heard preachers tell how the circumstances of their early lives made education difficult. But I sat there and said to myself, "This man has an education that is exceedingly valuable, even though it was obtained in the school of just ordinary human experience." Even in my own experience it seems to me that some of the most valuable background for my work as a minister was formed during the time when I had not thought at all of becoming a herald of the gospel. There is a certain sense, and that sense becomes more apparent as time passes, in which every preacher has been in preparation for his work all his life, and when the spectrum of the gospel passes through the lens of personal life and experience it becomes in the most commendable sense "my gospel." And thus some of the most important preparation to preach is and must always be indirect and unconscious.

There can be no question that a seminary training is valuable, but if we are to enter into comparisons, I would say that a good fundamental education, one that enables one to read intelligently, and one that gives some approach to the ordinary branches of human knowledge, is more important than specialized training. But of course it is desirable that the preacher should have both. However I would not give out the wholesale advice for everyone who feels called to preach to go to school. I would say this without exception to such as are young and unencumbered, but when one is older and encumbered with family and business when the call comes, there are many things to consider before advice is given. In rare instances it is wise for an encumbered preacher to run into debt by going to school. Ours is not a "money making" calling, and not many preachers have faith for more than the bread and water promised for daily subsistence -- paying debts from the income from preaching is always difficult and usually impossible.

And just as there are two phases to the subject of preparation at the initial stage, so there are two phases in preparation to preach day after day and week after week. We would designate these latter phases as general and specific preparation. And here again in making comparisons we would say the general is more fundamental than the specific.

Some time ago I heard a noted preacher apologize for devoting a service to the telling of certain of his personal experiences. In this apology he said that after

all a man's experience is his only personal and exclusive possession and through it he is able to make his only original contribution. I will let this stand for my apology prefacing a simple example of my own method. Some years ago I repaired to my study at a late hour Saturday night to make specific preparation for an annual sermon which I was to deliver the next morning. I came out very well with the service and when a friend found out through my wife that I had been unable to give special attention to the matter until the late hour Saturday night I became the recipient of special compliments for the apparent thoroughness accomplished in so brief a time. But candor compelled me to say that although I had used only a few hours in special preparation, I had been making general preparation for practically a year. I had prayed, gathered material, meditated betimes, and thought out my propositions while walking by the way. And that was the reason the specific preparation occupied so short a time. In fact I am not sure that I could have done better if I had used more time.

Just a few months ago a brother approached with the information that the minister who was to preach that very night had arrived tired and worn and had asked to be relieved. The brother appealed to me to fill the vacancy. I hesitated. My wife and children and friends present took the part of the visiting brother and urged me to help out. Finally I yielded and agreed, but not until there had flashed into my mind the message I would bring if I did agree. And from that moment on, although it was several hours before I could give myself wholly to preparation, I was "getting ready to preach."

Even now I am "getting ready" for convention and campmeeting preaching that is yet many months in advance. I am not exactly selecting themes or gathering illustrations, but I am making inward preparation with the special occasions in mind. Now and then I visit the study of a minister and am dazed by the abundance of special preparation I find there. It reminds me of our old neighbor who was a wagon maker. You could go to his place and find only a small amount of material being actually shaped for the construction of wagons. But if you would take time to go to his curing rooms you would find an immense amount of material going through "seasoning" processes and becoming proper raw material for the work which the months ahead would see. And I think it should be like that with the preacher. Actually "making sermons" is not so important as "preparing to preach" in that more fundamental sense.

And we must not overlook the fact that until a sermon and a message have actually taken hold of the preacher it is not likely to take hold of anyone else. And this matter of taking hold is a matter which requires time and meditation and prayer and comparisons and visualization and a lot of things which cannot be described with words. But I think no one can doubt the truth of the saying that the times call for a better prepared ministry and a better preparation to preach.

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Be sure to read in Benson's review of Dr. Jefferson's book that passage which distinguishes between a church and an audience. Perhaps this is a distinction that will encourage the pastor who seriously labors to build a church and yet must live in the same town with some preacher who glories simply in an audience.

Rev. Edward Hanson, who is pastor of a tabernacle in New Britain, Conn., sends his renewal and writes, "About a year ago some kind, and as yet unidentified, friend subscribed for The Preacher's Magazine for me, and he most certainly has my undying thanks; for I have found The Magazine delightfully helpful in many ways. By all means keep it coming. I have found it more enjoyable than another periodical I receive at three times the subscription price of The Preacher's Magazine."

P. H. Lunn has promised to be a little more regular with his book reviews. I told him that our readers appreciate these reviews, and profit by them. That when they read the review and discern from it J that they do not need that particular book they are often saved the price of a year's subscription to The Magazine. And if they find from the review that they do need a certain book, then he has done them a service that they appreciate and will not forget.

Joseph Gray's series on "Church Publicity" is something new and, I believe, something helpful. The installment dealing just with the mechanical side of newspaper publicity may seem unimportant to some. But I believe, as Brother Gray says, that the preacher who will carefully observe some of the points he covers will find his ability to secure space in the newspapers increased a hundred per cent.

Shortly before her decease Sister Carrie M. Flower, a pastor on the Kansas City District, prepared two papers for the Preachers' Convention. One was a study of the relative importance of preaching and pastoral visitation. Her conclusion was that preaching is the more important. The other was a study of the relation between the pastor and the layman. In this one Sister Flower used some verses, whether original or selected I cannot tell, which I think are not only worth reading, but worthy to be memorized and quoted. They are as follows:

I will start anew this morning with a higher, fairer creed;
I will cease to stand complaining of my ruthless neighbor's greed;
I will cease to sit repining while my duty's call is clear;
I will waste no moment whining, and my heart shall know no fear.
I will look sometimes about me for the things that merit praise;
I will search for hidden beauties that elude the grumbler's gaze;
I will try to find contentment in the paths that I must tread;
I will cease to have resentment when another moves ahead.
I will not be swayed by envy when my rival's strength is shown;

**I will not deny his merit, but I'll strive to prove my own;
I will try to see the beauty spread before me, rain or shine--
I will cease to preach your duty and be more concerned with mine.**

And now another preacher writes to say, "I do not find many outlines in The Preacher's Magazine that I can use." And this calls for our saying again that we do not expect preachers to use many of these outlines. Rather, we are content if now and then a line of thought is suggested that the preacher can follow up and make something useful out of it. And even if this fails, we think every preacher, young and old, will be helped by reading outlines. This serves to keep alive and develop the "homiletical instinct" and more or less indirectly and unconsciously this makes for better arrangement and better preaching.

It goes without saying that a man who quits praying will soon quit preaching with power. But there is a corollary: a preacher who quits reading will soon quit preaching with freshness. And we have observed that paralysis soon follows staleness. How many books have you read during the past year?

How much time do you spend in reading each week? How often do you read the Bible? How often do you read it through? How many times have you read it through to date? Do you have a regular reading habit?

When it is not possible for a preacher to buy the books he needs, there is nearly always a way. Perhaps there is a library near. Perhaps there is a brother minister who is willing to exchange books with you. There must be some way.

From a recent letter from Rev. Roscoe Pershall, Lambert, Mont., we quote the following: "Your regular attendance is a testimony to the world to the worth of salvation, and if your attendance becomes desultory [inconsistent] the ring will be that of a counterfeit. Duty can never be half performed." Perhaps this would do good in the church bulletin.

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03 -- DRAWING NEAR TO THE THRONE OF GRACE -- Olive M. Winchester

Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need (Heb. 4:16, R. V.).

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his presentation of the person of Christ dwells especially upon the high priesthood, thus seeking to impress upon our minds the work of Christ as Savior. For this purpose had Jesus come in the flesh being therein made "like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (2:17). In all this Christ was faithful unto Him that appointed Him (3:1). The saving ministry of Christ, however, did not end with His death upon the

gress. Christ ascended on high, He has passed into the heavens. Because Christ became man and lived the life of man, being tempted in all points, and thus can understand the infirmities of human kind and because He now has ascended into the heavens, sitting at the right hand of God, we are exhorted to come to the throne of grace.

With Boldness

As we approach the place of prayer, we need not do it with fear and trembling, we who are the children of God. We are bidden to come with boldness.

This word boldness used in this connection in its primary sense indicates freedom of speech. We hear the band of disciples praying after Peter and John had been released by the rulers and returned to their own company, "And now Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness" (Acts 4:29). Frequently do we have the term in this sense in the narratives in Acts.

From the original of the word there seemed to have developed a more general significance, carrying the thought of freedom in other aspects. So Thayer, the New Testament lexicographer, gives as the acquired meaning, "the undoubting confidence of Christians relative to their fellowship with God," and another writer, "confidence in prayer and communion with God."

How may such confidence be obtained? John tells us that it springs up from the life that is hidden in Christ. He exhorts his followers. "And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28, R. V.). There is that oneness of the believer in Christ. The ground of our confidence arises from the fact that we have the mind of Christ; we have said, "Not my will but thine be done." The promises and assurances of answer to prayer are not left for our appropriation at our own caprice, but they are based on fundamental principles. There is the calling of deep to deep. Forth from the heart comes the cry that has been wrought there by the Spirit and bespeaks that mystic union of the soul with Christ. We do not always know for what we should pray; we oftentimes ask amiss, then we do not receive answers to our prayers. We sometimes think we have faith when it is only the wish and desire of our heart, but when the Spirit pours through us groanings that cannot be uttered and our petitions are indited by the Spirit, then we are assured of an answer.

Another phase of this life with Christ abiding in the heart is the fact that our love is made perfect. Here again we read from the Apostle John, "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (1 John 4:16, 17, R. V.). When the heart is torn between two opposing forces, when underneath there is the pull of racial sin which opposes the mind of the Spirit, then is our

confidence diminished, and we come with uncertainty to the place of prayer, but when the heart is united and love is the guiding principle within, then as a child approaches the father with confidence and assurance when that father is a good father, so do we our heavenly Father who is the fount of all goodness, and admonishes us in his Word, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:11).

One more requisite does the Scripture give us that we may make our petitions with boldness. This also comes from the Apostle John. He seemed to have penetrated the secrets of prayer and whispers them to us. He brings to us the word, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:21, 22, R. V.). If there lurks in our heart the sense that we have not sought the will of God first and been obedient to all His behests, then we cannot present our supplications with confidence; we draw near with questionings in our heart, not concerning God's willingness to answer but fearful lest our own condition will deter the answer, but if we can say, "O Lord, I have sought to do Thy will fully as it has been made known to me and I have kept Thy commandments," then we feel assured that God will hear us and we approach the throne of grace with confidence.

Thus for joyous confidence in prayer we must have the mystic union with Christ that is the portion of believers, the perfecting of love in the heart and the freedom from condemnation that belongs to every child of God. Then can we sing:

"With confidence I now draw nigh,
And 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

To Obtain Mercy

While we are to draw nigh with confidence, yet at the same time we come as suppliants seeking mercy. Our attitude toward those who pray from day to day, "Forgive us our sins," has been one of hauteur. We do believe that a Christian should not need to seek the forgiveness of his sins repeatedly; this he does once, and thereafter there should not be willful transgression, but there arises the question on the other hand whether at times there might not be a self-righteous complex, for always are we compassed about with infirmity, Our understandings are impaired, our impulses carry us on and overpower our will which is not tempered by reason, our desires are often mingled with self-interest; this is not essentially willful but is more due to lack of judgment, yet it makes our living not in perfect keeping with the divine pattern. For such shortcomings we need to implore forgiveness. Instead of doing this, we often rush on in the affairs of life without a thorough diagnosis of our decisions and acts not realizing how much of self may be woven into them. Bowing down meekly and humbly before the Lord, we might be the better able to evaluate our spiritual condition and enter into a deeper experience

of salvation, one which would radiate more than much of our boasting which we unwittingly do. Thus we need to seek for mercy.

Speaking of this blessing of mercy Hastings says, "There is no fellowship with God possible on the footing of what people call 'disinterested communion.' No, we have always to go to Him to get something from Him. The question is, What do we expect to get? The text tells us. It is not temporal blessings, not the answers to foolish desires, not the taking away of thorns in the flesh, but mercy and grace to help -- inward and spiritual blessings. But what are these? The one expresses the heart of God, the other expresses the hand of God. We may obtain mercy as suppliants coming boldly, confidently, frankly with faith in the great High Priest, to the throne of grace. There we get the full heart of God."

We have been speaking of the mercy bestowed upon those who are children of God, meeting the need of their infirmities. Before this mercy can be bestowed is the mercy which redeems the sinner and brings him home to God pardoning all his sins. This is the most outstanding bestowal of mercy.

Then there is mercy that extends even to those who have never sought for redeeming grace and still are afar off; mercy follows us and extends to children's children. This mercy springs from Christ our Savior. He left his Father's throne above--

So free, so infinite His grace!
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!

To Find Grace To Help In Time Of Need

We approach the throne of grace to obtain mercy and also to find grace for every time of need. Man is a dependent being. He may assert himself in independence and exalt himself, feeling that he is self-sufficient, but sooner or later the time comes when he collapses. This may come so late in life that he cannot reverse the trends of his living and his destiny has been set, but yet the sense of the futility of things of time and the insufficiency of man creeps over him. The soul was made for God and there is ever that homing instinct and the sense of something amiss until it finds God.

The word grace has two significations according to the use. It carries the thought of unmerited favor when it refers to the bestowal of redemption upon man. Hastings asks, "And what is grace? Grace, of course, is the New Testament word for the undeserved favor and loving regard of God to man considered as weak, sinful and unworthy; it is love which has its own motive, apart from any regard to worthiness in the object upon which it falls. Grace is its own real impulse and

motive, and grace is set in Scripture as the opposite of desert; it is of grace, not of works, and so forth. It is set as the antagonist of sin and unrighteousness and all evil, and so runs up to the idea that it expresses the unmerited, self-originated, loving regard of God to us poor miserable creatures, who, if dealt with on the ground of right and retribution, would receive something very different indeed."

Then referring to the grace given in time of need as indicated in this text is imparted power, that grace which gives to us the strength to endure the temptations that come to us and to bear the trials of life. How comforting it is that in our weakness we have this source of strength! We may come in prayer and find grace for every time of need; not for special needs but for every need. In life when we have need, there are some friends who may minister to one and others to another; then there are needs which none can seem to touch, but at the throne of grace there is not a need but what can find its corresponding grace. In despair we may come pressed down under trial, but we can hear a gentle voice saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 'Mid my life's vicissitude, Seeming evil mixed with good; 'Mid its pleasure and its pain, Alternating loss and gain--

Be Thou still my staff and rod,
All-sustaining grace of God!
Like a pilgrim here I pass,
Darkly see as through a glass;
Little know I of the way,
What shall be I cannot say--
Let the light upon me shine,
All-sufficient grace divine!
'Mid my ever-changing mood
God who changeth not is good;
And His Word within I have,
He will guard the life He gave--
Sing, my soul, along the road,
Happy in the grace of God.

Thus in all the needs of life we can come with confidence unto Christ, our great High Priest who understands all our struggles and knows the healing balm for each wound. He will not chide when we have sincerely done our best, but will look upon us in mercy and give us grace for the need. How great a privilege is this we have! What an anchor to the soul on the storm-tossed seas of life?

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04 -- MINISTER MAKING PROCESSES -- Paul S. Hill

When St. Paul said that he "was made a minister" he evidently referred to the fact that God had called him to the "gospel of his Son" and that he had answered "yes" to that call and the arrangement had been made between God and himself

that St. Paul was to be a "minister." We are sure that in the statement that he "was made a minister" there is no claim that he was as good a minister as it was possible to be, or that he had entered at once into the full exercise of mature and ripened ministerial gifts and graces. We think the whole of St. Paul's ministerial life was one of processes by which he became a still better minister. Though at the beginning he "was made a minister" yet through the years he still was being "made," and never once did this wonderful man say that he was the best minister it was possible for God to make. He seemed rather to be on the stretch for that bigness and efficiency that could correspond to the greatness of the gospel that he had been called to preach.

It seems that his statement to the Romans that "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel" does not refer to his sense of personal ability so much as it refers to the certainty of the power of the gospel. There never was a hint in any statement of St. Paul's that the gospel might not be sufficient for the purpose, but so far as he was concerned he preached this great gospel in "weakness." A study of the ministerial life of this great preacher reveals a strenuous effort on his part to develop to such a degree that his ministry would fully correspond in power to that gospel he was called to preach. He had a powerful gospel to preach, he wanted to preach it in a powerful way. He wanted to be a powerful preacher, a more powerful preacher, a still more powerful preacher.

We look back over the long line of ministers of the yesterdays and are stopped by the towering ability of St. Paul. What a man! What a minister! It is true that his early training and natural abilities entered largely into his success, but we are sure that the entire answer to his bigness is not in his early training nor in his natural abilities. These were with him as part of his pre-ministerial days, and did not "make him a minister." His call to the ministry does not entirely answer the question of his wonderful career. His first start as a minister, though it changed the entire direction of his life, did not account for those developments and mature gifts and graces that afterward became evident. St. Paul had a lot to do with his own "making" as a minister. If he had not done something about it himself his career would have been small.

"As much as in me is" shows a process of development. The limit of his abilities, the extreme strength of his personality, were enlisted in the business of preaching the gospel. He gave to the limit of what he had on hand, and in the exercise of it he found increase and development.

"The fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," coupled with "as much as in me is" pretty nearly tells the whole story of his ministerial progress. To be possessed with the full blessing of the gospel, and to go to the limit of human abilities in order to preach it surely stands for a progressive ministry that otherwise might almost fail.

Many of us ministers miss out on both these fundamental requirements for a successful ministry. The gospel does not possess us fully enough, and when it does not our efforts in preaching it will be second rate, or even worse. Some have found that they may be possessed with a career, or a reputation, or some other ministerial abnormality, and not be possessed with the gospel. And when we are possessed with the gospel, and the gospel possesses us, we are frequently not diligent enough in going our limit in its proclamation. We are poor preachers and ministers because we are afraid of hurting ourselves with hard effort, and because we have too little concern for the gospel we are called to preach. We can run races with other ministers to see who will get the best churches, or the biggest meetings, or the most calls, or have the biggest crowds, but when it comes to those things which only can make us better ministers we fall down on our job and sit around and wait for the Lord to do something that He never has done yet, and that is make great ministers out of lazy and half-saved men.

Mostly Wrapping

Yesterday there came to me through the mail a little, four-page paper. As I tore off the heavy covering in which it was wrapped the thought passed through my mind, "This appears to be mostly wrapping." Sure enough, if the two had been placed in the scales the wrapping would have outweighed the contents more than two to one. But that was not all. The little paper enclosed was greatly concerned about a matter that was of no special value. Mostly it condemned those who did not see eye to eye with the position it assumed. If all the world had adopted their position as correct, and had faithfully adhered to it, it would not have changed anything for the better, nor helped one soul to heaven. When I had read the contents of that little paper I thought again, "It is mostly wrapping." The discussion was much too big and long for the importance of the subject. The kernel of meat, if there was any, was too tiny for so much husk.

But that is quite likely to be the way with those of us who have a little idea that impresses us. We build an empire around a non-essential. The agitation that is going on just to propagate some notion or doctrine that is only slightly if at all related to the truth as it is in Jesus is about like that little paper, "mostly wrapping." Once in a conversation with a Catholic priest the question of the true Church came up. Everything was not going his way, and to help his position he exclaimed, "I can trace the ordination of every priest back to St. Peter." He didn't get time to do it for he had to leave for a smoke, but we would have liked to hear him do it, for after he had finished we were going to ask, "What of it?" Does that prove anything that helps save a soul?" "Does that make for a clean heart, or guarantee the baptism with the Holy Ghost for any believer?" And then, cannot the Episcopal Church point to the same line of ordination by bishops? And do not the Presbyterians claim as unbroken a lineage of apostolic succession? And after all, what does it prove that is essential when the entire New Testament ministry is being preserved entirely independent from the Old Testament tribe of Levi, and is now maintained by a

Spirit-called, and Spirit-filled, and Spirit-preserved ministry, on the basis of the administrations of the Spirit. An interesting subject, indeed, but "mostly wrapping."

Some of the subjects that are most frequently discussed by Christians are out of proportion to the space they use. We once asked a Salvation Army captain if he was a pre-millennialist or a post-millennialist and he answered that he was a Salvationist. That is about the best answer that we have heard to that question. Come to think of it, we think it is the only answer we have heard. Mostly the question is wrapping, though the brethren are welcome to keep on wrapping if they find it interesting or profitable.

Some of our sermons are about like that. "Mostly wrapping." The real essential truths of the sermon are so weakly presented while the non-essentials are paraded with shouts and gestures that are indeed impressive. But the intelligent layman who sits in the pew will leave thinking that the sermon was mostly wrapping.

Oh, well, that heavy wrapping got that little bit of no good paper to me through the mail, and maybe in spite of the heavy wrappings we do our thoughts and truths up in some of them will get to their destination. Let us hope so.

The Bible As A Preacher's Book

It is said, and truly so, that a book that is read and well digested belongs to the one" who reads it. It is not with the idea of having bought the book and become owner of it in a material sense, but rather with that of having within, as part of oneself, the contents of the book. The ideas of the author have been grasped, the subject matter received, and the whole book has been gathered up into the purposes of life. This is what makes a person the possessor of a book. A man may own a book for years, and read it many times, but until he gets for himself what is in the book it is not his.

On this basis it is better for a man to have a few good books, and have them his own, than to have many in his library and not one that he has really digested and possessed.

We do not wish to be understood that any man can completely possess the Bible as might be inferred from the above. The Bible is a bigger book than any man, or set of men, can possess in the full extent that other books can be possessed. The very fact of man's inability to fully comprehend the Bible is one of the strong evidences of its divine authorship. If it were of strictly human origin someone could fully comprehend all its depths. Someone could think as deeply and as clearly as another human who writes but with the Bible the heights and depths are so sublime that it has remained through the years a book not fully understood.

But the Bible belongs to the Christian minister as much as it belongs to anyone, or at least a Christian minister should come into possession of it as fully as any other mortal living. It seems that in about the proportion that the minister possesses the Bible the Bible possesses the minister. It will, of course, affect his preaching, but even better still it will make an impression on the minister as a man. To have a soul and mind developed among the great truths of the Bible is like developing a plant or flower amid the rugged and the mild things of nature. Both the rain and the sunshine are necessary for growth in plants, and so amid the storms of Sinai mountain and the visions of the prophets, the sorrows of Calvary the gales of Pentecost, the fervor of New Testament Christianity and the dangers of heathen philosophies, the minister's soul and mind are developed and enlarged.

A Bibleless soul is a ministerial failure. His mind and soul may be filled with Shakespeare or Tennyson, he may know history and geography, science and art, but unless his soul has grown up amid the eternal truths of the Bible we think he will fail, he will fail at least partly, and possibly entirely.

The Bible contains much history, and there is something about the way it is written which is unique in that it reveals the attitude of the Lord at every turn of the road. Every historical event related in the Bible is against the background of the fact of God. Profane history does not contain this marvel of the divine Presence in history. Men write histories against the background of public opinion, but the Bible relates historic facts against the background of the holy laws of a holy God. And this strange element contained within the Bible can become the possession of the minister of the gospel, so that he will interpret present day history against the same background, and thus stand with the prophets and utter the truths of God in the face of a wicked world.

And so it is with everything that touches our lives. The Bible places everything against the background of what God says about it. To not have the Bible background for soul development is equivalent to confusion, but to possess the Bible in this way will hold us steady on the main line in many a testing place. It will not only hold us steady but will enrich us with a bounteous supply of worth while soul food that causes us to grow and keeps us from decay.

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05 -- THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH -- Charles E. Jefferson

Lecture Two -- Building The Brotherhood

The conception of the church held by the leader of the Twelve and the man to whom our Lord first promised the keys of the kingdom is that members of the church are brothers. "Be ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brothers, tender-hearted, humble-minded" is Peter's teaching. To Saint John the church is a band of brothers, and the first duty of church members is loving one another. He

wrote, "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren." Again, "If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" To Saint Paul the church is a brotherhood. He writes, "Concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." These men got their conception of the church from Jesus for it was His habit to remind His disciples that He was their Master and that all they were brethren. Their estrangement before the supper in the upper chamber was healed by His example in washing their feet and the commandment, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The distinctive note of the Christian life is here proclaimed to be love for one's fellow Christians. A man proves himself a Christian, not by: loving men in general, but by loving his brethren in Christ. Christ prayed that His followers might love one another and be one for ; fellowship is the proof of the divine power of Jesus, evidence to the world that He came from heaven. In fact the world is to be brought to God not by Christians particularly loving the world but by Christians loving one another.

The Roman Catholic idea of the church is not the idea of Peter. An outstanding cardinal says, "The: One and true church is the congregation of men united by the profession of the same Christian faith and the communion of the same sacraments under the rule of legitimate pastors, and especially the one vicar of Christ upon earth." Everything mentioned in this definition is external. Love has no stated place at all. Even the Protestant definition of the church is somewhat aside from the New Testament standard. A representative definition reads: "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

The two features conspicuous in the Protestant church are the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. But preaching is not sufficient to make a church, nor the proper administration of the sacraments. A church is a brotherhood, a school for training in fellowship, a home for the cultivation of the social virtues and the human graces, a society in which men are bound together in sympathy and holy service by a common allegiance to the Son of God. The new commandment is the standard by which all churches must be measured. This commandment is no ordinary love which is called for, but love fashioned after His own, and lifted to its white intensity and heavenly temper. A Christian owes something to a fellow Christian which he owes to no other human being, his first duty is to his fellow believers, his first obligation is to his Christian brethren, his first concern is with his comrades in Christ. It is by Christians' loving one another after the sacrificial manner of Jesus that other men are to become Christians. Love is the law of the church. Love is the base of discipleship. Love is the chief evangelist and head worker. Love is the power which overcomes. The secret of the progress of the early church lies revealed in the exclamation of the pagan crowd -- "Behold how these Christians love one another!"

The primary work of a preacher is the cultivation by word and deed of the spirit of Christlike brotherliness among the members of his own church. Many ministers shrink from this idea as something narrowing and unworthy. They prefer to be broad and preach the brotherhood of man and not the brotherhood of Christians. It is just here that many ministers make a great mistake, in their eagerness to be broad they become narrow. In trying to do much they achieve nothing. In their zeal to rise above boundaries, they lose themselves in the clouds. It is really only as a man is willing to confine himself within narrow limits that he can do any mighty work. Definiteness in thought and action is the thing above all things for the twentieth century preacher to cultivate. This definiteness in thought and action should be evident in the preaching and the living of the new commandment -- love. For without this love faith is empty, hope is darkened, love is starved. It is through the fellowship of the saints that this world and all worlds are to see what God is and what He is able to do.

Every preacher should count it joy to train the members of his church in the fine art of living together. This is the most difficult of the arts but the church is the school ordained of God for perfecting men in this art. The influences of this training and living will reach into the world itself. When tangled relations of a church are straightened out, a contribution is made to the social problem. When class antipathies and racial antagonisms are softened within the congregation, help is given to the solution of the most baffling of world complications. The minister's first business is to get his people together. Let him preach to his church, and his church will preach to the world. Let him kindle the church and the church will illuminate the community.

The minister who gives himself to the training of a church in Christian fellowship is creating the very capacities and powers by means of which Christ's large wish for the world can be most speedily fulfilled. The man who loves his own wife as he loves no other woman will come to take a chivalric attitude to all women. The father who loves his own children as he loves no other will be the swiftest to gather all boys and girls into the round tower of his heart. Men who are most faithful to their own homes are the men to be first counted on for the defense and maintenance of all homes. It is the man who has come into fellowship with his brother men in his own church who is most likely to come into right relations with men who have no connection with organized Christianity.

The shame of present-day Christianity is that it is rich in money, ideas, apparatus, numbers, but poor in love. Too many preachers are interested in what they call the "kingdom" but not in the individuals in the kingdom. Love is expressed in the hymnbook but does not exist in the hearts of the people who sing the hymns. In not loving the man by his side it is impossible for the church member to love the man who is far away which results in an indifference to the work of missions. This lack of brotherly affection also hinders in the worship of God. It becomes mechanical and unsatisfying for how can a man love God whom he has not seen if

he does not love his brother whom he has seen? Many a preacher has tried to put warmth into the worship of his church by elaborate arguments to prove that men ought to delight in the worship of God. They have failed to recognize that the source of warmth is human fellowship for loving man is the only way to grow in the grace of loving God. The preacher's first work is the building of a brotherhood and out of this all sorts of reviving streams will flow.

These are good times for preachers to ponder the meaning of the new commandment and to train their people in the practice of it. In all the kingdoms of life there is a new vision of the meaning of social relationships and the miracle working power of combinations. Men are massing themselves in cities because they find in city life gratification for their social cravings.

As soon as men come together they organize and gather themselves into groups. The multiplication of societies is on the increase and the men of the community are swallowed up, leaving to the church only women and children. This should stir the preacher so that his ambition will be to make his church the warmest and most effective brotherhood in all the town. No stranger member shall be ungreeted. No unfortunate member shall go unbefriended. No invalid shall be unvisited. No needy person shall be unassisted. No bewildered soul shall go unadvised. No home of mourning shall be neglected. The church shall be a home. Men cannot live by sermons alone but by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God -- and one of God's choice words is fellowship. A man's love for his church depends in a large measure upon the relationship established between himself and his fellow members. Unless a man enters into the life of the church, he is practically not a member of it at all. Listening to a preacher or having a name upon the church roll does not make one a church member for fellowship is the essence of church membership and to cultivate and enrich this fellowship is the primary task of the Christian preacher.

A sharp distinction ought to be made between a church and an audience. It is to be regretted that we have come to rank churches by the size of their nominal membership, and to judge preachers by the number of persons who listen to their sermons. A superficial man is consequently tempted to work, not for a church, but for an audience. An audience is a set of unrelated people drawn together by a short-lived attraction, an agglomeration of individuals finding themselves together for a brief time. It is a fortuitous concourse of human atoms, scattering as soon as a certain performance is ended. It is a pile of leaves to be blown away by the wind, a handful of sand lacking consistency and cohesion, a number of human filings drawn into position by a pulpit magnet, and which will drop away as soon as the magnet is removed. An audience is a crowd, a church is a family. An audience is a gathering, a church is a fellowship. An audience is a collection, a church is an organism. An audience is a heap of stones, a church is a temple. Preachers are ordained, not to attract an audience but to build a church.

It is because so many churches are audiences that thousands, on changing their places of residence, drop out of church connections altogether. Their old church membership meant nothing to them and membership in another church has no attraction for them. It is because so many churches are audiences that only a small proportion of those who start the Christ life ever reach spiritual maturity. The church is not a brotherhood and when a new recruit starts to follow Jesus, he is not cheered by brotherly voices or guided by fraternal hands. The preacher, in order to hold his converts, must have the fellowship of his church to help him.

Building the church into a fellowship is the most taxing and baffling work God has ever given to man. Not until a minister strives to build a brotherhood does he realize how unsocial human nature is, how narrow and how cold. Not till then does he discover what havoc sin has wrought, and what low and crude conceptions of the obligations of Christian discipleship lodge in many a Christian heart. It is comparatively easy for most Christians to listen to sermons. It is easy for many Christians to give money and some will give generously. But for church members to be brotherly with one another, this is indeed difficult, in many quarters apparently impossible. Men make contributions for carrying the gospel into foreign lands who act like heathen in their home church. To the amazement of the young preacher, social estrangements flourish inside the company of the sanctified. Possibly it is for this reason that certain preachers devote so much attention to sinners outside their congregations. A man finds relief ill striking at a distant octopus who has been discomfited by some unregenerate pigmy within bis reach.

But the servant of the Master must not follow the things which are easy. He may find that his church is after all only an audience. It may be that the older people are not interested in the young people. It may be that the new members have been allowed to continue strangers and that older members have sat for years within six feet of each other without even so much as a look of mutual recognition. Possibly there are men who quarreled ten years ago, and who have doggedly resisted every suggestion of reconciliation. They do not speak either in the church or on the street, and this ill-will festering in their hearts poisons the atmosphere of the whole church. It may be that members of the church are estranged from one another by differences in doctrinal opinion. To train men to love one another who differ from one another theologically, is a task more formidable than converting the toughest of publicans and the trickiest of the sinners. It may be that some Pharaoh has grown up in the midst of the congregation who lords it over both the minister and the saints and unless suppressed will make more trouble for years to come. The hope, despair, cross and crown of the minister is to make his church a brotherhood.

Ministers should create in their churches by precept and example the spirit of love and the churches will pass it on. He is the greatest preacher who so frames and utters the thoughts of God as to bind together the largest number of Christian hearts in closest fellowship for Christlike service.

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06 -- ELIMINATING THE UNSUCCESSFUL PREACHER -- Roy Smee, District Superintendent

I am reminded of the farmer who had a mangy dog. The disease was spreading. Other animals on the farm were subject to it. The mangy dog must be eliminated!

There were three ways by which this could be done.

- 1) He could cure the mange,**
- 2) Kill the dog,**
- 3) Let the disease take its course and in the end nature would eliminate the dog.**

There are three ways to eliminate the unsuccessful preacher.

- 1) Eliminate the cause of his failure,**
- 2 Ecclesiastically kill him,**
- 3) Let circumstances take their course and thus eliminate him.**

First, if possible, I feel that we should "cure the mange." I believe that the successful District Superintendent should discover the causes of failure. We are responsible in a great degree for the success of our preachers. Many of our men will appreciate constructive counsel. I know there is danger here. The mangy dog might bite. The unsuccessful preacher might retaliate. Sometimes it may take strong medicine to cure the mange, which is also true concerning the preacher. If the farmer values his dog sufficiently to cure the animal at the risk of being bitten, surely we should be willing to risk something in order to help one of our brethren who is failing because of some shortcoming of which he may be completely unaware.

For instance, one of my pastors, who is very excellent in the matter of visitation, sympathetic contact, and personal piety, together with being a splendid singer, was about to be voted out of his church. I discovered the condition in time to counsel with some of the members of the church. I found that this good man was rather slow of speech and unfortunately followed a pastor whose one strong point was his ability to preach. My man felt that he must do his best to preach big sermons. The sad thing about it was that his sermons were big in point of duration only. The result was that the people were bored almost beyond their ability to endure. They could stand it no longer, so they determined to have a change.

What was I to do? Could I stand by and let this man who had been there only a year come up for re-election and be voted out and thus be injured beyond recovery? I felt that if ever I was my brother's keeper, I was in regard to this man. I determined to have a frank talk with him. I knew that I had to use all the tact possible and asked God for divine wisdom in making my approach. I told him the exact condition as I had found it, and assured him that I was his friend and desired above everything else to help him. My advice to him briefly was thus: Do not preach over twenty minutes. Be sure to have something to say and when you have said it stop. Write your sermons out. If necessary, take your manuscript to the pulpit and read it. You had better read a good sermon than to extemporize and say nothing. I further advised him that if he would write his sermons and read them several times before his wife or before a large mirror before going into the pulpit he would have more fluency and ease in expression when he stood before his congregation.

He thanked me very much for this advice and seemed to appreciate it. The direct result to him was a unanimous vote for his re-election. That church today is one of the bright spots on my district. I believe that I saved this man to the ministry, saved his family from embarrassment, and saved the church from division.

Another way that we can help the unsuccessful preacher to succeed is to so thoroughly know our men and be so well acquainted with our churches that we can place round men in round holes and square men in square holes. There are distinct types of congregations as well as distinct types of men. It seems to me that our one big job in the superintendency is to secure pastors that fit. If our pastors succeed our district will succeed. The most satisfactory way to eliminate the unsuccessful preacher is to help him to succeed by eliminating those faults which make him unsuccessful.

There are times, however, when all that we can do will not save a preacher from failure. Either he cannot or will not make the necessary adjustments in order to succeed. I believe that in these cases it is necessary to eliminate the preacher by frankly refusing to recommend him. This may cost us some votes at the next District Assembly and in extreme cases may cause us to suffer defeat. I feel, however, that this need not be the case if we exercise proper diplomacy in our procedure.

It may be properly said here that our strength as superintendents depends not upon the power delegated to us through legislation, but more especially upon our ability to gain and hold the confidence of our pastors. To this end we must ever be known as the pastor's friend. Only in the rarest cases is it wise to take sides with a congregation against the pastor. Even though I may be sure that a pastor is opposed to me as Superintendent, I do not feel that this is sufficient cause for me to seek his removal. It is a larger thing for me to get along with him and thus win him rather than to have a fuss and drive him from my field. When we have gained the confidence of our men we can safely counsel with them concerning whatever changes may seem to be the best for the work.

We should remember too, that to merely transfer an unsuccessful man from one district to another does not eliminate him. I think a little old-fashioned honesty might be more ruggedly practiced when it comes to recommending our unsuccessful preachers.

Too many times our recommendations are so written that there is more between the lines against the man than what the lines themselves express in his favor. This might seem all right if all are properly versed in reading this code. This practice among us is doubtless prompted as a means of self-protection. We fail to give a fair recommendation because we fear our communication will not be held in strictest confidence. Brethren, let us be fair with one another.

There are extreme cases where all we can do to eliminate the unsuccessful preacher is simply to let matters take their course and his own failures will close every door against him. Churches want pastors who succeed. Of course we will be blamed for not finding him a place. But we really have nothing to fear because every right thinking man will know the fact of his failure. Of course if he has become an elder and lives in California we will always have him with us to keep us humble by criticizing us and finding fault in general.

In conclusion, I might suggest that the old adage, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," could well be applied in this matter. I feel that we should be more strict in our requirements for ordination. Not necessarily in our educational requirements, but in those other matters which make for success. One may be ever so well versed when it comes to theory, and be very spiritual indeed, and yet not have the adaptability to successfully apply his theories. Does he know how to lead his people into the deeper things of the Spirit? Can he exercise leadership? Can he get along with people? Does he have a teachable disposition? Does he know how to practice loyalty to leadership? Does he have a sympathetic attitude and a spirit of sacrifice? We should discover these qualities of character more accurately in the future before ordaining men into this most sacred order of the ministry.

Doubtless our schools and colleges could help with more extensive courses in practice, and generating a feeling among our prospective preachers that graduation merely prepares them for the apprenticeship of the ministry, and that their advancement will depend upon their efficiency in carrying forward the work of God.

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07 -- SOMEONE HAS SAID -- Compiled By Harold C. Johnson

Chapter Three

No person can whitewash himself by blackening others.

**"Gold, gold, gold, gold,
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled,
Hard to get and light to hold,
Hoarded and battered, bought and sold,
Stolen, squandered, borrowed, doled;
Spurned by the young, hugged by the old,
To the very edge of the churchyard mold,
Price of many a crime untold,
Gold, gold, gold, gold."**

Act as you believe the Lord would act, if He were in your shoes.

If you only have a mental belief in God, at your best you are one step behind the devils, for they believe in God and tremble, and you don't tremble.

If you cannot think of any reason for doing a thing, then you have one reason why you should not do it.

God wants soldiers not babies. Put down your bottle and snatch up the sword.

As Christ gave all, He claims all.

All that God says will come true in spite of all false hopes held out by false prophets.

I believe in the kind of decision day that Peter held on the day of Pentecost.

Dress in that way to rightly represent the Christ you profess to serve.

The basis of prayer is right relationship with God and our fellowman.

Faith not only believes that God can but that He will.

Authors are known by their writings, fools by their words, men by their companions, and parents by their children.

Some people are afraid of getting too much religion, but who will have too much when death comes?

Crucify your lusts and deify your Lord as you have deified your lusts and crucified your Lord.

God has so constituted man that within himself lies the power of his salvation or his ruin.

Rotten politics breed anarchy.

The home worth living in: Where each lives for all; and all live for God.

Thousands of people in the nation do not vote, possibly their faith in politics has been destroyed.

Atheism and anarchy unite to destroy men and dishonor God.

Democracy void of Christianity is dangerous.

Death, himself shall die, but we never. Blessed or cursed with immortality, we shall live to wish we had never lived, or to rejoice that we shall live forever.

I would rather lose any battle fighting fair than to win fighting unfair.

I can sleep better to give a cup of cold water to my enemy, than to murder him.

It costs man nothing to forgive,* but it cost God His Son. [*This is not always so. There are times when forgiving another can cost the person who forgives, MUCH! -- DVM]

Faith never claims the results without having met the preliminary conditions.

Presumption claims the results without ever having met the conditions.

Ritualism breeds superstition.

Many of us read too much and think too little. Many more do neither.

Watch your heart, life and tongue.

To laugh at a child's mistake may ruin him forever.

It is not God's will for you to be damned. If you are lost it will be in spite of His will.

Blessed are they who teach their children to reverence the house of God.

If we reject the Christ of the manger, we must turn away from the Teacher on the Mount.

Some have lost their power and pacify themselves by making light of those who have retained theirs.

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THE END